Tapping into Community Conversations: How Broadcast Journalists’ Social Media Routines Influence Content and Sourcing

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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS .............................................................................. ii

ABSTRACT ........................................................................................................ iv

Chapter

1. INTRODUCTION ......................................................................................... 1

2. FIELD NOTES .............................................................................................. 3

3. WHAT I LEARNED ....................................................................................... 22

4. PHYSICAL EVIDENCE ................................................................................. 24

5. TAPPING INTO COMMUNITY CONVERSATIONS: HOW BROADCAST
JOURNALISTS’ SOCIAL MEDIA ROUTINES INFLUENCE CONTENT AND
SOURCING ....................................................................................................... 75

References ...................................................................................................... 104

Appendix

A. Original Proposal ....................................................................................... 105

B. Transcripts

   News Directors ........................................................................................... 137

   General manager ....................................................................................... 177

   Digital/Web ............................................................................................... 182

   Reporters ................................................................................................... 221
TAPPING INTO COMMUNITY CONVERSATIONS: HOW BROADCAST JOURNALISTS’ SOCIAL MEDIA ROUTINES INFLUENCE CONTENT AND SOURCING

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ABSTRACT

Broadcast journalists serve two masters: the long-reigning broadcast and its digital brother. Digital journalism encompasses many things: it is just as much a Facebook post as it is free standing websites made of HTML. Both rookie and veteran broadcast news reporters have grown to expect digital journalism as a part of their everyday work. They experiment; they push the limits. But a broadcast journalist does more than take selfies and tweet links to her stories. This research illustrates how broadcast journalists’ work across platforms is a byproduct of their own routines, as well as a representation of their expectations and stations’ values.
TAPPING INTO COMMUNITY CONVERSATIONS: HOW BROADCAST JOURNALISTS’ SOCIAL MEDIA ROUTINES INFLUENCE CONTENT AND SOURCING

Lee Anne Denyer

Keywords: Television, News, Gatekeeping, Reporting, Social Media, Engagement, Broadcast, Multimedia, Branding
Chapter One

Introduction

A dear friend once told me it’s my incessant curiosity that gets me in trouble. And while the nearing 26-year-old me would probably advise my younger self against some of the situations I have found myself in over the years, I have—and will always—believe in talking to strangers.

It’s the addiction to conversation that brought me to journalism.

Journalism rewards my curiosity. And it doesn’t just encourage it; it demands it. It requires me talk to strangers, to put myself in others’ shoes, even if just for a short time, and to bring others a new perspective on the world. Television has a way of doing this in a way that appeals to the senses. It is visual, it is auditory and when the right story falls in your hands, it can be magical.

I came to the Missouri School of Journalism for one very simple reason: to be excellent. I wanted to be an excellent journalist and to push myself to be a more excellent version of myself. I never imagined I would learn what I’ve learned, meet whom I’ve met and would fall in love with a city I couldn’t have found on a map several years ago.

There are several things that pushed me towards completing a project about the television journalist and social media. The first is that dear friend from above. She is an avid happy hour goer, and unapologetically gets most of her news from BuzzFeed lists that appear on Facebook. That lack of media literacy aside, she’s brilliant, but she’s not your typical viewer of a five o’clock local newscast. I want her, and others in our age bracket, to learn more about the world through the news they consume. I want young
people to receive information from ethical, professional and sensitive aggregators of information. In other words, a journalist. Research shows that increasingly, people are getting this news from their mobile devices and over social media. Today’s television journalists know this and consequentially are often required to report for both a televised broadcast and for the web. When I, too, began to report for two platforms as a reporter for KOMU 8 News, I quickly realized I had myriad questions about the best way to do this. I wanted to know what others were doing, what others expected and how reporters and their managers could better serve their communities with both kinds of content.

I am also a strong believer in the mantra that says people tell their own stories best. They know their community. And after working as a reporter for several months, I quickly began to dislike bland sound bites from official sources talking off a sheet of quick facts. There had to be something better out there and I wanted to know how to find it.

There is no doubt in my mind this professional project has made me a better journalist. It has changed my entire way of thinking. When I receive an assignment the first thought in my head is who is this story really about? Who are the people most impacted by whatever it is we’re putting up for discussion today? Is this something we even should put up for discussion?

While Columbia has been good to me these past two years, I am thrilled to take my new found skills to my next home.
Chapter Two

Field Notes

Week 1, January 20 – January 23
Activity overview:
• Covered a lock-in event for at risk girls in Columbia for 9/10 daily reporting shift
• Researched stations for potential visits
Reporting reflection: This story came as a press release from the Columbia Parks and Recreation Department. While the story didn’t have a lot of depth to it on the surface, it made for a pretty good live shot. It was a nice change of pace to do something fun and light-hearted. The producers and I discussed the best format for this story in the newscast and decided on a RDR/SOT/RDR. I picked two sound bites so the nine and ten o’clock hits would be different.

Social reflection: The story was not posted to Facebook, which I think was a missed opportunity. I think this would have been a story that could have included a question about the types of events that are best for our community’s young people. I did tweet three photos; however, they did not receive a high volume of interactions. I used suggested practices for Twitter when constructing one of my tweets by using a quote from an interview as well as a photo.

Research: I did preliminary research on stations I could visit for the analysis component of this project this week. I will need to coordinate them geographically, as well as be flexible with ratings periods.

Link 2: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zbnneORGiik

Week 2, January 26 – January 30
Activity overview:
• Covered Governor’s speech in Jefferson City Monday in which he thanked members of military for their service. He also proposed bonds be issued to fund a new veterans home in Missouri.
• Wrote and edited promos for Cyber Crimes story airing Thursday
• Visited Boone County courthouse for extensive fact checking of television script and web copy for Cyber Crimes story
• Fronted live tease in six am show for Cyber Crimes
• Fronted Cyber Crimes package in ten o’clock show with live intro and tag at the Boone County Sheriff’s Department
• Covered breaking news of house fire in Higbee
• Prepared for professional headshots being taken Saturday, January 31
Reporting reflection: I covered several stories this week and have included a reflection per story below.

VET HOMES: While KOMU doesn’t have assigned beats, I am starting to see trends in the stories that I like covering. I gravitate towards education issues, quirky characters and issues involving veterans. I covered the ballot proposal last August suggesting Missourians use a new lottery ticket to fund the construction of a new veteran home. This helped me feel more prepared in covering the bond issue, as well as allowed me to use archived b-roll for my new story. This saved a lot of time and helped me stick to my backtiming.

In an effort to be more demonstrative, I added touchscreen element in my six o’clock hit; however, it got mixed reviews. Executive producer Jeimmie Nevalga said the touchscreen didn’t really work because the audience couldn’t see the elements clearly enough. While it might not have been a success, I think it’s important as a reporter to remember what options you have available when you’re in the studio.

CYBER CRIMES: I am very proud of this story. It stemmed from a simple observation I made as a digital producer last semester. I noticed almost every shift as a writer for the KOMU website the Boone County Cyber Task Force was reporting weekly arrests regarding individuals possessing and creating child pornography. I wondered if the force was experiencing an upswing in cases. Turns out, the task force is understaffed, backlogged and on next year’s chopping block for government financing. I put together this story using the lead detective for Boone County’s task force as my CCC, but also traveled to St. Charles to get a more broad perspective at the state Internet Crimes Against Children (ICAC) office. This story required rigorous fact checking, careful shooting to ensure investigations were not compromised and a willingness to be open to learning about a type of work few are able to do day in and day out.

HIGBEE: As I was driving back to KOMU from my Cyber Crimes live shot, the manager on shift told me she needed someone to drive north of Columbia to cover a breaking news situation. It neared 11 o’clock by the time I left. This serve as a reminder that a reporter never has a set start and finish time when he or she comes to work. We serve a 24/7 news cycle and must work accordingly. When I arrived in Higbee, fire crews were still on scene, but they would not share any information with me or go on camera. I evaluated what I had to work with and shot some night video of the firefighters and a look-live to run in the morning show. Back at the station I cut the standup with some VO, wrote up a short web story and put together a script based on my observations.

Social reflection: A lot of my project is about understanding the routines reporters, like myself, use every day to keep up with their work load. During my Monday shift, I only sent one tweet. This would not be sufficient in many newsrooms. I had to do a bit of scrambling throughout the day so I did not tweet as much as I should have. This is an opportunity to adjust my own routine to insure social post gets done. I ended up cutting it pretty close to airtime at five. Literature I have read confirms how important it is to be sharing news throughout the reporting process and not just at the post-publication stage of the story.
Something else to keep in mind, when I covered the Higbee fire I did not have cell service and was unable to tweet from my phone. This is an example of how sometimes work in the field does not match expectations from managers and producers back in the newsroom. While I am sure that anyone would understand the situation, it reminded me of how there can be a disconnect between team members.

Lastly, for my Cyber Crimes story I created an extra web element in the form of a YouTube video embedded in my web story. I wanted to include information from the parent’s meeting I went to in my story, but did not want to bog down an already long story with more elements. I think this project has gotten me in the mindset of looking for ways digital can help tell a story to its fullest.

Research: I am reaching out to stations and putting the finishing touches on my literature review and proposal.

Link 3: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V82miH2ItXo&feature=youtu.be

Week 3, February 2 – February 6
Activity overview:
- Reporting shift covered due to Monday conflict
- Worked a morning digital producing shift at KOMU, which consisted of monitoring reporter activity on social media, posting stories to KOMU.com from the Associated Press, monitoring scanners and assisting the morning news team as needed.
- Met with individual committee members to discuss project progress
- Met with Kent Collins to review portfolio and website

Reporting reflection: I did not work my regularly scheduled shift due to a personal conflict Monday evening. I did enjoy working the DP shift Wednesday morning.
Social reflection: I enjoyed helping the morning reporters during my DP shifts get their content on KOMU’s social platforms.

Research: I am still moving forward with arranging station visits. They are slower coming than expected.

Link 1: NA

Week 4, February 9 to February 13
Activity overview:
- Worked scheduled dayside reporting shift Monday, but did not end up with a story
- Assisted with producing the Thursday five o’clock show with another student
• Anchored the nine and 10 o’clock shows Thursday after anchor had to go home sick

Reporting reflection: Monday was a very slow day in the newsroom. I pitched several ideas, but early in the afternoon I did something I rarely do: I gave up. I called a friend from the KOMU parking lot and cried. A lot. Reporting is an emotionally draining job and sometimes I think it gets the best of all of us. This particular day I reached a breaking point when the stress of grad school collided with forces out of my control. Part of the magic of KOMU is it gives students a place to learn both the hard skills involved with television news, but also the mental skills the job requires.

When three o’clock hit and I still didn’t have a story, I took off. Something else I had never done before. I drove to Business Loop 70, parked the car and began walking around with my notepad. I stopped in a motel, a gun store, an adult store and a senior citizen center. I asked people about what they see, what’s changed, what they wanted to see covered. Two hours later, I’d filled pages of my notebook with ideas for possible stories. When I got back to KOMU, I went over my list with Randy and we came up with some ideas for things I could follow. While most of it wasn’t helpful, there were a few good ideas there. This activity reminded me what “tapping into community conversations” really means to me.

At this point in the process, I have to say things aren’t going well, but I am feeling hopeful about the process.

Social reflection: NA

Research: I am making progress on arranging station visits, but I have not finalized plans just yet.

Other: I enjoyed producing the five o’clock newscast with another student this week. He taught me about a lot of the logistics, especially to do with timing out the show. I think investing time in producing is a good idea because it helps me write quicker and see the newscast from a different point of view. It was also nice to shake up the schedule a bit and work a new shift.

Link 1: NA

**Week 5, February 16 – February 20**

Activity overview:
- Covered Columbia Public Works crews issuing citations for cars parked in snow priority routes, a relatively new ordinance
- Reported on food drive at William Woods University

Reporting reflection: I had a blast working on the snow story Monday. The snow fell hard overnight so I made sure to give myself enough time to dig out my car and get to work. Our assignment manager Matt Johnson heard on the scanner Public Works crews were issuing parking tickets so he sent me to find them. I spent the day driving around (carefully!) and interviewing people about the snowfall and the parking requirements. I lucked out and found a group of girls who did not know until I told them they’d received
an expensive ticket for parking on a priority route. She became my CCC and I was able to put together a humanized, humorous piece about parking.

My Tuesday story was less thrilling. I think the content manager misunderstood exactly what it was, but nonetheless, we got something on television.

Social reflection:
SNOW: An observation I made this week is that station accounts (ie. @KOMUnews v @leeannedenyer) are going to generate more traffic. It seems like an obvious observation, but I feel it’s important when considering how social is performing across different accounts. Station accounts obviously have more followers therefore more opportunities for interactions. In KOMU’s situation, however, it is the reporter tweets receiving a RT that are generating the traffic.

KOMU faculty teaches strict routine for reporters. I’ve wondered for a long time how that changes when reporters go outside the working lab environment. In adherence with KOMU’s policy, I completed my web story before starting on my scripts and editing video. After seeing how chatty people had been during my interviews, I thought the story would play well on Facebook. The digital producer and I crafted a post put it on Facebook. It did great!

The story reach surpassed 20,000 views and generated hundreds of likes and comments. I reached out to Annie for analytics on the post, which I have included below. The thing I found most valuable from this was scrolling through the comments. Some of our viewers suggested follow-up stories that I could pursue.

Annie Hammock, KOMU 8 Interactive Director sent me this note about the post: On the Web it got 892 hits with an average length of view of 2:44. 369 of those hits came from Facebook (that’s 43%). 60 hits came from Twitter (7%). The package got 62 views. As you can see, lots of traction on social doesn’t always translate to Web traffic. I’d consider the story a success, however, based on these social numbers. The Twitter number is very high for us in terms of percentage.

I/we had less success of Twitter, but per Annie’s email that seems to be normal. My personal tweets (x3) received one favorite, but my retweets from KOMU received seven. I thought my behind the scenes photo of photographer Justin recovering from the cold was a good choice to both show process and make a weather story relatable.

Annie’s note reminded me how important being well versed in the jargon of engagement is going into the industry in 2015. I am excited to say I am beginning to both know how to create more engaging content, as well as how to success contents’ successes and shortfalls with others on my team. I also embedded a tweet into my web story.

FOOD: This was a lesson in what to do when there is an error. I had a typo and wrote “Area” instead of “arena”. Following KOMU policy, we tweeted out the correction. I initially didn’t think the story was “worth” posting on Facebook; however, convergence students are required to when they go out with us and it did better than I expected. I think some discussion on “worth” would be an interesting.
Other: Thursday evening I did some reading from Joy’s participatory syllabus. I particularly liked the Poynter article on Twitter uses for journalists. It got me thinking a lot about the value of beats and how being only GA makes organizing contacts a bit difficult. I also experimented with the geolocating feature on Twitter. I sifted through tweets throughout the week, but didn’t see anything particularly interesting. It was primarily 17-year-olds sending each other emojis.

Research: Wednesday I spent sorting out my IRB application, which has since been submitted. The ladies in the office have been very helpful. I anticipate there will be some changes. I have some questions about confidentiality that I will need to run by Stacey. Wednesday I also took several hours to try and nail some ideas for longer form stories to get working on. I have a couple of ideas I plan on picking up next week. I was thrown a bit of a curve ball earlier in the semester when I learned my initial HFR project was canceled and the Town Square team wanted to give another student a chance to go through the process with them. I was disappointed about both of those developments, but I am trying to move forward.

This week I also heard back from four of my five stations. Two news directors declined my request to interview and observe in their newsrooms. I am wondering if arranging these station visits would be easier if we were not in the middle of a ratings period. I plan on reaching out to two new stations. I have a phone call scheduled with a ND to go over some questions she has about my project Friday afternoon. My contact at another station got back to me earlier this week and said he’d work on getting me in touch with his ND.

Overall, I thought it was a good week. I have some concerns about the timeline of this project, but I must say I am feeling more hopeful.


**Week 6, February 23 – February 27**

Activity overview:

- Arranged with content manager Matt Johnson over the weekend to cover murder-for-hire trial of Casey Lewis beginning with jury selection Monday morning.
- Monday: Live shots at noon, five, and six
- Monday: Cut mini package for nine and 10 o’clock shows
- Tuesday: Live shots at noon, five, six
- Tuesday: Cut mini package for nine and 10 o’clock shows
- Wednesday: Live shots for five, six, nine and 10 o’clock shows (backpack problems for noon)
- NOTE: I worked 44.5 hours in three days covering this trial. I believe this week helps make-up for slower weeks earlier in the semester
- Met with representatives from Hearst Broadcasting
Reporting overview: Covering this trial was one of the most educational and exciting stories of my very short career as a reporter. Covering a murder trial from start to finish was a great learning opportunity in terms of social as well as reporting. It was a difficult 72 hours, but I am so thankful to have had the opportunity to do it. I really enjoyed the specificity we heard in the court, which was a change of pace from the press releases we often receive.

Social overview: Per court rules, I was allowed to tweet from outside the courtroom, preferably during breaks and in-between witnesses. I did my best to tweet what I thought viewers would like to know. I think this got better as the week went on. I also worked with the team back in the newsroom to update the story on the web and on social during opportune moments.

When thinking about reporting routines, tweeting definitely is an interesting one. While it does take a moment to do, it is quicker than calling the newsroom and relaying information over the phone. For breaking or in the moment stories, team members back in the newsroom can use a reporter’s tweets to update material in real time.

Research: NA

Other: I had the opportunity to meet with representatives from Hearst Television this week. The highlight was the one-on-one opportunity with KMBC’s news director Sherrie Brown. She suggested I spend time this semester tightening up my writing by carefully selecting what content makes it into my package. She easily picked up on my overshooting habits. She also suggested that I work on more conversational on the air and showing a bit more personality.


Week 7, March 2 – March 6
Activity overview:
• Covered changing fire agreement between city of Sedalia and the Boone County Fire Protection District
• Met with content manager Matt Johnson to discuss possible HFRs for the semester
• Edited stories for award submissions
• Met with interactive director Annie Hammock to go over engagement measurement for KOMU.com
• Spent time doing research and making preliminary calls for HFRs
• Helped Town Square team prepare for upcoming special on vaccines
• Attended several True/False documentary screenings for inspiration on shooting, writing and storytelling
• Went to Joplin with Jim Riek and Hanna Battah Saturday to cover the opening of the new Mercy Joplin Hospital, which will air next week as a HFR
• Wrote and edited Hospital package Sunday

Reporting overview: Something I would like to improve upon is my writing. More specifically, I would like to improve on my time management and the amount of time it takes me to complete individual tasks. My project asks about routines and I think developing a routine is something I haven’t quite mastered yet.

Social overview: I met with KOMU 8’s interactive director this week to get a better sense of what sort of numbers she uses to measure the success of social posts. She also went over how to look up analytics on Facebook posts. I found it very helpful.

Research: I attended Monika Blodgett’s formatting presentation.


Week 8, March 9 – March 13
Activity overview:
• Wrapped up editing of Mercy Joplin package for Monday six o’clock newscast
• Covered Proposition One rally for Monday six o’clock newscast
• Attended show critique by Raycom Media recruiters
• Met with Raycom Media recruiters
• Met with News Press and Gazette recruiters
• Worked a digital producing shift

Reporting reflection: This week had some high highs and some low lows in terms of both my project and moving forward with the semester.

I thought the post show critique from the Raycom recruiters on Tuesday was one of the most helpful things we’ve done at KOMU all semester. The feedback that resonated most with was their thoughts on the relationship between digital and web for broadcast stations.

The recruiters spoke to the exact goal of this project: identifying and highlighting non-official sources. They reminded that we have to keep our viewers coming back to the broadcast and in order to do that, we have to give them something they can’t get online. For example, one suggested my Joplin web story could be fact heavy and include quotes from the officials and then in it include a tease to the upcoming newscasts where we “hear from the nurse who survived and continued working.” This focuses my package and gives the viewer something different.
They also gave some great tips on social use. In an effort to cut down stories, identify
things that can be web or social extras. Using this advice, I cut a minute of raw video of
good, emotional sound and used it on Facebook. It received relatively good numbers
according to our analytics.

Specifically, I received a lot of helpful feedback on my personal reporting. A few
pointers included:

**Focus, focus, focus:** The recruiters pointed out I stay with an angle for about 75 percent
of my package and then I use the last 25 percent to jam in all the other information I
collected. They said I’d be better off breaking my foci up into shorter, more concise
series of stories. One used the phrase write by “selection not compression.”

**Watch the wallpaper:** I have a habit of using generic video when I’m crashing editing
my stories. Shooting smarter and writing to my video will help combat this in the future.

My own reflections yielded some additional observations. First, I really struggled to write
my Mercy Joplin package on Sunday. I think it boiled down to a case of writer’s block.

After I finished edited, I took on another story for the newscast. I pulled it together
relatively quickly. I set up the interviews and shot my package in three hours. While I
was able to get a package in the 6, I broke one of the cardinal rules of KOMU and did not
write my web story before my television script. KOMU is a digital-first newsroom, and
like many others, this is not how we do things.

Social reflection: The raw interview I posted got 50 likes and 3 comments and had a
reach of 16,000 on Facebook. According to the KOMU interactive director this falls
under a “Strong” engagement category for KOMU.

Research: I have three stations nailed down for my visit to California next week. I have it
confirmed I’ll be at Station 1 from 3/26-3/27, Station 2 from 3/30-3/31 and Station 4 in
from 4/6-4/7. I have reached out to 15 total stations and am still in talks with several of
them; several have declined. I am still working with Station 3 to set up a visit, but they
have been very slow to commit citing concerns over revealing strategy secrets.

*[Author’s note: Stations have been changed and numbered to reflect the final naming I
used in the analysis portion of this professional project]*


**Week 9, March 16 – March 20**

Activity Overview
• Covered fire watch due to increased weather conditions and dry conditions
• Did ride along with Columbia Fire Department Station 6 crew
• Edited social posts for Facebook for upcoming Town Square special on vaccines
• Met with managing editor Jamie Greber to discuss possibilities for HFR on fire contracts
• Attended press conference by Chancellor R. Bowen Loftin for noon show
• Joined team coverage for release of Sasha Menu Courey investigation report
• Met with Columbia Fire Department leadership to discuss requested records
• Posted and monitored Town Square teases on Facebook and Twitter over several days leading up to show
• Fronted story for nine and 10 o’clock newscasts while working on Town Square projects
• Met with Meredith Broadcasting
• Filed public records requests for fire contract story
• Met with Stacey to review project progress and critique work
• Met with Joy to review social activity

Reporting reflection: This week is how I imagined my project would go, but in taking a step back, I think it’s important to realize part of the nature of local news is the ebb and flow of heavy and light news weeks. This week was full of a lot of reporting, a lot of research and a lot of feedback. I thought adding the meetings with Stacey and Joy really helped give the week depth.

Data journalism can be intimidating, but it is such an opportunity for thorough reporting. I’ve learned over the last few months to think in terms of documents and to be constantly asking myself, “What sort of documents back this idea up?” Records requests filed… mark of thorough investigating

Several daily shifts and live shots

Social reflection: Committee member Joy Mayer and I met Friday to look over some of my posts and to review some of my concerns with my own branding on social media. Our conversation took a lot of paths. It remained primarily professional, but took a few detours to address some personal concerns as well.

We discussed how television is a unique medium that as some element of remarkability in it by nature. She suggested that instead of talking selfies that I/and other TV reporters, use personal platforms to show more behind the scenes as well as start to introduce personality.

This conversation got me thinking about what I want me own accounts to look like. I consider myself to have a lot of personality, but in my work and in my digital content, I stay pretty reserved. I am happy to tell people about my work, but when it comes to writing something up I tend to stop talking. Joy suggested I tackle topics such as personal experiences at work, explaining equipment used throughout the day and addressing some of the actual questions I get out in the field.
To move forward, Joy suggested that I follow more people that I admire. I think this is necessary not just for social, but for my broader reporting. Currently, I don’t have a favorite reporter or station. I’m not consistently following professionals I admire. I think doing so would be a real opportunity to expand my tool kit and to try new things.

Joy suggested I look for more information about voice across platforms and dive into more research about what audiences expect from different types of social media applications.

Research: I confirmed visit with the news director at Station 5. I also wrapped up a few missing documents with the IRB office. Everything should be approved at this point. I am very excited to complete my station visits in the upcoming weeks.


[Author’s note: The next three weeks will be dedicated to completing the analysis portion of this professional project]

Week 10, March 23 – March 27
Activity overview:
• Spoke about digital reporting opportunities at KNPN in St. Joseph, Missouri
• Completed two days of observation and interviews at Station 1
• Drove to Station 2

Reporting overview: NA
Social overview: NA

Research: I really enjoyed my time spent at Station 1. The station has the lowest DMA ranking of all the stations I’ll be including in my sample, which I think strengthens the sample. I am looking forward to comparing what I learned here with the bigger stations I will be visiting next week. The first day I spent a lot of time observing the web manager and the content manager at the assignment desk. I also spoke with several reporters and anchors. I really enjoyed my conversation with a longtime anchor who has worked at Station 1 for decades. She had three main points: the workload keeps going up, the 24/7 news cycle is changing her routines and viewers have a bigger role in creating the newscast than ever before. She described Facebook as a place “to share ideas.”

The conversation I had with the web director also revealed a lot of interesting insight. He voiced some frustrating with trying to get the reporters to think of social and digital as they go through their day. He gave an example of a situation where the reporter went up in a helicopter to observe the snow pack. He said that would have been a create opportunity to shoot a video tease to the story to post to Facebook. I learned during my
conversation with the news director the web position was a relatively new one. I also learned that through an increased focus on the station’s digital presence, the web director had grown their Facebook following by 30,000 followers in just one year.

The second day I spent out in the field with a reporter — this particular reporter came recommended by the news director as being the strongest with her social media use. She created an interesting piece of web content. She ran into some kids who wanted to send a message to the station’s morning anchor. She taped it on her phone and later posted it to Facebook. It was a good example of creating special content for Facebook.

Week 11, March 30 – April 3
Activity overview:
• Completed two days of observation and interviews at Station 2
• Completed two days of observation and interviews at Station 3
Reporting overview: NA
Social overview: NA

Research: I had two successful days shadowing and interviewing at Stations 2 and 3 this week. I initially felt uneasy about going to Station 2 because I wasn’t going to be able to shadow a reporter, but I ended up learning so much from my time there. They gave me free range to wander the newsroom and observe different comings and goings. I had two excellent conversations with reporters about their social media use and their reporting.

Without a question though, the highlight of this visit was speaking with the Vice President of Digital News. She oversees the reporters’ social media use and also a team of digital content producers. She really opened my eyes to the branding part of social media. Essentially, she said, if you promise your viewers you’re going to be the most reliable news source you have to follow through with that in every way. She called unmaintained accounts “broken promises.” I am thrilled to have met her and really hope to stay in touch.

Something I heard repeatedly was the use of process storytelling at Station 2. The executive producer I met with said there are ways to include this in both television scripts and digital content. He gave the example of writing for the anchors “this story you’ve seen blowing up on Facebook, etc.” What I’ve learned is that the thing with social and digital is to give the audience something there that they can’t get anywhere else and then make it shareable.

Station 3 also yielded interesting information. I learned about a death in the family early in my visit so I am thinking my observations might have been slightly less focused the first day. I thought my interview with the news director was very strong. I specifically found her insight on how a reporter’s social use translates during the hiring process.

Day 2 was a blast with Station 3. I spent the day with a longtime reporter who shared so much about the changes the industry has seen. He was also very savvy with his digital
tools. He posted a video tease about his story at noon because he knows that’s when people are checking their social accounts on their lunch breaks at work. I felt my shadowing him gave me a very clear depiction of what it’s like working as a reporter in a large television market.

**Week 12, April 6 – April 10**

Activity overview:
- Completed two days of observation and interviews at Station 4
- Met with representatives from Scripps Company
- Met with representatives from Media General

Reporting overview: NA

Social overview: NA

Research: I really enjoyed my time at Station 4. I have wanted to visit a station in this newsgroup for some time and was so excited when they confirmed. I was really impressed with the sense of teamwork at Station 4. Everyone seemed excited and genuinely wanted to do his or her best work. My favorite conversation was with the news director. She was very dynamic and clearly passionate about the industry. She was also very nurturing over her reporters, which I found to be very refreshing. She really nailed it down in my head that truly people need to start thinking about what it means to work in broadcast in 2015. With audiences moving online you can’t expect to share information with them if digital is a secondary or after thought.

On the other hand, the reporters have a lot on their plates and it’s difficult to complete so many tasks — while never straying from your journalistic integrity — in one day. The reporters shared a lot of insight on being real with yourself and understanding you can’t do everything.

**Week 13, April 13 – April 17**

Activity overview:
- Covered changing boundaries for Columbia Public Schools for five and six o’clock newscasts
- Covered school board vote and subsequent reaction from parents on approved boundaries for nine and 10 o’clock newscasts
- Spent several hours researching stations, updating resume and cover letter and applying for jobs
- Spoke with news director from KWQC in Davenport, Iowa about open reporting position
- Reviewed stories with representative from the Gannett Company

Reporting reflection: I decided to focus on being more decisive during my reporting this week. This came as a byproduct of last week’s writing block. I did this by utilizing an approach one of the reporters I interviewed for the research portion uses. I selected all of my sound bites first and wrote to connect
My research asks about generating sources and story ideas and I have to say, I was shocked how many ideas came from sitting in on one school board meeting. During the meeting, the board honored a grocery store manager who hires special needs students from Rock Bridge to work at his store. I am interested in doing a story on that.

I’ve been trying to experiment with my writing and be more creative with my phrasing. Randy liked a line I used that included “backhoes to backpacks” when the video showed the dirt that would later be Columbia’s newest elementary school. I should note — I am still having issues with wallpaper video.

For my story this week, keeping with the spirit of this project, I made the extra effort to get real people and not reply on the PIO. I gave myself a set block of time and walked around an effected neighborhood until I found a mom who would go on camera. While I still included the PIO in my story.

This week I met with the Vice President of recruiting for Gannett Broadcasting. She emphasized that while my on-air presence is strong, my storytelling needs to be stronger. She gave me feedback on more humanized stories, which brought me right back to my project and my search for strategies for including more non-official sources in newscasts.

Social reflection: I experimented with a few social routines this week. I did my first video tease, and while I wasn’t a huge fan of it, I wanted to try it out and not waste time shooting a bunch of takes.

I live tweeted the education meeting, which made me realize how little I know about the best practices for doing so. I’d like to look up some articles about how to go about doing this most successfully.

At the end of the day, I posted my story to my professional account. It didn’t see a lot of traffic, but I am enjoying getting in the habit of putting my work on there. My conversation with Joy this week has sparked my interest in personal v. professional accounts. I’m curious if there is any research that speaks to the best practices for what goes where.

Research: NA


**Week 14, April 20 – April 24**
Activity overview:
• Localized Boston Marathon by tracking down local runner and compiling package using user generated content for five and six o’clock newscasts
• Completed station visits with two days of observation and interviews at Station 5

Reporting reflection: The package I put together this week is easily one of my most favorites I’ve done for KOMU. I got great feedback in the post show meeting and from the family I focused my story around. She wrote me, “Oh wow!! It was so great -- you did an awesome job!! Hannah will be super exited to be included! Thanks for sharing our story!”

Social reflection: I’m really excited about my how I used user generated content this week. My entire package was made up of photo and video a viewer I found over Facebook shared with me. Before the story aired, I posted the raw video to Facebook. I learned throughout the semester that the Facebook algorithms likes raw video and that web teams are encouraging reporters to collect extra video to be shared over social media.

At the last check the post had a 16,000 reach and the video was viewed 8k times. There are nearly 300 engagements on Facebook, which stemmed additional content to be shared on post.

Before the story aired, I did feel some hesitation towards putting the story on Twitter. Other reporters I talked to shared similar sentiment that there is a risk in tipping off other stations on what you’re working on. I considered several of these conversations and decided to keep it off Twitter until he show because it was not breaking or a matter of immediate public concern. I don’t know if I would have considered this before I started to be more mindful of my social activity.

Research: I really enjoyed my visit to Station 5. It was a young crew all of whom I thought were very hard working and journalistically sound. I thought the social media manager gave some great insight. I’m really looking forward to reading the book she suggested called “Contagious.” It’s about why things go viral and, more simply, what gets people to engage with content.

I believe I have reached saturation at this point. I felt I heard a lot of repeated information during this visit and really got a sense of the themes I am going to write to in the final mark up of this project. I’ve written up a bit of reflection on all of the visits:

Station 1: I am thankful to have Station 1 in the report. They are the lowest of the market rankings, which I think provides a nice contrast to the larger market stations. The team hear is compromised of a lot of young journalists I think are eager to try new things and shake things up. I was particularly impressed with the news mangers willingness to support the team. There was definitely a team effort atmosphere here.
Station 2: Of all the stations, I think I absorbed the most valuable information at Station 2. The news team gave me a lot of freedom to walk around and talk to people. I was thrilled with the specificity of the participants’ answers as well as their willingness to let me sit back and observe.

Station 3: I think I had my most valuable reporter shadow at Station 3. This reporter spoke very candidly and allowed me to truly immerse myself in his day. He also is highly experienced with social media and with the market. He’s been reporting for them for decades and has seen a lot of the ebb and flow of the business over the years.

Station 4: When I reached Station 4, I felt I was finally ready to look at some broader themes. I noticed my questions shifted a bit and that I was more trying to see the bigger picture than learn about specific practices.

Station 5: I reached saturation during my visit to Station 5. I really enjoyed my time here though. They have a young, excited news team who really strive to do good journalism. I felt very welcome and appreciated, again, the willingness to let me immerse myself in the newsroom and its culture.

Throughout the transcription process I identified several key themes that I think are important for both understanding the current practices of television news reporters working in a hybrid industry bridging television and digital as well as understanding the expectations of managers and larger trends in the industry.


Week 15, April 27 – May 1
Activity overview:
• Covered IBM hiring numbers following below required rate for state assistance through documents obtained from the DED
• Met with committee chair to critique recent stories and schedule defense
• Spoke with corporate rep from Schnucks about potential story
• Confirmed and did preliminary interview with source for Tiny House story

Reporting reflection: The most noteworthy part of this shift was the quick turn the story took when I finally secured the documents I’d been working on getting throughout the day. The story came as a result of an AP story that came down on the wire that the assignment editor wanted to advance. I pitched several stories including efforts to help Nepal, which was trending on both Facebook and Twitter that morning. I also pitched an idea I saw came in to the KOMU’s Facebook messages. Our content manager wanted this one though, which I saw no problem with.

I reached an official source from IBM early in the day. He gave robotic, vague answers to my questions and was only available over the phone. At 4:15, however, the DED forwarded documents disproving IBM’s comments. I learned two things quickly: to be flexible with scripting and cautious when working with official sources.
Another strange instant happened with sourcing when I stopped for lunch. The cashier saw my notes and turned out to be a former employee at IBM. It reminded me how often the everyday people directly involved or impacted in the story are in close proximity to the reporting. He did not wish to go on camera, but the meeting did help me brainstorm ways the story could be humanized in a subsequent story.

Social reflection: I posted to story to Facebook around 10pm a few minutes before I knew my recut was running. The story did well on Facebook. It received much more traffic than I expected. The story has been around the news for several years impacted a lot of people locally so I should have expected it to generate traffic. I am interested in doing a follow up story and think pursuing the comments would be a good place to look for nonofficial stakeholders.

Research: I am most excited about the spreadsheet I managed to put together this week. I think it’ll make writing up the analysis portion of the project much easier. I’ve really buckled down on transcribing interviews, but it has become increasingly clear these are going to take a lot of time to verbatim.

Notes: I am excited about the progress I am making on a few enterprises. They’ve been slow coming, but I think the ones I have slated now will make good pieces. The student I met about building the tiny house is very passionate about a lot of issues that are timely and newsworthy. I could tell in our meeting he is a bit hesitant about being on camera, but I hope that through building a relationship we can work through any nerves he may have.


Week 16, May 4 – May 8

Activity Overview:

• Covered Columbia city council reviewing changes to the city code to make it more gender neutral
• Met with news director of KCRG to discuss digital reporting position open at his station
• Tracked down CCC for HFR story on aging infrastructure in Missouri, which will be part of Town Square special airing next week
• Shot interview for Roads story with survey respondent

Reporting reflection: I am excited about being back on a Town Square project, although this one is already playing out differently than the others. For each Town Square special, the team posts a survey asking viewers to weigh in on an issue. They are also given the opportunity to leave contact information. The reporter then contacts everyone who leaves their information and attempts to identify themes within the community. This time around only one person left contact information so I had to go and find compelling characters on my own.
To do this, I went to the local truck stop and began talking to truck drivers. I was fortunate enough to meet Kevin Quigley, a veteran truck driver with a big personality and tiny dog whom he named mermaid. I felt Kevin gave a story about cement a lot of life. It helped humanize the story.

Social reflection:
After I completed my interviews I took several screenshots from my video — a suggestion from my station visits — and posted a small gallery teasing to next week’s broadcast story. It did not see a lot of traffic, but then again, I don’t have a lot of followers on my page.

Research: A bulk of my time this week was spent transcribing interviews. They are long, but very informative.

Notes: The news director at KCRG and I discussed what he is looking for in his reporters and much of his description matched what I have learned over the course of this semester as well as the philosophy I’ve developed for reporting from this project.


Week 17, May 11 – May 15
Activity overview:
• Covered proposed Clean Line power line in northern Boone County and one farmer’s perspective on the construction
• Wrote, shot (additional material) and edited Roads piece to air Thursday
• Collected archived photographs from the Missouri State Archives for social posting
• Fronted story for Town Square special
• Celebrated with other graduates and my family at School of Journalism graduation ceremony

Reporting reflection: Wow. I can’t believe this week marked my last scheduled reporting shift at KOMU.

Monday’s shift raised some challenges. The content manager assigned me to cover the president of an controversial energy company coming to the area to meet with stakeholders; however, we did not realize at the time we would only have access to supporters. Throughout the day I personally felt the company and its supporters were trying to sway the story in their favor. I did my best to keep an unbiased eye.

When I got back to the station though Randy, my Tiger Chair, started asking me questions about the controversial elements and realized I had no idea what he was talking about. This is a common obstacle at KOMU, and I imagine elsewhere, because I wasn’t
well versed in the previous reporting of this issue. While my package script was one-sided, we were able to frame a solid anchor lead and tag to ensure both side of the issue were represented.

I think the strongest element in my package was my shooting. I received good feedback from the other managing editors about my b-roll. I was particularly excited about incorporating moving video I shot from the farmer’s ATV. It started the package in a way I think brought the viewer in. I also used a clip of this video on my professional Facebook page as a web extra. I am trying to do my best to identify situations in which I can collect special elements to be used on the web.

Social reflection: While I was excited about my video clip, the highlight of this week came from a very successful posting to Facebook. About ten minutes before the Roads story aired, I posted a gallery of photographs I found at the Missouri State archives. I used several of them in the broadcasted version, but posted the whole collection to the Facebook page before the newscast. The post did great and saw a huge amount of engagement.

Annie wrote to me in an email:
“It’s getting very good FB traffic - perfect content for FB. Thanks for putting that together. It’s awesome and readers seem to really appreciate the blast from the past.”
I’ve learned this semester how to think for digital and for social. I don’t think it would have crossed my mind to put together a gallery teasing to the newscast before starting this project. I’ve learned that audiences want different content depending on which platform they are using. I’ve also learned that whether we like it or not, audiences aren’t always going to do to the broadcast. I did, however, put a link to the video piece within the post to allow users the chance to find more if they want it.

I’ve also become better versed in how to talk about analytics. I know the post did well because of my earlier conversations about baselines for KOMU and by knowing how to find the analytics for my post. The last numbers I saw showed a 50,000 person reach, nearly 700 shares and more than 250 shares. I am thrilled to see these kind of numbers.

Research: I am still transcribing the interviews I conducted.

Notes: I am really pleased with my roads story. I feel it is a good representation of what I’ve learned over the last year and was reported well across platforms.

Chapter Three

What I learned

I experienced what I would describe as significant ups and downs throughout the entirety of this project; however, I feel the turbulent path made me a better student and a better journalist.

The conversations I had during the research portion of this project were invaluable. I remain blown away by how accommodating, open and talented so many of the professionals are with whom I met. While these individuals remained nameless in the report, I hope they know how thankful I am for their time.

What my research comes down to is relatively simple. The broadcast journalist of today doesn’t fit the same description he or she may have been several years ago. It almost seems silly now to think anyone would. News companies are fighting to stay relevant and they are doing so by revving up digital and mobile projects. As more and more people are turning to digital and mobile platforms to consume their news, today’s journalists must be ready to meet them there in order to continue contributing to an informed society.

I did learn that there isn’t a blanket strategy for television reporters navigating cross-platform reporting. Journalists are people. They are nuanced, have personalities and preferences — just like their audiences, and just like the platforms they use. With that in mind, the strategy I learned is to create content that is different and suitable for specific platforms and then tailor it in a way that makes it shareable. Sharable content reaches wider audiences, which builds branding and ultimately can help lead to fiscal success.
There are countless ways to build a digital toolkit as a broadcast news reporter. This is where continuous education, training and experimentation come in. My observations lead me to believe that news managers who recognize personal preferences and support their reporters trying new things are likely going to see happier and more successful news teams.

The other half of this project consisted of doing my own reporting and experimenting with digital tools. I am very excited about where I have come in the last few months. I’ve noticed I keep an eye out for opportunities for extra content I can use across different platforms. This semester I experimented with posting uncut videos, extended interviews, photo galleries, video teases and other digital nuggets. I’ve noticed that the more I train my brain to look for these opportunities the easier they are to find. I hope to keep strengthening this skill and continue learning more about different platforms.

I feel my on-air presence and newsgathering have also improved. I remember on a hard day Randy told me that I just have to keep putting my reps in. I did that this semester. I am proud of the body of work I included with this project. Some days I think about what this experience would have been like interning for a network shop or going abroad, but this project is truly became reflection of what I came to Missouri to do: become a local television journalist.

I am so thankful to have had the opportunity to propose and execute this project.
Chapter Four

Physical Evidence

Throughout my time reporting at KOMU, I kept copies of my web stories and social posts, as well as copies of my aired packages. The video clips can be found in the multimedia folder attached to this project.

The following shows copies of the web stories and some of the social posts I crafted as physical evidence for the completion of this project. Throughout the semester, I experimented with different types of social engagement including video teases on Twitter, web extras embedded in the content management system (CMS), photo galleries and hyperlinks. I enjoyed having the opportunity to experiment with social media on both my own platforms, as well as on KOMU accounts.
Columbia Parks and Rec hosts "lock-in" for teen girls

COLUMBIA - Girls were "locked-in" Friday night for Columbia Parks and Recreation’s winter overnight program.

From 8:30 p.m. Friday until 8:30 a.m. Saturday morning, volunteers and teens played games, enjoyed homemade pizzas and had the chance to talk about the issues most important to them.

Park and Recreation lock-ins are open to teens 11 to 15-years-old and held in January, April, July and October.

Recreation leader Mary Dewey said the overnight programs bring out different sides of the teens, really allowing them to be themselves. Dewey said the lock-ins are a safe space for the attendees to talk about their opinions, concerns and hopes for the future. She said it can be particularly helpful for those who are more shy.

"If they start talking to us or other staff members they’re not bottling all that inside," she said. "It’s open. They feel comfortable."

About a dozen girls attended Friday’s event. The girls all agreed it’s easier to open up when you’re staying up all night together.

"When you’re with them all night you feel like you got to know them better," Sam Christian, 12, said.

Parks and Rec hosted an overnight for boys Jan. 16. The program at the Armory Sports Center cost attendees $5.
Week 1 social examples

MT @leeannedenyer "It's easier to open up" when you're up all night together. Girls all smiles at "lock-in"

Judging by giggling, yelling and chatter... I think it's fair to say ice is melted after ice breaker game @KOMUnews
Governor outlines proposed funding plan for new veterans' home

JEFFERSON CITY - Gov. Jay Nixon said Monday he wants more veterans off waiting lists and into Missouri Veterans' Homes across the state.

"For every veteran receiving quality medical care and services at one of our veterans' homes, there's a veteran who is on the waiting list because there's not enough space," Nixon said.

There are currently 1,973 veterans waiting to move into one of the seven existing full-time care facilities in Missouri. At the homes, eligible retired and disabled veterans have access to skilled nursing care, a range of therapies and the chance to experience the camaraderie of living among veterans like themselves. The homes also have special wings reserved for veterans suffering from dementia.

In Nixon's speech to the Missouri Association of Veterans Organizations in Jefferson City Monday afternoon, Nixon stressed that renovations to the existing homes and financing the construction of an additional home would be the best way to spend some of the funds obtained from a bond issuance for new construction.

He said long-term projects like these lend themselves to bond financing because of low interest rates and a go-ahead for construction from the legislature.

"It's kind of like buying a house," he said. "It's sometimes more cost effective to people to do that over a period of time. I think that these bond issues happen not that often and when you get in a situation to do it. I think it's important to line up what your priorities are."

He said, as more Vietnam veterans are retiring, this is the time to move forward with additional veterans housing.

"We just need to get that waiting list down," he said.

Nixon proposed using funds from issued bonds to complete $14.5 million in repair and renovations to the existing veterans homes. He gave specific examples of some of the work needed.

- In Cape Girardeau, renovation of nurses' stations, restrooms and resident kitchens.
- In Mexico, replacing first floor flooring and constructing bariatric showers on the first and third floors.
- In St. James, replacing fire alarm and nurse call stations, renovating the main kitchen and building an addition to the solarium.
- In St. Louis, renovating the entrance and lobby areas.

In Columbia, the Commander of VFW Post #280, Don Briggs, said state funding for veterans homes has been a "sore subject" for the VFW over the last few years.

"At one time, Missouri had the best veterans' program in the nation," he said. "Funding has slowly but surely been cut back. We blame a lot of this on the state. There was federal funding available, but somewhere down the line it got transferred to the General Revenue fund."

Briggs said that veterans advocates are constantly having to pesters lawmakers for funding to keep the current homes and cemeteries functioning properly. He said an additional home is an absolute must for Missouri veterans.

"All of the homes are full," he said.

Briggs said that the camaraderie experienced by older veterans living together in the homes exceed those because they're able to relate to one and other.

"You've watched your friends get wounded. You've watched your friends get killed. You darn near got killed yourself," he said. "You're going to be an entirely different person when you come back."

Nixon did not announce where the new facility would be constructed, but spoke firmly about the need for its construction. Nixon estimated it would cost around $45 million to construct a new home.
TARGET 8: Child pornography investigators face uncertain future

Posted: Jan 29, 2015 6:38 PM by Lee Anne Denyer, KOMU 8 Reporter
Updated: Jan 30, 2015 11:13 AM

BOONE COUNTY - From a small office at the Boone County Sheriff's Department, investigators search, sometimes file by file, for sexually graphic images of children. Investigators say this work is an integral part of Boone County Cyber Crimes Task Force investigations.

Detective Tracy Perkins heads the group of three full-time investigators and is a part-time forensic examiner. The unit completes a variety of tasks regarding crimes on the Internet; however, the main goal is to protect children and identify the possession and distribution of child pornography.

"Every time that a person looks at those images on their phone or their computer, they are re-abusing that child," Perkins said.

Despite a rise in arrests across the state, the $1.5 million grant that has historically funded the Boone County group, and the 15 other statewide cyber crimes task forces, was not made available for the 2015 fiscal year. Without it, investigators said the future of their work is unclear.

"We're on the chopping block, I really don't know our fate," Perkins said.

She said Boone County Sheriff Dwayne Carey has redistributed other funds to hold them over during the interim, but additional solutions will need to be found in order for the task force to continue its work.

"I know the sheriff believes in what we do. And so does a lot of the community and the public," she said. "But money is money and I don't know, it's kind of a huge question mark."

From June 2013 until June 2014, reports show the Boone County Task Force alone arrested 30 individuals for cyber crimes. The data shows possession of child pornography was the most common offense.

One arrest Perkins said impacted her greatly was the investigation into Columbia resident, Charles DeCarr. In Dec. 2014, DeCarr pleaded guilty to statutory sodomy, possession and promotion of child pornography and sexual exploitation of a minor.
The case dates back to 2012, when an agent with the FBI notified Perkins he believed an email account in Boone County contained child pornography. Within several hours, the Cyber Crimes Task Force executed a search warrant of the home, seizing computers and other media.

During the investigation, Perkins estimated she saw at least 80 sexually graphic photographs of his children. The investigation revealed the photos had not only circulated throughout the United States, but had traveled as far as Sweden.

The two children, ages 2 and 5 at the time, were adopted, and Perkins said they are now “happy” and in a “safe home.”

Regional task forces, like Boone County’s, often work in tandem with national organizations like the FBI, as well as the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children. The Boone County Task Force also works with in conjunction with state agency, the Missouri Internet Crimes Against Children (ICAC) to track and investigate Internet crimes against children.

At the St. Charles County Police Department, Lieutenant Chris Mateja heads the MO ICAC. Mateja said MO ICAC provides supplementary funding to help purchase equipment, finance training and update software for the affiliated agencies around Missouri.

“Our main goal is to rescue that child from that environment, pull them out of that situation so they’re not abused any further.”

To ensure this happens, Mateja explained that investigators must undergo extensive and continuous training to keep up with changing technology.

“We can learn a certain technique or obtain a piece of software and in months it’s outdated and something else has come along,” he said.

Routine training also keep cyber investigators aware of new applications attracting predators, new equipment capabilities, and trends in the field.

“In the last year and a half, we’ve been seeing a lot of people who have been caught once before and they’ve done time in prison or been on probation and now we’re catching them again,” Mateja said. “Sometimes we’re even catching them before we submit their case to a prosecutor.”

He said the computer forensic software required monthly and annual maintenance fees as well, making the niche industry a costly one to fund. Financial strain led to the laying off of two MO ICAC investigators earlier this year.

Mateja said his team is already backlogged with work and understaffed. He said the disintegration of regional task forces will back up detectives even further, as well as provide a less efficient point of contact for state and federal investigators.

KCMU 8 News reached out to the Governor’s office about the decision to restrict the funding for cyber crimes task forces around the state. Spokesperson Scott Holste said:
"The budget passed by the General Assembly for the 2015 fiscal year was very much out of balance and there is simply not enough money coming into the state treasury to pay for all of the things in the legislature’s budget. The Governor has a responsibility to keep the budget in balance, and that often requires tough choices and spending restrictions to prevent the growth of government beyond its means. As he has done since the beginning of his first term, the Governor will continue to carry out his fiscal duties to ensure that Missouri’s budget is balanced and fiscally responsible."

The Cyber Crimes Task Forces is just one of 218 other entities that Governor Jay Nixon either vetoed or restricted funding for earlier this year.

"We’re going to have less people doing child exploitation work, less computer forensic examiners to pull data, which is going to create a backlog," Mateja said.

He estimated without the help of regional task forces it will take MO ICAC detectives months, or even more than a year, to pull data for investigations. Mateja said this will put a strain on other types of investigations, like burglaries and homicides, that have evidence on digital devices.

Mateja said he is also concerned about financing public presentations throughout the state. Statewide, investigators gave nearly 40,000 presentations last year covering new trends in cyber crime and teaching parents about red flags for inappropriate content and contact online.

At a presentation in January, Perkins suggested parents establish rules with their children about their device usage and said they should be sure not only know what types of applications are on the device, but also how they are being used. For more information about Perkins’ tips for parents, view the video below.

"Kids younger and younger are getting cell phones and technology into their possession and they're constantly being exposed 24/7 to electronic communication," Perkins said. "If they're unsupervised, have no guidance or rules on what we should and shouldn't do, then it's going to continue on."
Perkins said under the Child Privacy Protection Act, websites and mobile phone applications cannot collect personal information for children under 13 years old. Some mobile applications, like social networking messaging application Kik, require users to be 17-years-old to download and use it. Its website said this is because of "Frequent/Intense Mature/Suggestive Themes and unrestricted Web Access."

Perkins said, however, there is nothing restricting minors from simply entering a fake birth year and moving forward with using the application. This leads to problems in profile legitimacy both for the user and the people he or she may be interacting with.

Perkins said the Cyber Crimes Task Force will continue work as planned through May, but that she is unsure what will happen after that point. Despite the emotionally taxing nature of the job, Perkins, a mother of two, said she can't imagine doing anything else.

At the Missouri ICAC office, Mateja said he wants a more concrete answer from state leaders.

"Really, we'd just like to hear from the governor. We've contacted his office, written letters and everything else, but we don't hear anything," Mateja said.

He said he'd like the opportunity to sit down with Nixon to talk about strategies for obtaining funding.

It is still possible that Nixon could still release the funds, but the task forces said finding other solutions is vital.

The timeline below shows nine investigations conducted by the Boone County Sheriff's Department Cyber Crimes Task Force in the past year.

January 24, 2014

Man sentenced to prison

BOONE COUNTY SHERIFF’S DEPARTMENT
CYBER CRIMES TASK FORCE
201 S. Highland, Columbia, MO 65201

Public Information Officer: Kristi Brown
855-766-1398

Media Release

Subject: Man Sentenced to Life in Prison

Location: Columbia, Missouri
Case Number: 2012-5633

Details:

On Friday, January 24, 2014, 45 year old Charles D. DiCar
due to

2014
Week 2 social examples

TARGET 8: The team of investigators who track child pornography cases faces an uncertain future. The Boone County Cyber Crimes Task Force relies on state grants to fund its force, but those funds were not made available this year. Tonight on KOMU 8 News at 10, we take a look at what goes into a cyber crime investigation and what the county plans to do to keep the force active.
Drivers cited, fined for parking in priority snow routes

COLUMBIA - Some Columbia residents awoke to not just white on their cars Monday morning, but red, orange and yellow.

Columbia Department of Public Works issued dozens of the brightly-colored citations Sunday night and into Monday afternoon to cars parked in priority snow routes. City ordinance mandates that parked cars on the high traffic streets must be moved when more than 2 inches of snow falls.

KOMU 8 Weathercaster Kanton Gewecke said Columbia had reached 4 inches of snow by mid-day Monday. He estimated Columbia likely passed the 2-inch mark before midnight Sunday.

East campus resident Lucy Mulvihill said her roommate broke the news she’d received a ticket. She said she parked her car outside her home on South William Street before the snow started falling Sunday.

“I had no idea,” she said. “I knew it was going to snow. I wouldn’t have parked here if I’d known I was going to get a huge ticket.”

The snow priority routes are marked with signs, but Columbia Public Works spokesperson Steve Sapp said two issues lead to confusion: high-turnover of tenants and tenants not knowing where to move cars to once the snow starts falling.

“A lot of people ask us, ‘what do we do with our vehicles?’,” Sapp said. “I don’t know that I have an answer for everyone individually, but it’s trying to work with neighbors and others to try and find spaces in drive ways and parking lots.”

Sapp said he understands the frustration felt by residents caught off guard, but the priority routes have proven too helpful to crews for him to foresee any changes to the law. Sapp said Public Works used social media to get the word out, not only about the parking rules, but also other snow related concerns.
Columbia Missouri Public Works

Snow - update at 9:00 pm - Snow Routes - Enforcement

About an inch on the ground now, snowing moderately.

We are getting closer to two (2) inches of snow and expect to get there within the next hour or so. We will begin enforcement of citations and towing on priority routes when we reach two (2) inches of snow. Total snow accumulations of 4-6+ forecast for Columbia.

Please move vehicles from priority routes to avoid citation and towing. We appreciate your help!

Like · Comment · Share

40 people like this.

19 shares

Ann Fitzpatrick: when are you going to plow neighborhood roads so that people can get out
Like · Reply · 10 hrs

2 Replies · 4 hrs

Sarah Grim: I have about 5 - 6 inches in SW Columbia and it is still snowing.
Like · Reply · 6 hrs

Mulvihill said, "I'm really annoyed, kind of angry. I don't know. I'm just really irritated. I don't know where they expect me to go."

Sapp said crews issued 74 citations from 10 p.m. Sunday night into Monday morning. The storm was the first in which Public Works issued citations in 2015. Crews towed only 12 of the ticketed vehicles.

Columbia has about 200 miles of priority snow routes. Sapp said the faster the priority routes are treated the faster crews can move into residential neighborhoods.

"We don't like to put citations on cars. We don't like to tow cars if we don't have to, but the simple fact of the matter is we know it improves our efficiency."

The citation is for $100. Drivers whose vehicles are towed are subject to additional charges for towing and storage.
William Woods University students combat county hunger

FULTON - William Woods University students kicked off their CourtWarming Tuesday evening with a food drive and movie night.

CourtWarming is a university tradition that organizers said helps bring the campus together. Organizers gave the 2015 CourtWarming a 'Hunger Games' theme, after the popular movie franchise.

To support the 'Hunger Games' theme, students donated canned goods and non-perishable food items before watching the first film of the movie trilogy.

"We liked to use the opportunity to raise awareness about hunger in our community," Stephanie Behlmann, with the WWU Student Alumni Council, said. "I think its very eye-opening, especially for the students who aren't originally from Fulton. We have such a community feel at this university anyway, it's really great whenever we get the chance to volunteer out in Fulton."

Mark Webb, an intern at SERVE and its local food bank, spoke to the around 70 students who attended. He shared how hunger impacts hundreds of families in Callaway County and around mid-Missouri. Webb said each month 400 families use SERVE services.

"SERVE seems to be one of the bigger agencies in Fulton and the Callaway County area just because we serve such a large clientele over multiple areas," he said. "It's not just a food pantry. It's not just a transportation service. It's all of the above."

He said SERVE also partners with other agencies to serve the community even further.

Behlmann said Tuesday's event was the first of several activities planned throughout the week.

"William Woods doesn't exactly have a football team so CourtWarming is what we do to bring the school together and support our basketball players," Behlmann said.

The main event of CourtWarming is a pep rally at the basketball game Friday.
Week 5 social examples

Some Columbia residents awoke today to citations from the city of Columbia for parking in what the city calls 'snow priority routes'. Did you receive a ticket? How do you feel about the ordinance?

Drivers cited, fined for parking in priority snow routes
KOMU.com | Columbia, MO
http://www.komu.com

Columbia Public Works crews issued citations Monday to drivers with cars parked in priority snow routes. The fine is $100.

20,696 people reached

Secley Kennedy It's about time they start giving tickets while the city is trying to clean our streets and keep everyone safe. I think they should start towing vehicles. It's very hard for the plows to get down the streets as it is in this weather let alone trying not to hit a vehicle.
Like · Reply · £35 · 16 February at 15:13

Lori Robinett KOMU-TV - how about a follow up article on what landlords do to provide off-street parking for renters who live along these routes?
Like · Reply · £31 · 16 February at 15:36

Tod Meyer Is a landlord to provide a certain number of parking spots per tenant?
Like · 16 February at 16:36

Jared Walker I don't believe it's the landlord's obligation to offer parking of any kind, unless agreed upon before the lease is signed. I know there are adds that specifically advertise "off street parking." It is a luxury in Columbia that tenants pay dearly for in their rent. Residents should look elsewhere, if they need off-street parking or any parking if that's the case.
Like · £6 · 16 February at 17:04

Michael Rogers Parking is a perk you pay for, as Jared said. They are not required to provide it.
Like · £3 · 16 February at 17:13
MT @leeannedeny Columbia Public Works gave tickets overnight, this morning to cars parked on streets w/ this sign:

MT @leeannedeny Photographer Justin is warming up! We have more on #CoMoSnow coming up on KOMU 8 News @ 6.
Day one over in the trial against an accused hit man

COLUMBIA - The trial against the man authorities believe was hired to shoot and kill a Columbia man's lover began Monday morning.

In January 2015, a jury found James Thompson guilty of first-degree murder for hiring his childhood friend Casey Lewis to kill his lover, Brian Daniels.

During opening statements, the prosecution said Thompson had an elaborate plan to kill Daniels and he enlisted the help of Lewis to do so. The defense countered, saying Thompson was a "con artist" and acted alone in killing Daniels. The defense played the 911 call Thompson made after Daniel's death.

Jury selection began just after 9 a.m. Monday and wrapped up around 2:30 p.m. Attorneys selected 15 jurors in total, including three alternates to serve during the trial.

More than 100 jurors were questioned. Judge Gary Oxenhandler began the selection by stating the importance of having qualified and unbiased jurors on the case. There was also discussion of the role media coverage has played in jurors' knowledge of the case and how it will influence them.

Judge Oxenhandler said he expects the trial to last until Friday.

[Editor's note: This story is being continually updated with the latest information from court.]
Prosecution calls witnesses in accused hit man's murder trial

COLUMBIA - Prosecutors continued calling witnesses Tuesday morning in the murder trial against accused hit man Casey Lewis. Authorities believe Lewis was hired to shoot and kill a Columbia man's lover.

In January 2015, a jury found James Thompson guilty of hiring Lewis to kill Brian Daniels.

The first witness prosecutors called to the stand Tuesday was medical examiner Dr. Carl Stacy. He testified the autopsy revealed Daniels died of homicide. Dr. Stacy also confirmed Daniels' body had severe burns which were the result of an unrelated instance. Dr. Stacy said that he is not able to pinpoint the exact time of death but said Daniels died of gunshot wound to the chest and the head. According to Dr. Stacy, patterns on the body suggested the gun was fired from about a half foot to two feet away.

The second witness of the morning was Kathleen Green, a firearms specialist with the Missouri State Highway Patrol. Green examined the bullet from Daniels' body but because a firearm wasn't recovered, she cannot say what type of gun was used. She spoke about the type of firearms that would eject a casing and the types that would not. This was a key part to the defense's opening statements Monday because no casings were found at the scene.

At about 9:30 Tuesday morning, Columbia Police Department Sargeant Robert Dochler took the stand. In April 2013, he was a detective with the domestic violence unit at the Columbia Police Department. He was shown several photos of both the interior and exterior of Daniels' home. During Dochler's questioning, the defense reiterated a high number of Egyptian, gold ornaments and figurines were found in Daniels' home. The prosecution said because of the cluttered nature in Daniels' home, it would be difficult to determine what was taken. The prosecution showed a picture of the alarm system among many photos.

During opening statements Monday, the prosecution said Thompson planned to kill Daniels with the help of Lewis, and the defense argued Thompson was a "con-artist", and acted alone.

Judge Gary Oxenhoadler said he expects the trail to last until Friday.

[Editor's note: This story is being continually being updated with the latest information available.]
Jury finds Casey Lewis guilty in murder-for-hire trial

COLUMBIA - Jurors reached a verdict in the Casey Lewis murder-for-hire trial Wednesday evening, declaring Lewis guilty of first-degree murder.

Jurors deliberated for more than 4 1/2 hours after closing arguments, coming to a decision just before 9 p.m. Judge Gary Oxenhander set Lewis' sentencing date for April 7, 2015. The date later got pushed to April 10. Lewis sat quietly and with little expression as Oxenhander read the verdict.

Jurors started deliberating late Wednesday afternoon during day three of the trial against accused hit man Casey Lewis. Authorities believe Lewis was hired to shoot and kill a Columbia man's lover. Police said James Thompson paid Lewis to kill Brian Daniels in April 2013.

Closing arguments in the case wrapped up around 3:45 Wednesday afternoon. In its closing argument, the state said Lewis is a cold-blooded killer without regard for human life. They said Lewis is a hit man who came from Oklahoma to kill Daniels and left afterward.

In the defense's closing arguments, attorney Justin Carver said James [Thompson] acted alone and not a single piece of physical evidence linked Lewis to Cimarron Drive. The defense said it [the case] boils down to "Glen said, James said" and Glenn said James isn't to be trusted.

Closing arguments began earlier Wednesday afternoon after defense attorneys called thirteen witnesses to the stand after lunch. Among those who testified for the defense were James Thompson's father and uncle. Six police officers who were on patrol on Cimarron Drive after the alleged homicide also took the stand. They testified they saw cars at the house but not specifically Lewis'. Defense attorneys also called a pawn shop owner Thompson sold items to.

Earlier, prosecutors rested their case after a day and a half of calling witnesses.

Glenn Anderson, a friend of Thompson who admitted to providing him a false alibi, took the stand Wednesday for the state. He was a key witness in the case.

Anderson discussed his relationship with Thompson, and went over some details of their friendship leading up to Daniels' death. During today's trial Anderson said Thompson told him directly that Thompson hired "a gangster" to kill Daniels for $10,000. Anderson also testified that Thompson told him that Casey Lewis shot Daniels three times.

When the defense cross-examined Anderson, Thompson's credibility was the focus of the questioning. The defense has reiterated throughout the first three days of trial Thompson acted alone. Anderson testified Thompson often gave his friends gifts, and picked up the bill at different venues. The week before Daniels died, Thompson paid to take several of his friends to go on vacation in Cancun, Mexico. The defense described Thompson as a liar and con-man.

Public Defender Justin Carver said, "His [Thompson's] word isn't worth a drop of spit."

After Anderson finished, several other members of the Columbia Police Department testified. A jail call between Thompson and his sister was played in court. Detective Joe Jackson said the call prompted authorities to arrest Lewis.
Prior to the trial, Anderson told police Thompson told him he paid Lewis to kill Daniels. Then he stated Thompson mentioned paying Lewis cash, giving him a .45-caliber handgun and a car for committing the murder. Anderson then went on to say Lewis shot Daniels three times and preformed a ritual over the body. Anderson stated Thompson and Lewis made the scene look as if someone had broken into the residence.

Tuesday, prosecutors called several witnesses, notably law enforcement and the medical examiner. They testified about how Daniels died and the condition of his home. Read more of Tuesday's testimony here.

Monday began with jury selection which lasted through early afternoon. Later Monday, during opening statements prosecutors argued Thompson had an elaborate plan to kill Daniels and he enlisted the help of Lewis to do so. The defense countered, saying Thompson was a "con artist" and acted alone in killing Daniels.

On January 16, 2015, Thompson was found guilty for hiring a hit man to kill Daniels. The Boone County jury convicted Thompson of first-degree murder.

In July 2013, officers arrested Lewis in connection with the murder of Daniels.

[Editor's note: This story has been continually updated with the latest information available. Lewis is pictured above in court with his attorneys Tuesday.]
Prosecutors "very pleased" with guilty verdict for hit man

COLUMBIA - A murder for hire case ended Wednesday night when a jury found an Oklahoma man guilty of murder.

Columbia man Brian Daniels died in the early morning hours of April 10, 2013. Investigators never recovered a murder weapon.

The jury spent four and half hours deliberating the defendant Casey Lewis’ fate. Lewis pleaded not guilty. Judge Gary Oxenhandler read the verdict shortly before 9 p.m. Wednesday.

KOMU 8 News spoke with prosecutors Andrea Hayes and Stephanie Morrell following the guilty verdict. Prosecutors said the multi-state investigation and large crime made this case a challenging one.

“It was a complex story,” Morrell said. “We had to tie it all and nail it in a way that the jury understood and that we could show them without a reasonable doubt that they were guilty.”

Hayes said this case included an “overwhelming amount of circumstantial evidence.” She said both the prosecution and the Daniels family are “very pleased.”

Daniels’ family traveled to Columbia for both the Lewis and Thompson trials.

“They had to endure seeing photos of Brian, autopsy photos, crime scene photos;” Hayes said. “They had to endure hearing people saying negative things about Brian, things that weren’t true about Brian and they had to sit quietly and watch and hope that the process worked.”

Throughout the three-day proceedings, the prosecution described the victim Brian Daniels as a schizophrenic who had been severely burned in a fire. The prosecution said because of this, Daniels had obtained a large sum of money in a settlement. They described him as “quite wealthy” at the time of his death.

Prosecutors said that large sum of money attracted another man named James Thompson. They said while defendant Casey Lewis had not met Daniels prior to the day of his death, Lewis became involved when Thompson hired him as a hit man.

A jury found James Thompson guilty of murder in January 2015. During those proceedings, Thompson said he was both a “caretaker” and “lover” to Daniels. Testimony in Lewis’ trial also included statements that Thompson said he and Daniels were in a domestic partnership. On the first day of the trial, the prosecution played a 911 call from Thompson to the Columbia Police Department in which he said he’d found his “partner” dead.

Throughout Lewis’ trial, defense attorneys Justin Carver and Erin Douglas reiterated “James acted alone” in the killing and reinforced that no witnesses could place Lewis at Daniels’ home and no physical evidence suggested so either.

Lewis wore a dark suit and thick black glasses throughout the trial. He wore his hair in a long braid and made only small facial expressions throughout the proceedings.

Oxenhandler set sentencing for April 7.
Week 6 social examples

Lee Anne Denyer @leannenedyer · Feb 25
Judge Oxenhandler set sentencing date for Lewis as 4/7/15. Lewis sat quietly and with little expression as judge read verdict.
@KOMUnews

Lee Anne Denyer @leannenedyer · Feb 25
Jury finds defendant Casey Lewis guilty of murder. @KOMUnews

Lee Anne Denyer @leannenedyer · Feb 25
Prosecutor says jury has reached verdict. @KOMUnews

Lee Anne Denyer @leannenedyer · Feb 25
Defense maintains James Thompson acted alone in killing of Daniels. The prosecution says Lewis hit man and "cold blooded killer"
@KOMUnews

Lee Anne Denyer @leannenedyer · Feb 25
The prosecution and defense have finished closing arguments. Jury has left for deliberations in Casey Lewis murder trial. @KOMUnews

Lee Anne Denyer @leannenedyer · Feb 25
Defense rests their case. Closing arguments will take place after this recess. @KOMUnews
Lee Anne Denyer @leannedenyer · Feb 23
After 5 hours, jury selected for Casey Lewis murder trial. Judge asked 15 jurors to return at 3:10 to begin opening statements. @KOMUnews

Lee Anne Denyer @leannedenyer · Feb 23
Quick break. Prosecution stepped outside minutes ago to discuss jurors. Jurors told to take belongings as they left courtroom. @KOMUnews

Lee Anne Denyer @leannedenyer · Feb 23
I'm heading back into court. No phones. Will tweet more updates when we break. @KOMUnews

Lee Anne Denyer @leannedenyer · Feb 23
Alleged hit man Casey Lewis appeared in court with his defense this morning. Jury selection has been ongoing throughout morning. @KOMUnews

Lee Anne Denyer @leannedenyer · Feb 23
Police found Daniels dead in April 2013. Authorities believe his lover, now convicted, James Thompson hired Lewis to kill Daniels @KOMUnews

Lee Anne Denyer retweeted
KOMU 8 News @KOMUnews · Feb 23
Follow our reporting today from the trial of Casey Lewis, the man accused of killing Brian Daniels bit.ly/1w2SvGr
Boone County Fire evaluating responses after record year

Posted: Mar 2, 2015 2:45 PM by Lee Anne Denyer, KOMU 8 Reporter
Updated: Mar 3, 2015 3:07 PM

BOONE COUNTY - The Boone County Fire Protection District responded to a record number of calls in 2014. District officials said Monday, it’s time to reevaluate its operations to keep with the increased demand.

“As a volunteer agency we’ve got some stations that are running more calls than some paid departments run in a full year,” Battalion Chief Gale Blomenkamp said.

Because of the demand, Blomenkamp said the district is adjusting its agreements with surrounding cities in order to better serve Boone County residents.

On Friday, Boone County Fire Protection District Chief Scott Olsen shared with his board of directors and BCFPD personnel that Centralia Fire Station 2 would become the first responders for both EMS and fire calls within Centralia city limits. Centralia City Administrator Matt Harline said he was not surprised when he heard this. He said the Centralia Fire Department, a volunteer agency, has been working towards this for several years.

“I really don’t think this is going to cause any major concerns,” he said. “We couldn’t have done this ten years ago, we couldn’t have

Harline said the volunteer fire crews have the training and know-how to respond to both major medical, as well as fire calls, within the city.

Blomenkamp said this is an example of a way partnering jurisdictions can work with the Fire District to ease the number of calls being taken outside of Boone County.

“They’re paying us to respond to Boone County and when 20 percent of call volume is outside of legal jurisdiction we need to figure how to fix that.”

Blomenkamp said District officials are working with Columbia Fire and city of Columbia leaders to identify ways to also lessen the load on district volunteers.

Its contract runs through March. While no decisions have been reached Monday, Blomenkamp said he expects developments in the coming weeks.
Week 7 social examples

Lee Anne Denyer @leannedyer · Mar 7
Hello from Joplin from @kumlJm, @HannaBattah and me. We can’t wait to show everyone in mid-MO the new hospital here.

Lane Anne Denyer @leannedyer · Mar 7
Chaplain tells me this blue tile was in the entry way to the old chapel destroyed in 2011 tornado. @KOMUnews
**Mercy Joplin employees find closure in hospital’s opening**

Posted: Mar 9, 2015 8:44 PM by Lee Anne Denyer, KOMU 8 Reporter
Updated: Mar 9, 2015 11:05 PM

JOPLIN - Emergency Room Clinical Manager Libby Clark finally has the closure she needs.

After serving her community from the most makishift of conditions following the deadly and devastating May 2011 tornado, Clark celebrated the opening of the Mercy Joplin Hospital Saturday.

"I think it will help us lay the tornado to rest finally. It's just the beginning of a new chapter," she said. "Everything in Joplin is rebuilding, but the hospital was still this gaping hole and now that's open I feel like it'll be a shot in the arm this community needs."

Thousands of community members joined hospital employees Saturday to celebrate the hospital’s completion with an open house. Medical staff and Joplin residents reflected on the four-year rebuilding process as they walked through the nearly 900,000 square foot facility.

Like many of the current employees, Clark’s story with Mercy dates back years before the EF-5 tornado tore through the city. Clark organized triage in the parking lot of a Home Depot the night of May 22, 2011. She said she remembered seeing light passing through the battered building as the sun began to set that night.

“You could see the building standing there and you shouldn’t have been able to see that at that point. There should have been so much more between us,” she said. "That was the 'my life is going to be different' point."

Two days after the tornado hit, Mercy promised to keep all 2,200 employees in a job. Mercy President and CEO Lynn Britton said Saturday illustrated "a promise kept."

Clark said she remembers hearing "if you can hear my voice, you still have a job and we're going to rebuild" as she treated the injured.

"I remember that today, with him saying that this is a promise kept. That was beautiful," Clark said.

The $465 million medical center features not only the very latest in medical technology, but also safety features to ensure its safety if a tornado were ever to hit the area again. The windows alone can withstand 250 mph winds.

The hospital will begin taking patients March 22.
Citizen groups at odds over Columbia electric bond proposals

COLUMBIA - Columbia voters will decide in April if bond financing is the best option to pay for improvements to Columbia’s electric system.

Supporters and opponents of Propositions 1 and 2 spoke out Monday. If passed, Propositions 1 and 2 would provide millions in bonds to fund city utility projects.

Propositions 1 and 2 would increase utility bills six percent over five years. Without the bonds, the city would need to raise larger amounts of money in shorter time increments.

Mitch Richards is a spokesperson for Boone County for Liberty, a group of Columbia residents advocating against the city purchasing the bonds. He said the city’s changes to budget and finance plans in the past have created an atmosphere of distrust within the community. He said that distrust makes him hesitant to believe that "this is the only way to fund the electric improvements."

"It’s almost shady, I think, unfortunately, is the word we have to use," he said. "...We love and support our community as much as the folks on the 'yes' campaign. We just feel that voters should not be put in a position to pay more money for a city council and a city government that unfortunately hasn’t demonstrated the necessary trust to do that."

Richards said the group also supports an independent audit of the city of Columbia.

Supporters of the bond purchase said the bonds are a necessary part of keeping up with an expanding city and increasing cost of infrastructure. Tom Mendenhall is a committee member on the Foundation for Columbia’s future board, and said the bonds are needed to bring necessary upgrades to the city.

"Some of the infrastructure dates back almost 75 to 100 years and a lot of this is being brought up with the ongoing development downtown," Mendenhall said. "To bring our infrastructure needs up, we need to pass the bond issue for sewer and electric."

He said he believes bond issues are the best option for the city because it allows rates to increase gradually over time instead of suddenly.

"You’ve got to take care of your infrastructure needs or you’re just not taking care of business."

Columbia Water and Light compiled a list of projected project on its website. Projects are categorized as replacements and upgrades, transmission and substation projects, as well as modernization and expansion. In 2006, voters approved $80 million in bonds for electrical improvements.

Both Mendenhall and Richards encouraged Columbia residents to vote in the April election. Voting will be April 7.
Week 8 Social

Emergency Room Clinical Manager Libby Clark celebrated the opening of the new Mercy Joplin hospital earlier this week. Clark organized a triage unit following the devastating May 2011 tornado. In this interview clip, Clark shares the moment she saw the hospital as she treated patients from a Home Depot parking lot. Clark says the hospital's opening is bringing her the closure she's waited years for.

Like · Comment · Share · 9 March

Rona Navales, Megan Elbridge and 46 others like this.

Most Relevant

Write a comment...

Don Howard why does she rub her nose during interview?
Like · Reply · 9 March at 22:07

1 Reply

Natalie Oswald Allie Landreh if you haven't seen this yet, I thought you might enjoy relate to it. 😊
Like · Reply · 1 · 9 March at 23:18
High temperatures, gusting winds raise fire danger

Posted: Mar 16, 2015 2:10 PM by Lee Anne Denyer, KOMU 8 Reporter
Updated: Mar 16, 2015 9:02 PM

BOONE COUNTY - High winds and high temperatures brought an elevated fire danger to Boone County Monday afternoon. Under these conditions, fires not only start, but spread rapidly.

Boone County Fire Protection District Spokesperson Gale Blomenkamp said this time of year is the driest for mid-Missouri.

"Grasses are very dry right now, even though the ground is wet, the grass is very dry," he said. He said under these conditions fires can start easily from a flat tire sparking to a tossed cigarette.

Blomenkamp said Monday's conditions are normal for the Boone County area this time of year; Mid-Missouri's natural cover fire season lasts from late February into March and April.

KOMU 8 Weathercaster Kenton Gewecke said that at noon in Boone County winds gusted at more than 25 miles per hour. He said the winds, coupled with high temperatures, low humidity and dead grass in the area, make for a dangerous combination when flames are present.

"Don't barbecue today," he said. "Not only for your sake, but for your neighbor's sake too because if a fire starts, it can spread rapidly," he said.

The Boone County Fire Protection District reminded residents that:

- Permits are required to burn within Columbia city limits.
- Check local forecasts before any open burning
- Have a water source nearby
- Call 911 immediately if fire grows larger than anticipated.

The Special Weather Statement for Boone County remains in effect from 1 p.m. until 7 p.m. Temperatures are expected to drop Tuesday.
Menu Courey case a catalyst for MU sexual assault reporting reform

COLUMBIA - University of Missouri Chancellor R. Bowen Loftin spoke Wednesday morning about the aftermath of the Sasha Menu Courey investigation and its impact on Title IX investigations. He took questions surrounding sexual assault reporting in an open-ended question and answer session initially organized as an opportunity to reflect on his first year as University chancellor.

His remarks came less than an hour before the Columbia Police Department announced it was closing the Sasha Menu Courey sexual assault case.

Menu Courey committed suicide in April 2012. Later investigations revealed the MU swimmer had reported in 2010 she had been sexually assaulted by several members of the university football team. Even though several university employees heard about the assault from Menu Courey, university administration officials were not made aware of the situation. This prompted a harsh critique of MU’s sexual reporting in an “Outside the Lines” report by ESPN, published in January 2014.

During Wednesday’s session, KOMU 8 News asked the chancellor directly how he thought the university played a role in helping the community start to find closure after Menu Coureys’ death.

“There are some many instances we can talk about here,” he said. “I think that, in terms of Sasha Menu Courey, that stimulated a great deal of thought over a short period of time to really understand how the university responds to both sexual assaults and to specific needs of our students”

Loftin cited several key changes, including the hiring of a full time Title IX administrator. Ellen Eardley will begin her positions as Title IX Administrator and Assistant Vice Provost April 20.

In addition to hiring Eardley, Loftin said university leaders have structurally changed the way students report and receive help following an instance of sexual violence. Eardley served in Washington, D.C. as an attorney and adjunct faculty member at American University Washington College of Law. Loftin said the university is fortunate to have a person of her caliber serving as Title IX administrator.
"We had the resources before, but accessing them was more dependent on the students' knowledge of where to go opposed to our having a pipeline for them," he said. "Now we have a single entry point for our students who need assistance. From that point they can be sent to the right places to get the most appropriate help they need."

Since the "Outside the Lines" article brought sexual assault reporting to the headlines, the University of Missouri has made significant changes. Loftin said in addition to hiring Eadley, the university will hire two more investigators.

Loftin said in addition to handling reported cases, university staff has increased its proactive education efforts to educate its student body.
Week 9 Social

Lee Anne Denyer
16 hrs

KOMU 8 Weathercaster Kenton Gewecke says temperatures in Columbia reached 80 degrees today! Those high temperatures paired with gusting winds and dead leaves though put fire crews on alert.

High temperatures, gusting winds raise fire danger | KOMU.com | Columbia, MO |

Fire officials reminded residents Monday to refrain from open burns when temperatures and winds are high.

KOMU.COM | BY LEE ANNE DENYER

77 people reached

Lee Anne Denyer @leeanndenyer · 21h

Fire District says Monday's gusting winds and high temperatures raised chances of brush fires in Boone Co @KOMUnews

View more photos and videos
Lee Anne Denyer
17 March

The contract between the city of Columbia and the Boone County Fire Protection District expires in a few weeks. My next story looks at the relationship between the Columbia Fire Department and the county fire crews. I'm riding along with Columbia Fire at Station 6 today.

120 people reached

Like · Comment · Share

Annamarie Hodgkinson, Cathy Kellogg Oregon, Pamela Gorski and 3 others like this.

Write a comment...

Lizzie Johnson You're on fire! (heh, puns).
Vote expected for Columbia school boundary changes

COLUMBIA - The Columbia Board of Education is expected to vote Monday night on new boundaries for its elementary schools in preparation for the opening of Columbia's newest elementary school, Beulah Ralph. It will be located in the southwest portion of Columbia and will open in August 2016.

“There’s nothing easy about this and we know we’re not going to make everyone happy,” Columbia Public Schools spokesperson Michelle Baumstark said of the need to change boundaries.

Columbia mother of two Julie Artemova said her daughter will be going to a Jefferson Middle school, unlike many of her current classmates, because of the new boundaries. While Artemova said she is content with the school, she feels for her daughter, who has already told her she will miss her classmates.

“A very small percentage of this subdivision will be going to Jeff. So that’s hard. Now you’re with a totally different group of kids,” she said.

Baumstark said that the boundary vote comes at a good time because students, and parents, will have more than a year to accustomate to their new schools.

“We have till 2016 before the school opens, so families will have a lot of time to get to know their new school building and the students they’ll be going to school with in their new building,” she said.

The Columbia Board of Education meeting begins at 6:30 p.m. Monday evening.
Parents express mixed emotions as school board approves boundaries

COLUMBIA - A Columbia mother stilled happy tears while another sat back in disbelief as the Columbia Board of Education approved updated attendance areas for its district Monday night.

The redistricting - and high emotion - came as Columbia Public Schools prepares to welcome Beaulah Ralph Elementary School students to Columbia's newest campus. The school is in the southern part of Columbia and is being built to accommodate for growing communities in the area.

"It's no secret that on the southside of town we've been addressing overcrowding in several of our schools," district spokesperson Michelle Baumstark said.

Beaulah Ralph Elementary is scheduled to open in August 2016. District officials said the new school's boundaries will impact families currently attending Mill Creek, Fairview, Russell Boulevard, Foxton Keeley, Rock Bridge elementary schools. Baumstark said the new school should help distribute students more equally across the schools.

The board debated a proposed amendment to the suggested boundary map in light of a suggestion made during the public comment portion of the discussion; however, the board denied the amendment. The mother whose comment sparked the discussion said her children will no longer be able to walk to school under the redesigned attendance areas. She did not wish to give her name but said she was disappointed in the decision.

Board of Education President James Whitt said the board is happy with the decision reached at Monday's meeting but understands the stress boundary changes can create for local families.

"We understand that," Whitt said. "But that's the part of our community that's growing. We're constantly adding students to our school system and because of that we're building new facilities to educate our kids. Whenever you do that, you have to change a school's attendance areas. It's going to impact families, and that's always tough when things don't work out like you thought they were going to work out."

The new attendance areas will also allow the district to stop use of 11 classroom trailers, seven from Mill Creek Elementary and four from Russell Boulevard Elementary.

In addition to approving the suggested attendance areas, the board also elected its newest president and vice president. Outgoing president Christine King will remain on the board, but Whitt has taken over as president. He said he looks forward to continuing the work the board has done so far and hopes to invest special energy in helping kids that are struggling.

"We know that we've got some tough issues we've got to tackle," he said. "We do a really good job of educating our kids, but we have some that we've really got to do a little extra for to make sure they're included."

Families impacted by the attendance area changes will receive information on the changes for 2016-2017 school year. For a map of the approved boundaries, click here.

The board will meet May 11 for its next regularly scheduled meeting.
Columbia parents learned today just how the district will be shuffling students for the 2016-2017 school year. The changes come as it prepares to open a new elementary school. I saw both high highs and low lows from parents as they heard the news.

Parents express mixed emotions as school board approves boundaries | KOMU.com | Columbia, MO |

The Columbia Board of Education approved proposed attendance area changes in preparation for opening of new elementary school.

KOMU.COM | BY LEE ANNE DENYER

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Lee Anne Denyer @leeanndenyer · Apr 13
Columbia Board of Ed will vote tonight on new boundaries for elementary schools. This will be site of newest school.

Lee Anne Denyer @leeanndenyer · Apr 13
Columbia Board of Ed meeting is underway. Board members to take oath of office next @KOMUnews

Lee Anne Denyer @leeanndenyer · Apr 13
Board members Christine King and @JShay have arrived at CPS. Sessions says it will be an "exciting night." @KOMUnews
Columbia mom laces up for 2015 Boston Marathon

BOSTON - A Columbia mom, and now Boston Marathon finisher, Heather Cox celebrated completing the historic race alongside family and friends Monday afternoon.

Cox ran the 119th marathon with fellow Columbia runners Haley Schwarz and Anne Sievers, and 30,000 others from around the world. Cox, Schwarz and Sievers are three of 11 runners listed as from Columbia running in this year's marathon.

The 2015 Marathon comes two years after Dzhokhar and Tamerlan Tsarnaev killed three people and wounded more than 230 by planting bombs at the race's finish line. Tamerlan Tsarnaev was killed by police and Dzhokhar was captured after a dramatic manhunt. Cox did not run in the 2013 race. Schwarz and Sievers did.
"Sievers and Haley Schwarz, they were here in 2013," Cox said. "Thankfully they finished prior the bombings, but they said they felt the crowd support was greater this year. I think maybe people are just really trying to come out and support the runners. Really, it was overwhelming."

Marathoners Anne Sievers, Pat Okker, Heather Cox and Haley Schwarz are pictured above.

Heather Cox's husband, Patrick Cox, described Monday morning as an emotional time for his wife, who has been running for most of her life. The marathon is one of the most challenging to qualify for in the country and for many runners, qualifying is a feat in itself. Later that day, Heather Cox told KOMU 8 News Sievers was the one who pushed her the hardest and helped make her eligible for Monday's race.

"I wanted to quit so badly," she said speaking about their training. "She wouldn't let me. I'm just so thankful to be here with her."
Heather Cox finished the race seven minutes faster than her personal goal, coming in at 3:33:13.

The Cox's 6-year-old daughter, Hannah, showed KOMU 8 News her version of history with mom taking first place.

"As far as she knows, yes I did," Heather Cox said. "That's the beauty of having a little one. You're always a winner to them."

While that award went to Caroline Rotich of Kenya, with a race time of 2:24:55, Cox's family still cheered her from mile one to mile 26.2.
Week 14 Social

Columbia runner Heather Cox finished her first Boston Marathon earlier today. Her husband Patrick shared this video of her making her way through the course.

The marathon lists 10 other marathoners as being from Columbia as well. Did you know a mid-Missourian who competed in today's historic run? Share your photos below and help us congratulate all the finishers!

Like · Comment · Share · 20 Apr

Colin Patrick, Scott Schaefer, Rona Navalos and 324 others like this.

12 shares

Lee Anne Denyer @leannedeny - Apr 23

A Columbia dad shared sweet video with me of him cheering on his wife at the #bostonmarathon Monday. It's here -> komu.com/news/columbia-…
IBM employment numbers reveal broken promise to Columbia, state

Posed: Apr 27, 2015 7:37 PM by Lee Anne Denyer, KOMU 8 Reporter
Updated: Apr 27, 2015 10:59 PM

COLUMBIA - Documents obtained by KOMU 8 News late Monday afternoon confirm IBM's Columbia service center has not upheld its end of an agreement that provided the company millions in tax breaks.

In May 2010, IBM said it would hire 800 mid-Missourians to work at its center located on LeMone Industrial Boulevard in southeast Columbia. However, over the last five years a series of layoffs by the company has prompted questions into if IBM has met its expectation from the city and state. IBM has not released its employment numbers over the years citing company policies; however, documents provided by the DED outline IBM's most recent employment numbers.

In a letter addressed to Stephen Dodd of the IBM Corporation obtained by KOMU 8 News, Executive Director Robert Miserez wrote that the agreement between the IBM Corporation and the Missouri Development Finance Board mandated IBM have at least 500 full-time employees on its payroll to keep receiving tax credits.

The letter is dated April 22, 2015 and can be read in its entirety here.

Missouri Department of Economic Development Spokesperson Amy Susan said the DED received IBM's annual report Monday cutting employment numbers from January 2014 until December 2014. As of March 31, 2015, the IBM Columbia Delivery Center employed 453 full-time employees. That is 75 less jobs than reported in December 2014. IBM laid of employees in January 2015, but would not report how many employees were let go.

The agreement between IBM, the city of Columbia and the state of Missouri is part of the BUILD Missouri Program. A program that provides financial incentives to companies in exchange for the promise of local jobs. Over the years, IBM received $28 million in tax credits from the state as part of the contract. The city of Columbia also agreed to pay $3 million over a 10-year time span to purchase the building on LeMone Industrial Boulevard and lease it to IBM at a cost of $1 per year for 10 years.
An IBM spokesperson refuted reports Monday that the service center in Columbia had lost financial incentives from the state of Missouri.

Before KOMU 8 obtained the documents, IBM spokesperson Clinton Roswell said the site had maintained its agreement and would continue to receive its benefits, a direct contradiction to the documents.

"Contrary to reports IBM has not been notified by the state nor has any ongoing incentive program been suspended. IBM has met all its requirements to the state," he said.

Roswell said there were layoffs in January, but those were a result of restructuring within the company. An agreement between IBM, the state of Missouri and the city of Columbia required the company to meet certain employment rates.

"There's always a rebalancing of skills at IBM," he said. "That means that there's always the nature of our business is we respond, and we try to best serve our clients as a result there's a rebalancing of our work force."

Roswell reiterated IBM does not provide the number of employees hired at any given center but said the company has fulfilled its requirement to the city and state in terms of employment, training and reporting.

The documents state, "The company is not entitled to receive any further tax credits until the number of jobs at the Columbia facility equals at least 500."

(Editor's note: This story has been updated to reflect KOMU 8 New's obtaining of DED documents.)
The Missouri Department of Economic Development provided KOMU 8 News with documents today showing declining employment numbers at the IBM Columbia Delivery Center.

This comes after IBM, the city of Columbia and the state of Missouri agreed IBM would receive millions in tax breaks and a facility for hiring a minimum of 500 workers.

We’ve included copies of all the documents on our website. How do you think the state should move forward?

IBM employment numbers reveal broken promise to Columbia, state | KOMU.com | Columbia, MO |

An IBM spokesperson refuted reports Monday that the service center in Columbia had lost financial incentives from the state of Missouri.

Christina Elena, Diana Fredrick, Allen Miller and 20 others like this.

19 shares

Amanda Desirée Early Hansha still believes trickle down economics works? What a joke. Another greedy corporation comes out with the last laugh.

Like · Reply · 15 · 27 April at 22:48

2 Replies
City leaders review gender biases scattered through city code

COLUMBIA - Columbia city leaders will discuss a portion of Columbia's city code Monday night to review suggestions that would make the it more gender inclusive.

An example of the changes look it below. Underlined words would be added, while text with a strike through would being deleted, eliminating words such as "he" and "him":

"The municipal judge shall be a conservator of the peace. He The judge shall keep a docket in which he shall enter every case and proceeding therein commenced shall be entered and kept together with before him and the proceeding therein and he shall keep such other records as required."

There are dozens of these types of language in just Chapter 15, which will be reviewed Monday.

Columbia residents voted 16 years ago to amend the city code to be solely written in gender neutral language; however, the extensive code is still being revised.

City counselor Nancy Thompson said office staff for the Law and City Prosecutor's office keep an eye out for gender specific wording when working with city documents and let city leaders know when they've identified changes that can be made.

Councilman Michael Trapp, of Ward 2, said "One of our strategic priorities is equity. I think that when we use gender inclusive language we're more opening and accepting to all of our folks. We don't want anyone to feel they are ill served because the language that we're using to describe a certain situation."

The ordinance proposal is on the city's website.
I met up with a few Columbia kids yesterday who say they still hear people talking about how certain jobs are better suited for one gender or another. They said, however, the talk doesn't impact their future plans.

Gender biases might not be something we think about everyday, but in city documents there are dozens of instances of phrasing that assumes a city official might be one gender or another. For example in Chapter 15, policeman is used instead of police officer. I've got a breakdown of how city leaders are trying to right these wrongs in the story below.

City leaders review gender biases scattered through city code | KOMU.com | Columbia, MO |

The Columbia City Council will review changes to the city code Monday to make it more gender neutral.

KOMU.COM | BY LEE ANNE DENYER
Grain Belt Express president meets with supporters

Posted: May 11, 2015 4:27 PM by Lee Anne Denyer, KOMU 8 Reporter
Updated: May 12, 2015 4:13 PM

RANDOLPH COUNTY - Representatives from the Grain Belt Express Clean Line met with local landowners Monday to review their plans for a $2 billion project aimed at moving wind energy across the Midwest.

The proposed project, the Grain Belt Express, has been met with both support and opposition since Clean Line submitted an application to the Missouri Public Service Commission in March 2014. Clean Line will need the commission's approval before it can build, own and operate the 750-mile transmission line that would pass through Missouri. But the commission's approval is just one stop Clean Line must take. Clean Line must receive approval from all four of the states the line would run through — Kansas, Missouri, Illinois and Indiana — before it can move forward.

Clean Line Energy President Michael Skelly visited landowners and fielded questions from them Monday. He said Clean Line is still receiving questions about the logistics of the Grain Belt Express.

"The line begins in western Kansas, where we have some of the best wind energy in the country," he said. "It will move wind powered electricity all the way across to central Missouri."

Opponents of the Grain Belt Express power lines cite health and visual issues, as well as concerns about how the lines would impact planting. In previous KOMU 8 News reporting, opponents told reporters they had concern with the line impacting day-to-day farming activities. A group of opponents have formed the Block Grain Belt Express - Missouri.

But Skelly expects the line to bring enough energy to power 200,000 Missouri homes. The energy would then continue east to Illinois and Indiana. The line would be a high-voltage, direct-current transmission line (HVDC).
"We're going to deliver a lot of clean energy," he said. "As we move the country toward a cleaner energy mix we're going to be part of the infrastructure to make that happen. Along with that comes a lot of economic development from building the project."

Skelly said farmers would be able to graze livestock and farm underneath the line, if it is approved and constructed. He said Clean Line will pay landowners for the use of their land if the transmission line is built. The landowners will also be eligible for additional compensation as development continues, according to Skelly.

Monday, Skelly met with Moberly farmer and landowner Wayne Wilcox at his nearly 400-acre ranch. Wilcox said he began attending the public forums when the company started hosting them last year and that Clean Line leadership has been receptive to his suggestions thus far. The line would pass through the northern part of Wilcox's farm, and he said he doesn't think the line will disrupt his farming or his view.

"I'm in favor of the project," he said. "When a project like this needs to cross your land, if the people treat you fairly, you need to try and cooperate with them."

Wilcox is in favor of the project because he believes the tax revenue generated from the power line would benefit the school district. He served on the Rentick school board for 18 years.

The next step is for the Missouri Public Service Commission to approve or deny the project. There is no timetable set for that decision.

[Editor's note: This story has been updated to include additional background and information]
Survey: Drivers weigh in on tax, toll for aging Missouri roads

Posted: May 14, 2015 6:48 AM by Lee Anne Denyer, KOMU 8 Reporter
Updated: May 16, 2015 4:21 PM

BOONE COUNTY - Local drivers seem to agree: Missouri highways need help.

KOMU 8 News surveyed more than 100 people for its May edition of Town Square, a special project that lets the viewers drive the conversation, and found many of our viewers think something needs to be done about aging infrastructure in Missouri. Its how to fund those improvements that has them divided.

There are two options currently on the table: converting I-70 into a toll road and raising the gas tax.

MoDOT recently released a report stating Interstate 70 is suffering due to increased traffic, heavier loads and aging infrastructure. To combat the declining system, MoDOT proposed building a toll road from Wentzville to Independence. It suggests charging a 10 to 15 cent fee per mile for passengers cars, and two to three times that for trucks. That calculates out to nearly $20 from Columbia to St. Louis.

In our non-scientific survey, nearly 70 percent of respondents said they oppose a toll road. Several people said MoDot needs to reassess how it manages the funding it already has. Others cited the inconvenience of tolls. Some said it would place an unfair burden on commuters who rely on I-70.

30 percent of respondents said they support a toll road. A common theme for them: that it would pay for repairs by charging people who actually use the highway and that the many non-residents who travel I-70 would be among those paying to improve the road.

Veteran truck driver Kevin Quigley, who travels on Missouri highways regularly, said he also would not use the I-70 if MoDOT implemented the toll.

"I'd run 36 or 24," he said.

Quigley described the roads as "rough" and littered with pot holes.

"They need to fix the pot holes on the right sides of the right lane, which I don't know what tears that side up more then the other side, but the edge is bad. In a lot of places there's pot holes two, three, four inches deep."
Another driver, however, said Missouri roads appear to stack up relatively well compared to the rest of the country.

"I've been to all 48 contiguous states right now and I'd say Missouri stands up quite well compared to the rest," truck driver Clint Trentman said. "It was a rough winter in most parts of the country. The freeze and thaw damages the roads and places like Tennessee and Arkansas right now are awful. They've actually closed certain lanes on I-40 just because of the potholes. They're so bad."

MoDOT has outlined three possible options for improvements to I-70, which range from a $2 billion plan to a more elaborate $4 billion plan. The low-end proposal suggests replacing all the existing pavement and adding lanes, while improving some of the interchanges along the interstate.

A second alternative has a $3 billion price tag. It would include replacing all of the pavement as well as all of the interchanges and add a minimum of one lane in each direction.

Lastly, MoDOT outlined a $4 billion project that would convert I-70 into an eight lane system with four lanes dedicated to overhaul trucks. It states the lane designations would increase safety by lowering the interaction between trucks and passenger cars.

Lawmakers have also proposed increasing the gas tax. Missouri has one of the lowest taxes in the country.

The Senate could vote by Friday, when the current session ends, on SB 540, which would increase the gas tax by 1.5 cents. An earlier measure to raise the tax by two cents failed.

A gas tax increase got wide support in the KOMU 8 News survey, with nearly 60 percent of respondents favoring the idea. Many of said the proposed increase is relatively cheap and is reasonable given the condition of Missouri roads.

More than half of the respondents said they drive 50 or more miles per week on average.

Mike Bellman, a respondent on the Town Square survey, operates his own computer repair business and said he spends a lot of time in the car and driving around Columbia and its neighboring communities. He said he would be in favor of a gas tax.

"I do agree with the gas tax if it were able to increase the funding for the roads," he said. "I don't want to a gas tax supplant a funding in such a way that it decreases the revenue in the general revenue fund."

Until a large renovation can be made, Bellman said MoDOT needs to focus on better care for road markings and reflective surfaces.

"I feel that area has been neglected quite a lot where even if the road markings are applied they don't last very long they're not high quality, very often the reflectiveness is poor" he said. "If a tax or another fee was involved I would hope that some of that would go toward road markings."
Engineers built I-70 between 1956 and 1965 and it was designed to carry 12,000-18,000 cars per day, according to MoDOT. Now, MoDOT reports, in rural areas, more than 23,000 vehicles travel it and, in metropolitan areas, roads carry an average of 98,000. The interstate passes through 10 states.

MoDOT officials said, with current projects, they expect I-70 to be stop and go from Kansas City to St. Louis if changes are not made.

MoDOT said its current budget will require the agency to leave more than 25,000 miles of roads largely unattended and the state is in danger of losing federal funding because of shortfalls.

**Recommended Stories**
Week 17 Social

A $2 billion project could power 200,000 Missouri homes, but local landowners still have a lot of questions for the company behind the high-voltage power line. Moberly farmer Wayne Wilcox took me out to the part of his property where the proposed power line would run. It's a controversial issue now in the hands of the Missouri Public Service Commission.

http://www.komu.com/.../grain-belt-express-president-meets-w.../

162 people reached

63 Views
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Sara Maslar-Donar likes this.

Lee Anne Denyer Thank you for doing good reporting last year on it Meg McLeod! Definitely helped me get a sense of what I was getting into this morning.

Lee Anne Denyer

Meg McLeod Glad you did a follow-up to this story (it was one of my last HFRs last year)! Great job!

Meg McLeod
Truck drivers like Kevin Quigley rely on well-maintained roads to get from one stop to the next safely and on time.

He describes I-70 here in mid-Missouri as "rough" and says some sections of the highway are so bad he doesn't want to drive on them at all.

Mid-Missouri seems to agree the roads are in bad shape, but how should we team up to fix them? We'll have much more on that and hear more from Kevin on our next Town Square special airing Thursday at noon.
Crews designed and constructed I-70 from 1956 to 1965. While researching the aging highway, KOMU 8 News tracked down these photos from the 50s and 60s. Many thanks to the Missouri State Archives for sharing them with us.

A clip from our Town Square special focusing on Missouri roads can be found here: http://bit.ly/1A32jrg
Chapter Five

Tapping into Community Conversations: How Broadcast Journalists’ Social Media Routines Influence Content and Sourcing

Abstract: Broadcast journalists serve two masters: the long-reigning broadcast and its digital brother. Digital journalism encompasses many things: it is just as much a Facebook post as it is free-standing websites made of HTML. Both rookie and veteran broadcast news reporters have grown to expect digital journalism as a part of their everyday work. They experiment, they push the limits. But a broadcast journalist does more than take selfies and tweet links to their stories. This research illustrates how broadcast journalists’ work across platforms is a byproduct of their own routines, as well as a representation of their expectations and station’s values.
Tapping into Community Conversations: How Broadcast Journalists’ Social Media Routines Influence Content and Sourcing

Method

This research seeks to better understand how today’s broadcast news reporters use social media and, further, how those routines are a byproduct of managerial expectations, brand values and of a developed work flow over the course of reporters’ careers. To understand this, the researcher conducted semi-structured interviews and observations at five commercial television stations for two days each. During the recruitment stage of this project, some interviewees expressed concern over strategic secrets being revealed in this report, so the researcher decided to leave names, stations and identifying elements out of the final report.

Each station is unique to its market, which means there are no direct competitors in the sample. The stations range in Designated Market Area (DMA) rankings from a top five ranking to one that is outside the top 125. The Nielsen Company groups geographic areas to form DMAs. These rankings are used for research and commercial purposes. These rankings are reflective of population size and community watching habits (DMA® Regions). For example, Columbia, Missouri received a DMA ranking of 138 for 2014-2015.

During each visit, the researcher interviewed at least two reporters, the news director and the web director. The recruitment process began with the researcher reaching out to personal industry contacts. The final participants derive from a network of professionals with the majority of those contacts having no previous relationship with the researcher. Due to scheduling issues, some stations had other positions at the same level
or higher substitute for one of these positions. Some stations provided additional interviews with positions such as general managers, news anchors, digital producers and other newsroom staff. The researcher asked the reporters and station managers two different sets of questions and the conversations ranged from 15 to 40 minutes. For a full list of the guiding questions, see the original proposal included in the appendix. The participating reporters ranged in age and level of experience. The reporter with the most experience said he had been reporting for television for 41 years. The reporter with the least experience said he was in his second job and was in his second year of television reporting.

All of the interviews took place in March and April of 2015. After completing these interviews, the researcher transcribed the audio clips and then coded them for reoccurring themes.

Results

Digital and social media have opened many doors throughout the years for television news reporters. They can help journalists generate story ideas, find stakeholders and spread news beyond geographic regions. Reporters say digital and social tools can bolster the sanctified practices of yesterday’s broadcasters, but they also say these aids are not without drawbacks. In this study, many reporters expressed concerns about an increasing workload, unclear expectations and uncertainty about how to maintain a personal identity on social media that will not compromise their work. These concerns must be addressed, because managers are increasingly shifting focus from the television broadcast to digital offerings.
This research shows how reporters utilize digital and social media throughout their entire reporting process, both on and off shift. Through a series of semi-structured interviews and observing the newsrooms, it also became evident television news reporters’ social content is influenced by their stations’ values and overarching brands. These individual brands sometimes are put at odds with the digital brands on-air personalities are making for themselves. Television news reporters take on many tasks, but what continues to make them who they are is the care they take for their television content. With rapidly changing technology and a 24-hour news cycle, reporters and news teams are using these tools in their fight to stay relevant.

The packaging

Many reporters say digital and social media enter their workday long before they reach the newsroom. All the stations observed had editorial meetings at the beginning of their employees’ shifts; this held true for dayside and nightside news teams. Broadcast reporters said it is routine to scan social media in preparation for this meeting. Several also said they check other media outlets as well as what their own station has covered since they last worked. A longtime reporter who typically works dayside from early morning through the five and six o’clock newscast, explained his day in a few short sentences:

“We have an editorial meeting at 9:15 in the morning. We pitch our stories, get assigned and then we generally leave, do research throughout the day, get interviews and then we're generally on two shows … And we try and make the stories different.”

Another reporter, who typically works from the early afternoon through the 10 and 11 o’clock newscasts (known as nightside), shared a similar breakdown:
“We’re all kind of pitching our stories and put our heads together to figure out what we can lead with that night… Then we’re out the door so we just see how the day goes. Every day is different. [Station name] is really big on breaking news stories so if there’s something else that’s pressing that might be happening — a fire, a shooting, a stand off — we would just hold on to the elements that we’ve gathered for the day and then we’d go to the next assignment.”

The morning editorial meeting looked different at each station, but was comprised of similar goals. At each station, managers expected the reporters to pitch two to three ideas for content that could be gathered and published that day. Reporters say the presence of digital and social media influences their process for tracking down stories to pitch. Common practices include aggregating Twitter accounts into TweetDeck for easy observation, searching trending hashtags or hashtags with a city name and sifting through viewer tips submitted by message, email or direct message — Twitter’s messaging system.

A reporter who works in a market with the highest DMA ranking and who has extensive experience marrying social media and broadcast news uses specific strategies when using Twitter for sourcing:

“I've built in lists of communities of people that I know are impactful to certain things. I have strong lists of decision makers in politics, decision makers in government. They are on social in ways that they have never been before and they are giving you information that you would normally have to go through nine people to get.”

The reporter searches Twitter for sub-communities within his community and attempts to identify people with digital followings within their respective neighborhoods.
When a story breaks in a particular city, he will search for that city’s name in Twitter and see whose tweets are trending. He also searches by zip code to determine who is most active in that area. From there, he said, he will tag the users in his own tweets about their neighborhoods in hopes that those users will share the tweet with their own followers — thus expanding his content’s reach.

This reporter reports for his station’s noon, five and six o’clock televised newscasts, but stays focused on his digital reporting throughout his shift. “I start with social. I end my day on social,” he said. “I feel like social for me is not a mechanism to draw audiences to my original platform essentially, it really is to have consistent conversation throughout the day, a relationship.” He thinks many journalists could benefit from taking the time to more aggressively understand the platforms they are working on.

“Here's the weird thing: I think journalists … are solely focused on how to be better storytellers or better writers or better journalists when they forget sometimes how to be a better communicators. Communicating is not just how to tell your story right, but it's also understanding the platform people are consuming your story on.”

In addition to Twitter, other journalists shared different ways they track down story ideas and sources. One reporter said he regularly checks his town’s “subreddit” on Reddit, a social networking platform with many topical discussion boards. Another said he uses Banjo — a Twitter and Instagram aggregator — to track to user-generated content. The same reporter said that when news breaks, social media is especially helpful for finding images to use on-air and witnesses to comment on unfolding events. He said typically sources are very “receptive” when contacted over social media platforms.
But despite access to these tools, many reporters said they still find value in building relationships face-to-face, off of digital platforms, by immersing themselves in their communities.

“I get interesting stories just having conversations with people out and about on my days off type of things.” a mid-market reporter/anchor said. “When you're out in the community is when you get the real enterprise stuff. I think that's the best thing is building relationships outside of work and just seeing what's going on in the community.”

Another reporter/anchor — this one from a larger market — agreed.

“I really like to go out in the communities and see what they're all about,” she said. “It's fun because we have so many different communities. I'll go out and see what they are doing. How are they different from another community? What's going on in theirs that is totally different from maybe a community that's right next door…it's just being engaged. Being a part of it. Being aware.”

News directors said that there is a push in the industry today to saturate the newscast with more community members. These non-official sources are a direct comparison to the Public Information Officers (PIO) and agency spokespeople journalists historically rely on for information. Research shows that regardless of the type of story, official sources continue to dominant the narrative (Livingston and Bennett, 2003).

“When an unpredicted, non-scripted, spontaneous event is covered in the news, the one predictable component of the coverage is the presence of official sources.” (p. 376). Sources share information in accordance to their own paradigm, perspective or agenda, which can leave some journalists questioning the soundness of the information they are
collecting. One news director recalled tuning into a weekend evening newscast and writing to her producer in delight after the first block of the show.

“I was floored. I was excited,” she said. She wrote to her producer, “Do you know why I loved your first block, your A block? I loved it because I didn't see a single official.”

She said the more than a dozen sound bites in the segment all came from community members, which are the people she feels her audiences connect with best. “I think people respond to people. People connect with people and that you don't always have to see the PIO. You don't always have to see the cop. They respond and connect with the mom who lost their kid, the person who is looking for a job, the guy who is pumping gas and wow, can't believe prices are going down. The real people.”

Social media opens doors for reaching non-official sources. Reporters say that including everyday people in their story “humanizes” the piece and often leads to stronger narratives and better overall journalism.

Researchers have recognized that there is a deficiency in literature about the way community members can become more involved in the reporting process (Kurpius, 2000) (Moon and Hadley, 2014). Kurpius suggests community involvement can provoke new conversations and help ensure an accurate depiction of reality in coverage. And for many journalists, social media has become an efficient way to track them down.

Crowdsourcing is a strategy used at many stations to find sources who are not officials. This strategy of reaching out to a following can be done on various platforms, but many reporters primarily use Facebook for this. Crowdsourcing is the idea that individuals can obtain information or content by putting out a call to a large group for
what is needed. Many reporters said they’ve done this to find a source in their daily work. One reporter said he and his web manager crafted a post together early in the day asking anyone with experience using payday loans to share their contact information. Within an hour of the post going up, the reporter said he reached someone who ultimately ended up being a character in his television story.

“I kind of gave him the gist of the story and said, ‘Would you be up for it?’ There’s a lot of people affected by payday loans…would you be up for being that voice today?’” He remarked that it’s often difficult to find people to talk about sensitive issues, such as finances, and that the crowdsourcing over Facebook technique helps narrow the search more efficiently than cold calling or approaching strangers. He said including this source humanized his story, in his opinion, making it stronger.

But not everyone interviewed supports using this strategy for sourcing over social media. One digital media manager said that because of Facebook’s algorithms, all of a station’s followers do not see the same information on their timeline in real time — like they would on Twitter. He said that the station would use the technique for lighter stories. He gave the example of a post asking followers to give their favorite breakfast spot for a feature without a pressing deadline. For him, the goal is to create shareable content on the Facebook page and in his opinion crowdsourcing posts don’t evoke users to share.

Social media tools are helpful for tracking down information, especially in breaking news situations when information is sparse and reporters rely on witness accounts to piece together what might have happened. Once a reporter receives his or her assignment, news directors say they are expected to start reporting for the web until airtime. Reporters shared varied requirements in terms of the broadcast and web versions
of their stories. Some reporters said they do multiple stories a day while others had one. Some reporters are required to submit web versions for the website, while others were encouraged—but not required—to write their own web stories. This is an example of the variance in expectation across the different stations.

“They expect that we're on it all the time. Certainly tweeting out things, letting people know what stories are going to air, breaking news as fast as we can,” a reporter said.

Consistent reporting is something that news directors said they not only expect, but also look for when recruiting new members for their teams. A news director from a large market station said it’s been a difficult to get reporters to consider digital reporting as an equal to the legacy newscast.

“We really have to change the mentality that it's not this extra thing you have to do — that it's part of the job as much as reporting on TV,” she said. “It's the same level of importance.”

Before hiring someone, she will scan his or her activity on Facebook and Twitter. The candidate might have a solid resume and look great on television, but if a social media presence is lacking, it could cost that candidate the job. News directors pointed out that news happens throughout the day — not just when TV stations go on air.

Regardless of the platform, journalists both in and out of the newsroom have incorporated digital and social tools into their routine. As seen in this research, this practices does influence editorial content by revealing story leads and identifying sources.
But once a story is in motion — with sources confirmed and an angle determined — reporters’ social use begins to gear up. Their activity from here can be classified as brand promotion both for themselves and for the station as a whole.

“We want a way to not just promote our talent but show that our talent are storytellers and that in this area there are a lot of people who do a lot of good things and we're the station that tells those stories, inspiring stories, good news stories. I think in general local news gets a bad rap for doing too much crime, too much negative.”

The content ultimately chosen is thought to be a representation of the values a station and its team holds. And these values manifest across platforms — 24/7.

**Station Branding**

Consumers recognize brands by “names, terms, signs, symbols” and other distinctive qualities. Like other businesses, news companies use branding to reinforce their principles and remain relevant in a highly competitive market. Kim, Baek and Martin (2010) studied specifically how news organizations are borrowing practices from strategic management to improve their brand and further promote their product: the news.

“The intricacy of the competitive media landscape has also made it more difficult to attract audiences solely on the basis of functional attributes such as the content of the news. In an environment where different organizations often offer news that is similar, differentiating media brands is necessary for survival,” they wrote.

News brands exemplify traits such as trustworthiness, sincerity, sophistication and toughness (Kim, Baek and Martin, 2010). The use of social and digital tools has impacted the way these traits are exemplified and promoted to audiences. News managers said this is increasingly important due to the fact that many stations cover similar newsworthy
events. Newsworthy topics often include matters of public safety, education and
government.

“Everyone covers the same stories pretty much and that's the reason why we have
the [brand removed]. We’re going to give you the extra information. We're going to
investigate that nugget that nobody is going to think about,” an executive producer said.

He said his reporters must push themselves to pitch and develop unique stories,
but must also remember to consistently promote the brand across the available platforms.
He said the goal is to consistently remind audiences the news team is working to not only
bring them the news of the day, but to engage with them in pertinent community
cversations.

“It (digital branding) is just like a camera. It's your camera. It's your script. And
it's social media. It's all one now, incorporated all in your coverage. Do not see it as
something that's secondary or extra work,” he said.

Because the party no longer starts at five o’clock.

Regardless of where the news is coming from, station managers know the brands
they’ve built must come through across platforms. Appointment viewing has declined
across markets big and small, which has forced news companies to come up with new
ways to attract and hold on to their consumer base. Appointment viewing refers to the
idea that audiences will schedule their days around consuming news at a predetermined
time of day. This largely describes the habits of viewers who rely on the legacy,
television newscast for their content. One New York Times author describes this pattern
of appointment viewing of specifically network newscasts as “the punctuation that ends
the work day for close to 23 million people (Vavreck, 2015).”
“Gone are the days where we tell the world, ‘We are on at five o'clock meet us there! Everybody gather round at five o'clock! We throw the party at five! Come to our party at five o'clock!’” one news director said. “The party is 24/7…It is arrogant to ask people to come to us at five. We have to be where they are.”

All of the surveyed news directors said that their news production must be available to viewers when and where they want it and it must continue to reflect the station’s values, mission and basic tenants.

“Ideally we'd like it to be a seamless user experience where our audience can engage with, interact with us, consume what we're offering on any platform and feel like it all makes sense and it's all part of the same news experience,” a vice president of digital news said. “That they can send us things and then they might see something on TV or we can respond to them via email, Twitter or Facebook and they can feel like we are sort of living and breathing along with them in their lives.”

Another news director compared the branding of her news station to that of an iconic soft drink.

“A Coke is a Coke no matter where you go in the world,” she said. “It’s because Coke is a brand.” She said this holds true with her station’s brand. No matter where the audience goes to get it, it must reflect the same principles, voice and values.

To do this and to keep up with the demands of cross-platform reporting, reporters have always been expected to represent themselves sincerely when on the air or in person. Now, they must be mindful of their audience when posting anything digitally — from Facebook photos to personal tweets.
New applications and digital tools enter the digital landscape every day. Stations are consistently experimenting with new ways to use them to both report the news and share it with audiences. As more tools enter the newsroom, managers say that they understand not every journalist will use or excel on every platform. One manager said she helps her team customize its digital toolkit to better find the team’s voice and identify its social preferences. In turn, this — she believes — makes her station’s content more sincere, journalistically stronger and ultimately enhances the station’s brand. This same news manager, who leads a department of dozens of digital producers and oversees reporters’ digital content, said that audiences detect when a journalist is simply going through the motions and is not invested.

“Even if someone is trying to be a trouper and deliver, it's going to feel artificial. It's not going to feel genuine in their voice. It needs to have an authenticity. If that authenticity is missing, that bullshit meter is going to detect that pretty quickly and they're going to move on.”

Several news managers said that a way to combat this is to understand that journalists will use tools differently and to not expect exactly the same output from an entire news team.

**Personal branding**

But part of what makes television news unique is the face-to-face experience viewers have with the news team, even if separated by a screen. Television reporters use conversational and inviting gestures to be more relatable to their audiences. Many reporters have created professional accounts on social platforms — like Facebook and Twitter — to continue this online. Only a small handful of the reporters sampled in this
Researchers began studying the relationship between on-air television journalists and their at-home audiences back in the 1950s. Rubin, Perse and Well (1985) contributed to this literature by explaining how the perceived intimacy is strengthened by the consistent appearance of this person, coached on-air behavior and skewed perception of proximity (55-56). Reporters’ social accounts follow similar patterns. Many of them use those accounts to share their stories and behind the scenes photos, start conversations and give the audience a better sense of who they are off screen. Some reporters said they post photographs of meals, pets and outdoor adventures.

But like other users, reporters must adhere to Facebook’s own agenda. Some reporters said they’ve been automatically switched over from friend accounts to page accounts, which has disrupted some of their plans for the page. Facebook explains that friend accounts are for personal use while its page accounts are tailored to be suited for “businesses, brands and organizations.” Facebook caps a personal account at 5,000 friends (Page Basics). Several journalists shared they regularly added sources and fans on their personal accounts, which drove up their friend counts to the maximum. They said the platform switched their account to a Page after reaching that limit.

Additionally, some of the reporters said how it’s not their reporting that’s attracting the most engagement:

“When I do post I’ll get several hundred likes if it's something like a picture of me, which sounds horrible, but if it’s a picture of a little boy I’m doing a story on and I write a blurb about the story then I’ll get like 20 likes. So I’ve been very frustrated with that,” a young woman who works as a reporter and anchor in a mid-size station said.
A quick scan of the reporter’s Facebook page confirmed her observation. Photos of her on her own or working performed much better than links to her stories, if measuring in numbers of “likes.” Another reporter, an older man who works in a large market, shared similar experiences. When the researcher asked what does well for him on his Facebook page, he said:

“Very personal things. Things where I pull something out of my old file — my old photo files — and I find something from 10, 20, 30 years ago. I just speculate, ‘Where's that person now?’ or ‘Here's what I did back then.’ People tend to enjoy that because it shows a different side of you then they see on a day-to-day basis. It's original content. It's something they can’t find anywhere else.”

But one station had strict policy against quick, look-at-me snapshots.

“I'm really anti-selfie,” the social media manager said. “We have found through pretty extensive market research over the years that our region really doesn't respond well with people who they feel are bragging, which selfies are very much that. We really try to make sure that when these reporters are promoting their stories they're promoting it with a really awesome, cool picture, not a picture of themselves.”

In almost every interview, reporters expressed some sort of uncertainty over when and how to use personal and professional accounts. Some reporters shared a variety of combinations of private and professional accounts across platforms.

Like others, reporters are at the mercy of the Facebook algorithm and its searching nuances and because of this, one reporter said he’s scrapped his private Facebook account altogether. That is something, he said, that is hurtful to maintaining relationships with long-distance friends and family.
“I guess the bottom line is I can't have a personal page anymore. If I really want to drive social media, if I want people to find me I just have to one page. And I have to be public about it, which means I have to pull back on personal stuff on it… I'm held back because you want to be professional, but then it's the personal stuff that people seem to like too. I have to draw that fine line. Where is that line where I can be myself, but not too much myself?”

Others, however, seem more optimistic about integrating their accounts:

“It's very industry,” a reporter with a professional account that blends together work and personal life said. “While it's personal, this is a work event. I think in television you're mixing journalism with brand, right, your own brand. You're mixing journalism with your own identify in the market.” He said his feed commonly shows food he’s eating and pictures of his dog, in addition to industry events and content directly related to his reporting.

But the majority of those surveyed continue to maintain both professional and personal accounts in an effort to maintain a private life while still building relationships with the community.

Engagement can be measured by likes, comments and interactions between the user and audience member. And while news managers reported they are pushing towards increased interaction, maintaining boundaries is still top of mind for reporters.

“I've been sort of timid in the past,” a reporter/anchor shared. “You do get the random crazy person who either starts stalking you or I've interacted with people who might say 'Oh, great show today,' whatever and I'll write back 'thank you,' 'thanks for watching' and then pretty soon they're messaging you every single day, writing you every
day and if you don't respond they get angry. I've had some bad experiences that have kept me from doing it. Also people can be mean. I have had good experiences, but I've been a little leery of stepping in sometimes.”

Regardless of the public face they put forward, these reporters said they need social media for its other functions. Many said they use social media to tease to their stories through video updates, links and Facebook posts. Digital and social tools commonly assist with the reporting process, and also remain integral throughout the publication and sharing process.

Television news teams have long built their brands around enterprising journalism, breaking news and investigative digging.

“From the moment you go to bed to the moment you wake up, you turn to [call letters removed] in whatever form. It’s there for you.”

The inclusion of digital tools has only given more outlets for upholding their promise to serve as a watchdog to their community. This means this promise must be upheld equally in television newscasts as well as digitally. Reporters, while both pushing their own brand as well as their stations’, said there is a variety of ways they can push out the stories they’ve crafted.

**Distribution**

Regardless of the platform, reporters are expected to bring the same diligence and brand values to their content.

“We want to make sure we're using the same voice,” a social media manager said. “Our website has much, much deeper content. I try to put the best of the best on our Facebook page. Things that I know people are going to click on.”
The distribution of content on both television and digital happens in two ways. First, in the actual distribution practices and secondly, with the language used throughout those activities.

Facebook is constantly revising the systems that determine what content a user sees on his or her feed. It recently made significant changes to allow for what founder Mark Zuckerberg said is a revised system that filters for the highest quality content (Chowdhry, 2015). Facebook has 1.5 billion users, many of whom are young news consumers. To share content with these people — and ultimately spread their brand more widely — news teams are coming up with better strategies and pointed execution of posts for their station pages.

With a similar goal in mind, another station’s team holds what it calls a “digital huddle” following the morning editorial meeting. There the team looks at what the reporters have been assigned and brainstorms ways the newsroom can create tailored content to go hand-in-hand with the reporter’s television story. Examples of this include photo galleries made from video screen grabs, timelines, and full interviews. This also includes posting trending content even if it is not directly related to the geographic region.

“The direction we're trying to go is how to package the content digitally for that day. It can be something completely different, but related for your story,” he said, “How do we package that online? Maybe do some sort of graphical display as a slideshow breaking down how much rain each city got and how much snow each city got because that's going to do better in terms of getting traffic, it'll do better on social.”
News and web directors hope their reporters take the audience through their day with them and illustrate the process that leads up to the television newscast. To do this, reporters are expected to gather photos, videos and factual information to be shared throughout the day and over multiple channels.

“I like it when our reporters do what I call progressive reporting. They bring users and viewers into kind of the process of how they're building their stories. It's not always just presenting them with ‘Here's the story as I found. I gathered for hours, now here it is.’ I really like it when we bring them along.”

But the constant sharing of information has some reporters feeling uncomfortable.

“The quandary is ‘Do I tweet the story as you're told to do, right, immediately, to beat the competition?’ The whole point of tweeting in this day and age is to beat the competition on social media, but the conflict arises if you have an exclusive story. Do you sit on it, do you tweet it and if so when do you tweet it? And so that's, that's problematic with social media.” This reporter said it has gone both ways for him. He’s been burned when a competitor breaks a story he’s working on before he posts it and he has also posted when it’s just too late for a competitor to pull something together.

A lot of the strategy rested in creating shareable content.

“I want to be sure I put out a really great picture,” a social media manager explained. “A cool picture that people are going to want to show their friends…because it makes (them) look like the person who delivered it, even though the station did.”

Jonah Berger (2013) wrote an entire book on why people share digital content. For him, it comes down to stories containing one or more of the following elements: Social currency, Triggered, Emotional, Public, Practically Valuable and Stories. Berger
describes content tailored for sharing as social currency. The idea is people buy into their friends’ accounts by how valuable they find their content. He writes that digital users want to seem smart, in-the-know and trendy. He says that the way to reach these viewers is to give them content that helps them do that. News managers are tapping into this and working to help reporters create content to be shared on digital platforms that are highly shareable. This involves giving them something they can’t get from another station including from a televised newscast.

When Berger refers to triggers he writes that content that is memorable and top-of-mind is more shareable. He suggests content producers develop content that is easily triggered by consumers’ environments to increase the likelihood it is remembered and brought up again in conversation. Content that is easily found often is more successful.

Emotional content also drove sharing. Berger found that content that was highly arousing — like anger, amusement or anxiety — was more shareable than content that evoked low arousal emotions like contentment and sadness. When people relate to the content they are more likely to engage with it. He writes, “Emotion sharing is thus a bit like social glue, maintaining and strengthening relationships. Even if we’re not in the same place, the fact that we both feel the same way bonds us together.” Lastly, he writes that helpful information and compelling stories will also attract audiences.

The book has direct applications to content created in a television newsroom. While Berger named the patterns he observed, many journalists report taking similar steps to make content more shareable. For example, some managers are emphasizing the need for photos and videos — shareable material — opposed to text or self-promoting content.
Even sales and promotions teams are cracking into this model because, at the end of the day, these are all businesses that need to continue to make revenue. A digital promotions producer said she saw great success during a morning show. The morning reporter was making his way up a mountain. Throughout the morning as he climbed, the reporter sent back short videos with messages like “We’re going to get up there!” Throughout the morning the promotions team posted these videos.

“When he got to the top and it was just total darkness, but you just see this amazing view and then when the sun's coming up and there's a silhouette of him playing.”

The story involved a mystery piano planted on top of a nearby mountain. Digital professionals said, however, there are not a lot of metrics that show how digital and social content influences viewership.

It’s understood that digital and social is a booming part of the television newsroom. This doesn’t though take away from the importance teams and stations put on their legacy product. Much of the newsroom operation budget comes from ads sold during the newscast.

“The money is still there. That's where advertisers feel safe,” a general manager said. “They (the advertisers) understand it. They still buy traditional media even though we don't have as many people.”

Even as reporters wrestle with creating content for different media, many said they still have to prioritize their television pieces.

“The top priority is — we are a television station — so the top priority is it's got to be on the air. That might not be the answer that the web team tells you, but from a
reporting perspective, if you have a black hole when your story is supposed to come up that's not a good thing,” a reporter said.

The television newscast isn’t simply seen as a moneymaker either. Viewers develop relationships with on-air personalities. Xu and Feng (2014) found that audiences who believe they have established a relationships with a journalist feel they have a deeper trust in the content and have more power to affect change in their community.

“I think the biggest challenge is really getting viewers to watch television,” one news director said. “People are using their phones. They can't get warm and friendly — what they get from the anchors and interpretation, the human quality, you're not going to get from your phone, but lives are so busy now. Sitting at home and watching the news at five o'clock is not what people really do anymore so how do we stay relevant? That's our biggest challenge is staying relevant and running a business with a decline built in basically. And being relevant on our phones and tablets and making sure we're the best option for people in this market.”

The Pew Research Center released a report in June of 2015 calling social media “the Local TV for the Next Generation.” The study’s findings showed 61 percent of Millennials — Americans born between 1980 and early 2000s — reported getting their news about politics and government from Facebook. This age bracket makes up one third of the U.S. population (Council of Economic Advisors, 2014) and is the bracket news companies want to turn into loyal consumers of their brand.

**Looking to the future**

The surveyed reporters seem to agree that there are boundless opportunities that arise from integrating social and digital tools into their work. But as more stations expect
journalists to work as one-man-bands — writing, shooting and editing their own work without the help of a photographer — and report across platforms, there is an increasing concern for the amount of time dedicated to the fundamentals that make the industry what it is.

“Where's the journalism? Where's time for the research? The fact checking?” a reporter with decades of experience said. “All of that, you know, anything that cuts into the basic tenants of journalism, the important things like fact checking, gathering information, calling sources, corroborating leads, all of that is diminished the more tasks you have, the less time you have to do the basics. I’m talking journalism with a big J.”

“A lot of times you’re just tied, your hands are tied and you’re just really busy,” another reporter said. “You’re just making phone calls and researching, that’s a little bit of the challenge.”

Television journalists complete myriad tasks throughout their day, but regardless of what or how they collect and share information, they said it remains critical they uphold their journalistic integrity.

“First and foremost, my job is to be a solid reporter and get the facts right… You can only do so much. As a reporter, you're already busy. And to be tide up in all these other things, I think it kind of takes away from the, what it means to be a journalist.”

**Discussion and conclusion**

The researcher drew this analysis from a collection of interviews, and while this research did not seek to provide a list of best practices, there are takeaways from analyzing these conversations that can be helpful to both academics and professionals.

It appears the increasing expectations are wearing on journalists.
“I think that many journalists—I won’t say all of us—but many journalists live separated from their own world. You can see from the daily work flow that we're on such a treadmill that it's hard to make the calls sometimes to receive phone calls or just to call a contact and say what's new, what's happening. Beat calls have always been a part of journalism. I find myself getting busier and busier and busier and less time to think, think, think,” a reporter said.

A place to start is by experimenting and understanding the tools available. Google Analytics, a product of Google that aggregates user experiences, can help identify strengths and weaknesses in strategy. The language of analytics is critical for all members of the news team — especially those looking to improve both station numbers and/or personal engagements.

The web managers offered expertise and pointed suggestions for not only ways to better their digital offerings, but also for ways at looking at an evolving industry. One pointed out that the phrase “social networking” has made its way out and “social media” has taken its place. He posits that is because of an increased excitement for shareable content that sparks conversation.

Overall, the interviews show every member of the news team must realize the broadcast news industry is in a volatile state. This bolsters the need for continued education on best practices, as well as experimentation with new digital tools for both sharing and measuring content.

Despite new tools, new platforms and an abundance of connections, it is clear broadcast journalists must consider that journalism must maintain its integrity regardless of which platform it’s being reported on.
News managers can be encouraged to support their teams — with increasing workloads — by maintaining realistic expectations of them. Reporters can feel comfortable by embracing the changing nature of the industry and in appreciating how many people a story can reach using new digital tools.

Reporters interviewed in this project reiterated the importance of new journalists learning time management skills and the ability to adapt and prioritize.

Many newsrooms have gone as far as physically restructuring their workspaces to keep digital content at the forefront. This was done by putting a member of the digital team at the assignment desk to ensure information could be pushed out faster, another team moved their entire digital department next to the assignment — “prime real estate” the news director called it.

“Digital is not the other side of the room literally or figuratively,” another news director said. “It’s not that television is not important, it’s that we’re moving… It’s getting people to understand that [call letters removed] is not just [call letters removed] TV. It’s wherever you are.”

Social media allows audiences to have to contribute to their news in a setting they feel comfortable in.

The interviews show journalists must also keep in mind the rate in which technology is advancing. What was trendy one moment could be obsolete in a matter of months. Because of this, it’s important to keep an ongoing education as well as an eye on new trends.
Future research

There are several specific threads of conversation that would make for interesting further research. It’s important to note that the new application that allows users to instantly share a live stream — Periscope — was brought up at every station. There is opportunity for future research in analyzing the role live video plays in both a newscast and on digital platforms. It is unclear what impact this application will have, but its repeated mention at news stations leads one to believe there is something important happening to the industry here. There has already been a lot of excitement about this new tool, but one news director said the risk is high.

“One day it's not that I'm going to take you to a party or a concert one day I'm going to show someone getting murdered, getting beaten up,” she said.

The ability to live stream is not a new one. Stations have done this since they began doing live shots in the newscast. That being said, however, further research could dig deeper into the implications more live video could have on the industry.

There also is not research currently available diving into professional versus personal accounts and the decision-making behind the content shared on each of them. Research on the depths of para-social relationships between news audiences and their viewers dates back to the 1950s. It would be possible update this and examine how online engagement between journalists and their audiences builds relationships — real and perceived. A deeper look into this through textual analysis in combination with a deeper understanding of platforms like Facebook’s algorithms would be abundantly useful. This research would also be helpful to the journalists who appear to be struggling with determining a best practice for this.
The hope is that this research gives a look into the world of a broadcast news journalist and the pull they feel to bring sound reporting to two masters: the broadcast and its digital counterparts.

“The nexus between social media and broadcast is really still kind morphing and developing,” one reporter said. “I'm not really sure where it's going. I know that people are seeing my tweets I don’t know if that necessarily means they're going to watch my story later in the day, but its almost like your serving two different masters. I'm not sure where the train meets.”

There may not be a definitive answer or magical formula that instantly makes news go viral, but there are steps that can ease the transition and strengthen strategies.

This research also confirms it truly is time to let go of preconceived notions of what a broadcast news reporter does and what should be expected of them. Journalists can — and do — use digital tools to cultivate sources, spark curiosity, understand the community and help audiences build trust in a brand through digital.
References


Appendix A: Project proposal

TAPPING INTO COMMUNITY CONVERSATIONS: HOW BROADCAST JOURNALISTS’ SOCIAL MEDIA ROUTINES INFLUENCES CONTENT AND SOURCING

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May 2014

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Abstract

This research reviews how broadcast journalists across the country use social media in their reporting routines and offers insight into ways digital platforms can be used to garner sources and story ideas. This professional project seeks to add to the existing body literature surrounding Gatekeeping theory. Through qualitative observation and semi-structured interviews, this study finds how broadcast reporters are using social platforms and the opportunities the current practices bring about.
Introduction

On a gloomy Sunday afternoon in December 2014, I lugged a camera case, tripod and reporters notebook to a small duplex on the west side of Columbia, Missouri. There, a family of four energetic little boys met me with wide eyes and an overwhelming curiosity as to the contents of the Pelican case sitting now in their living room. I spent around an hour with Columbia resident Eric Wright, his fiancé and four sons that afternoon. During that time, Wright shared intimate details of his worsening financial situation, including the imminent eviction of his young family. Wright said he chose to be a part of a KOMU 8 News story about poverty because he wanted to change the assumptions he felt many people in his community had about what poverty looks like. I met Wright after he responded to a Facebook post on the KOMU 8 News page asking people in the community to share their thoughts on poverty and what it meant to them. The post led to dozens of phone interviews with people wanting to share their stories, and ultimately three in-person interviews that became the foundation for a broadcast news story that ran several weeks later. That story has thousands of views online and prompted dozens of interactions on social media. The success of this story is a testament to the possibilities that arise for broadcast news reporters utilizing social media to acquire non-official sources and write unique narratives for television news stories.

My experience working on this story, as part of a special projects team at KOMU 8 News called Town Square, prompted the question that guides this professional project. I believe the findings from this project will abate some of the struggles working broadcast news journalists have identifying conversations within their communities. The idea is to learn how journalists can tap into community conversations through social media
channels and identify opportunities for adjusting social routines to enhance their coverage. The completion of this professional project is the last step to obtain my master’s in journalism degree from the University of Missouri. I expect to complete this requirement by May 2015.

My academic and professional experience at MU has provided a strong foundation to complete this professional project in a timely and thorough manner. I built this foundation by serving as both a digital producer and general assignment reporter for KOMU 8 News over the last year. These experiences taught me first-hand the demands of working in a local broadcast newsroom and showed me the challenge identifying non-official sources and unique story ideas can be for local news reporters. My preparation to complete this postgraduate level research is further supplemented by my educational background in mass media communication theory and qualitative research methods. For this project, I will utilize qualitative research methods to observe and interview working broadcast news journalists about their social media use, source development and newsroom routines. I will also speak with news managers about their goals on social platforms. Amid the interview and newsroom observation process, I will also work as a general assignment reporter at KOMU 8 News, covering local issues and experimenting with social techniques to influence my own stories. I am confident there is potential for a wealth of practical knowledge to be obtained from this research.

I intend to secure a position as a broadcast news reporter at a small to medium size market after completing this project and obtaining my master’s degree. Research shows news managers value potential employees who are experienced in reporting for multiple platforms, and more specifically, skillful at tailoring content to mobile and social
spaces (Wenger and Owens, 2013). I believe the professional skills component of this project coupled with the research and its subsequent findings will enhance my attractiveness as a candidate for these types of positions.

Digital competency takes various forms; however, there are several concepts that industry leaders write as fundamental for success. Digital journalists must be able to sort fact from fiction online and on social media. They must understand the basics of analytical data, and use social platforms to “engage, share and interact” with audiences (Bartlett, 2014). Building on my working knowledge of each of these will all be components of my professional project as I continue to sift through the academic research on the topic, as well as immerse myself in working newsrooms.

Professional Skills Component

I will complete the professional component of my project at KOMU 8 News in Columbia, Missouri from January to May of 2015. During that time, I will work report on issues and events valuable to mid-Missouri communities. I will do this by aggregating recorded interviews, natural sound, video and text for traditional broadcast news packages. I will also compose digital versions of my stories for the KOMU 8 News website and social platforms. My stories over the 14-week project duration will not be limited to a specific beat within the newsroom.

I enrolled in the University of Missouri Graduate School to obtain the highest level of education and professional experience available to journalism students in the United States (Gilbert, 2014). Through the broadcast news course sequence, I learned how to properly write for television, careful shooting techniques, camera operation, a variety of computer software, and arguably almost every other skill one would need as a
small market television news reporter. Before enrolling at MU, I obtained my bachelors degree in journalism from the University of Oregon School of Journalism and Communication and worked two years as a news production assistant in the ABC O&O, KGO-TV, newsroom in San Francisco, Calif. I believe each of these experiences contributed to my confidence in completing the master’s program and this research.

The experience, however, that has shaped me most greatly has been my time reporting for KOMU 8 News. The position is much more than a class requirement or a job to me. It allows me to do what I love most: talk to people and tell stories. My reporting introduced me to some of the community’s most resilient, the most flawed, some of the youngest and some of the oldest. It has given me the opportunity to share in the rebuilding effort of Joplin, Missouri, whose community is still recovering from the EF-5 tornado that touched down in 2011. It also brought me to Kansas City, Missouri, to share in both the excitement of the Kansas City Royals return to Major League Baseball World Series and the return of President Obama as he spoke about the state of the country’s economy.

In addition to reporting, I also work as a digital producer for the station. It’s my responsibility when serving in this role to write stories for the station’s website and manage the newsroom’s social media accounts. My work as a digital producer sparked my initial interest in understanding effective social media tactics, but my interest in seeking more non-official sources for stronger community journalism came as a byproduct of my reporting.

The professional component of my project will begin January 21 and run until April 21, 2015. My work schedule will consist of one reporting shift per week, except on
the weeks that I am traveling to complete the research components of this project. These shifts typically last 10 hours, from approximately 9:30 a.m. until approximately 7:30 p.m. This window can change depending on the assigned story and the constraints of the newscast; however, shifts do not typically run any less than 10 hours. I will spend an additional 20 hours per week working on longer form stories, ranging from features to investigations. At the end of the project, I will have a minimum of 14 stories derived from my weekly reporting shifts. These text and video pieces will provide a portion of the “abundant physical evidence” needed for completing this project. I will also keep field notes about the successes, shortcomings and opportunities for improvement in regard to both social media use and reporting practices after each shift. These notes will serve as additional evidence. The pieces will be broadcast during daily KOMU 8 newscasts and made online at KOMU.com. KOMU 8 News Director and committee member Randy Reeves will oversee my reporting schedule. A team of content managers and executive producers at the station will determine the airdates of my non-daily stories.

The overall hope for the professional skills component portion is to take information learned from executing the methodology and completing additional scholarly research and applying it to my reporter routines. Both the review of the supporting literature and the proposed methodology are outlined in subsequent sections.

Analysis Introduction

In a Harvard dorm room in February 2004, then a sophomore, the future founder of reigning social media monarch Facebook couldn’t have imagined that an idea to create an outlet to rank the attractiveness of classmates would become one of the most relied-upon digital platforms for international news consumption. An estimated 400 million users visit Facebook every month, many of whom rely on the application for news
consumption (Carlson, 2010). The Pew Research Journalism Project estimates three in
ten Facebook users receive news from their Facebook feeds (Matsa and Mitchell, 2014).

Facebook and Twitter dominate other social network sites, such as YouTube,
LinkedIn Instagram and Pinterest, when it comes to its users utilizing the platform for
news consumption. However, that same study reports users are not seeking out news
when they interact with the sites. It is more a stumbling into, as other users share photos,
links and personal anecdotes about events or ideas they deemed newsworthy. While the
surveyors found entertainment news was the most popular type of news interacted with
on Facebook, stories about local events and community figures appeared just eight
percent less frequently. Users then interact with content by sharing content from news
organizations with their own followers, discussing the content and contributing their own
videos and photographs to enhance the reported content. By analyzing social posts, one
can identify common threads of attitudes about events, people and ideas can be identified
within a community (Matsa and Mitchell, 2014). This data confirms the opportunities
available for discovery by looking at news organizations’ social media use and bolsters
my reasoning for wanting to add to the scholarly research on journalists’ social media
practices. This study proposes the following research questions:

**Research Question #1:** How do broadcast journalists utilize social media
platforms and how can individual reporters’ social media use impact editorial content?

**Research Question #2:** How do broadcast journalists develop story ideas and
sources for broadcast news stories presented across platforms?

There is a collective understanding among industry professionals as to what
makes a story newsworthy. Those news values include the number of people affected, the
general human interest, ideas or events controversial in nature, unusualness, and the
timeliness and location of the story (Shoemaker and Reese, 1991, p. 91). However,
research into how to find those stories in innovative ways is lacking. This professional
project seeks to see how social media can help.

Theoretical Framework

Communications researchers observe that as barriers between news producers and
audiences diminish, the relationship between the two has become increasingly more
symbiotic. Traditionally, news producers selected the news of the day, packaged it for
print or broadcast and distributed it at a set publication time (Gans, 1979, p.112).
Communications researchers call this linear, Gatekeeping (Lewin, 1947). However, as
journalists have increasing access to audiences and content through digital tools, the role
of the traditional gatekeeper has changed. Digital tools allow journalists of varying
platforms to present their material in innovative ways, but studies show many news
organizations are not taking advantage of these opportunities. “Hundreds of news
organizations are still stuck in the analog past,” Stencel, Adair and Kamalakanthan
(2014) write in their report of newsroom practices with digital tools for the Duke
Reporters’ Lab. They identified that despite awareness, particularly small, local news
operations are not tapping into readily available resources like data scrapers, interactive
map and timeline software and primary document hosting. After speaking with more than
20 news producers, they found that many newsrooms are sticking with traditional
Gatekeeping routines and resisting the opportunity of embracing digital tools.
Before diving into the ways digital tools allow audiences to become more involved in their daily news reception, it is important to have a firm grasp on the original Gatekeeping theory and its impact on the 2015 reporter’s newsgathering routines.

Gatekeeping theory is one of the oldest theories in mass communication research (Lewin, 1947). Lewin (1947) studied decision makers in “key positions” and looked at the “channels” from which those decisions subsequently came through. While his initial discussion focused on housewives, dinner tables and the process in which a mother’s idea became the evening’s roast, the patterns he observed later became instrumental to mass communication theory.

Lewin (1947) observed decisions by the “gatekeeper” are rooted in personal preferences, but also are influenced by the perceived likes and dislikes of others and an understanding of what is “essential (p. 144).”

“This holds not only for food channels, but also for the traveling of a news item through a certain communication channels in a group,” Lewin (1947, p. 145) writes.

According to Gatekeeping theory, gatekeepers decide what information is transmitted to an audience when he or she decides to either pass or not pass the information from the channel and through the symbolic gate. Because of this power, Lewin (1947) said an understanding of the power holder is imperative to understand the information allowed through.

Following Lewin, David Manning White (1950) published his study on “Mr. Gates.” The study analyzed the role of the gatekeeper and the impact individual decision makers have on editorial content. Like Lewin, the study is widely cited throughout the

White studied “Mr. Gates,” a newspaper wire editor at the Peoria Star, in the summer of 1947. White, who knew Lewin personally, took his understanding of Lewin’s Gatekeeping theory and through qualitative and quantitative methods was able to shed light into decision-making processes in a newsroom. White observed that of the copy available, “Mr. Gates” only selected about a tenth of the copy to print in the morning newspaper. White went further by interviewing the editor about why he made the decisions he made. “Mr. Gates” cited lack of space and lack of context within the copy, but White also observed a large amount of personal discretion also impacted stories chosen for print (Reese and Ballinger, 2001).

These findings contributed to preconceived notion that audiences are passive recipients of news content (Cleary and Bloom, 2011). Before the Internet and the advent of digital tools, many of which are now considered to be fundamental parts of the news production process, audiences did not have any interaction with content creators. Now that the barrier between creator and consumer is virtually invisible, some researchers believe Gatekeeping theory is due for a makeover (Cleary and Bloom, 2011).

Researcher and associate professor Jane Singer continues to publish literature on Gatekeeping theory, but anticipated a shift away from relying solely on an autonomous gatekeeper back in 2001. “As papers move online, Mr. Gates may find himself out of a job” Singer (2001) wrote. She recognized that news organizations’ “mission, market and resources” would determine the extent to which they tailored content to its digital platforms (p.65). Singer (2014) proposes that audiences actively participate in their news
consumption and therefore should be considered secondary gatekeepers for online content. “Users now have the capability to make and implement what essentially are editorial judgments about what is worthy and what is less so, about what others should ready and what they might as well ignore (p.56).” Users do so by selecting content provided to them by a news organization or journalist and further sharing it with a wider audience through social networking sites and other digital platforms (Singer 2014) (Xu and Feng, 2014). Singer (2014) writes, “In an online world, there may be no gates. However, it turns out, there are more gatekeepers than ever (p.68).”

Industry leaders agree and acknowledge there are underutilized opportunities to be found from engaging audiences, especially in the pre-publication stage. Josh Stearns (2015) of the Knight Projects Idea Lab suggests, for example, journalists identify local experts in their communities and work more collaboratively on stories with them. Stearns suggests by altering the Gatekeeping process through changes in sourcing practices and newsgathering routines, communities will feel more invested in their community and support their local news organizations more strongly.

An avenue for engaging with the community is through social media platforms, like Twitter. Studies about Twitter use by both the gated and the gatekeepers have become popular amongst Gatekeeping researchers over the last several years (Xu and Feng, 2014). Xu and Feng (2014) used tweets to analyze the characteristics of both parties in direct conversations with each other. They identified the gated as citizens, policy-makers and other media professionals. Media professionals, however, were classified as additional gatekeepers in the study. They found that gated citizens reached out to broadcast journalists through Twitter more frequently than print journalists. The
study adds to the existing body of literature on Gatekeeping theory because it identifies both the decreasing passiveness of the audience, as well as offers insight into the changing relationship between the gated and gatekeepers as both parties remain active online.

Even as news organizations embrace new possibilities with their audiences, the essence of Gatekeeping theory analysis holds true. Studies about Gatekeeping can still be conducted through careful examination of gatekeepers’ individual preferences, newsgathering routines, organizational pressures and the professional expectations of their work place (Shoemaker and Reese, 1991).

After reviewing the literature, I believe Gatekeeping theory provides an appropriate foundation in which to build my research on. I believe that through the observation and interview process outlined in the methodology section of this paper, I will gain valuable insight into the backgrounds and values of traditionally defined gatekeepers. This insight will help me understand how social media usage use reinforces or challenges those norms.

Literature Review

The central goal of this study is to first review the suggested best social media practices by industry leaders and then sees how those practices are being implemented in working broadcast newsrooms. The hope is to take findings about newsroom routines, sourcing techniques and social media practices use from scholarly research and use those findings to analyze and question working journalists about their own patterns.

Who is a journalist?
There isn’t currently a license or accreditation to determine who is and who isn’t a journalist. While many working journalists learned their craft through academic programs and apprenticeships, the qualification to serve in a gatekeeping role arguably came more often as a byproduct of trial and error than through an official certification (Agarwal and Barthel, 2013). There are, however, widely acknowledged professional values that are believed to set journalists apart from everyday citizens.

Good journalism starts with an understanding of ethics and what qualifies as news. “Journalists try hard to be objective, but neither they nor anyone else can in the end proceed without values,” Gans wrote in his book (1979). Individual journalists are expected to foster values such as “authenticity, accountability and autonomy (p. 263)” in their work even as they compete with non-traditional content producers who may not adhere to the same ethical rigor (Hayes, Singer and Ceppos, 2007).

News managers continue to expect their employees to possess strong news judgment, as they have since the professionalization of the industry. In addition, today’s news managers report wanting their staff to have additional professional experience, strong writing ability and the technical skills needed for cross-platform reporting (Wenger and Owens, 2013).

Journalists gather the news of the day by utilizing routines to identify content and the key players involved in an issue or event. Those routines have changed with the introduction and reinforcement of social media as part of the mainstream media. With the vastness of the digital landscape, journalists are met with both challenges and opportunities to enhance, alter and share their work.
**News assignments:**

Where individuals go for their news varies dependent on the type of news the audience is looking for. A study by the Media Impact Project, an initiative of the American Press Institute and the Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research, even further found audiences across demographics turn to a variety of platforms to receive their news. This finding counters the dated belief that certain generations largely gravitate to one medium or another (Media Impact Project, 2014).

Newsrooms are often organized in a linear hierarchy in which editors and managers assign and oversee the reported content and the packaging that content receives (Agarwal and Barthel, 2013) (Kurpuis, 2000). Although this holds true across a variety of media outlets, this research focuses exclusively on broadcast newsrooms, television reporters and their routines.

Television stations remain the most popular source of information for Americans consuming news (Media Impact Project, 2014). Today’s local television newscasts mirror the format Gans (1979) outlined in his book *Deciding What’s News*. A television newscast utilizes pictures, maps and graphs to fill approximately 22 minutes of aired content. The hard news stories typically run 1 to 2 minutes, with the most important story of the day as the lead. The lead is the first story, or leader, of the newscast.

Gans (1979) theorized that the stories selected for a newscast could be studied in one of two ways. He speculated a story’s selection could be analyzed by either looking at the journalist who covered it and the news values he or she possesses, or by looking at the news organizations’ expectations and values and how those norms cater to the salience of that story. Gans (1979) also comments “event-centered” stories with a hard today angle
frequently receive coverage. Examples of newsworthy items include protests, disasters, crimes and scandals, rites of passage, innovation, celebrations and traditions (Gans, 1979). Audiences report preference to local television newscasts specifically for news regarding weather, traffic and crime (The Media Insight Project, 2014).

Newsrooms often begin the day with a morning meeting in which reporters and producers pitch the stories they would like to see covered during the day’s newscasts. Assigned stories are often daily events or ideas received from a viewer tip. They can also include follow-ups to previously reported pieces (Kurpius, 2000). News editors utilize news values and routines when assigning stories. Other factors such as visual appeal and ability to make deadline might make a story more newsworthy for the day or not (Shoemaker et al., 2001) These editorial meetings are also an opportunity to pitch enterprise stories, which are stories developed through sources or individual curiosities. Research shows that station values have an impact on the types of stories they will produce. Kurpius (2000) categorized broadcast news stations into four categories based on the type of material each gravitated toward (p. 342). One type of station is the public journalism station. Kurpius (2000) writes stations focused on enterprise and deep connections to the community fell into this category. Through observation and interview methods, Kurpius (2000) determined routines amongst news teams and sourcing patterns contributed to the classification of each newsroom.

**Routines:**

Routines are the “repeated practices and forms that media workers use to do their jobs (Shoemaker and Reese, 1991, p.85). Routines are a critical part of understanding the Gatekeeping process (Shoemaker et al., 2001). Gatekeeping is considered a broad
representation of the routines journalists utilize to conduct their work. Routines help ensure accuracy, credibility by standardizing the process of interviewing credible sources, attributing their words and avoiding inserting personal opinion (Shoemaker and Reese, 1991). More specifically, these routines reinforce the expectation that reporters will maintain certain skill sets tied to news collection. These skills have grown and adapted over the years with the evolution of technology, but even as journalists experiment with new digital tools they remain loyal to professional routines and efficient work practices (Moon and Hadley, 2014). Some skills include the careful collection of still and moving images, social media best practices, competency with nonlinear editing and field production, as well as writing for various platforms (Wenger and Owens, 2013).

There is an abundance of literature related specifically to the role work routines play for broadcast news reporters. Established routines have shown to be more influential on a reporter’s work than the reporter’s personal backgrounds, values and beliefs (Cassidy, 2006). While studying the coverage of congressional bills, Shoemaker et al. (2001) observed a supporting trend. The understanding of newsroom patterns allowed for better prediction of a bills coverage than looking at the characteristics of individual journalists.

Sources

News is about people (Gans, 1979). Journalists rely on witnesses, spokespeople and newsmakers to provide eyewitness accounts and perspective for stories. Those stories are then packaged and shared with audiences across platforms. Those stories are heavily dependent on sources, which gives them great power. Sources have the ability to not only lie or withhold information from reporters, but also to frame their narratives as they see
most beneficial to them or their alliances (Gans, 1979). This practice is referred to as “officiating” in some Gatekeeping literature (Livingston and Bennett, 2003).

The most common type of source used in traditional reporting is the official source or the “known (Gans, 1979, p. 8)”. Official sources can be spokespeople, experts, the newsmaker himself or a directly involved party (Cassidy, 2006). Gans (1979) defines “knowns” as “political, economic, social and cultural figures; they could also be holders of official positions or powers behind thrones who play no official role (p.8)”. Regardless of the type of story, official sources continue to dominate the narrative (Livingston and Bennett, 2003). “When an unpredicted, non-scripted, spontaneous event is covered in the news, the one predictable component of the coverage is the presence of official sources,” they write (p. 376).

There is nothing stopping journalists from turning to neighbors, or other eyewitnesses in these types of situations. Advocates for community journalism seek to bring the lesser knowns of a community into the mass media more frequently. Ordinary people are reported to be unrepresented in mainstream reporting, which some scholars believe is the result of an overreliance on traditional reporting routines. Researchers note there is a deficiency in literature about the way community members can become more involved in the reporting process (Kurpius, 2000) (Moon and Hadley, 2014). Kurpius (2000) suggests community involvement can provoke new conversations and help ensure an accurate depiction of reality in coverage. Journalists report sometimes being unaware that stakeholders or groups even exist because sourcing is often overshadowed by powerful, official sources (Shoemaker and Reese, 1991). Some argue that decreasing
reliance on official sources and encouraging dialogue between journalists and the public would foster new ideas, and in turn stronger reporting (Kurpius, 2000).

Even as journalists develop new skills and embrace the vast digital landscape, journalists continue to maintain a high respect for ethical and trustworthy relationships with sources (Agarwal and Barthel, 2013). While some stations do report using social networking sites to find sources, the surveyed reporters did not elaborate in just how they did that and there does not seem to be a clear understanding of the ways in which to go about doing so. Facebook and Twitter have become platforms in which reporters can seek out anecdotal characters to give life to their stories, but researchers cite a need for additional research into the best ways to do so (Lysak, Cremedas and Wolf, 2012). Moon and Hadley (2014) found TV outlets used social media sources more frequently than print, but that they did so typically for softer news. Agarwal and Abel (2011) found a different outcome in their study of Twitter and CNN. In their analysis they observed that when CNN used Twitter as a primary source in a broadcast, it was more frequently as part of a hard news story. Twitter also played a role in engaging and interacting with audiences.

The influence of social media challenges both standardized routines and traditional sourcing practices. Half of Americans with Internet say they subscribe to news alerts (The Media Insight Project, 2014). With journalists and audiences continuing to use and adapt their social media use to better synchronize their digital and physical realities, the understanding of both parties usage becomes increasingly more critical.

**Social media trends**
The Media Insight Project (2014) revealed that social media applications serve as a supplemental instrument to news consumption. For example, audiences report first hearing about a breaking news story on television and then turning to the Internet and digital platforms for follow up, clarification and continued coverage. Younger audiences, however, do report discovering their news through social media three times more frequently than adults age 60-years and older. Audiences say they follow news throughout the day, which reinforces the need for reporters to provide ongoing reporting (The Media Insight Project, 2014).

Users find that receiving news over social media is not enough. Users want the ability to interact with the content, which can be done by sharing news stories, photos and videos or joining a discussion thread. In some cases, users are going further and becoming contributors by sharing their own photos and videos with news organizations (Matsa and Mitchell, 2014). Xu and Feng (2014) call this new symbiotic relationship a networked gatekeeping.

Xu and Feng (2014) found that consumers interacted more frequently with broadcast journalists than print journalists. These interactions include offering opinions about specific stories or about current events. While the study also showed that many consumers use social platforms to simply and unproductively express dissatisfaction with news organizations, there are productive ways to utilize interactions between consumer and producer. Xu and Feng (2014) write consumers use social media to build relationships with journalists they feel they have a deeper trust in the journalist and have more power to affect change in their community.
Community journalism strives to connect users to journalists. The thinking behind it is this model of journalism will encourage relationships and foster conversation. Social media offers a low-cost, easily accessible way to begin engaging in meaningful conversations. Literature examining the role community members play in the newsgathering process is lacking (Kurpius, 2000).

**Broadcast journalists’ current social practices**

As both journalists and sources continue to rely on social media tools, the ability to access one and other becomes increasingly easier. More than a quarter of social media users say they follow or like specific journalists and/or news organizations on their accounts and use the platforms to receive news content (Matsa and Mitchell, 2014). Without these tools, sources used to lack the ability to easily reach local journalists, which reinforced traditional Gatekeeping practices (Gans, 1979, p. 125). That’s not the case anymore. Tools like Facebook and Twitter remove this barrier. A social network is a digital community of individuals with common interests, goals and beliefs. Individuals become members of multiple communities on social media sites and interact with each other on multiple platforms (Kurpius, 2000).

The skills needed to navigate social media change rapidly in a professional environments. Wenger and Owens (2013) identified that the skills needed for web changed most drastically year-to-year during their quantitative textual analysis of job postings for broadcast news positions. They identified that alongside social media skills, familiarity with content management systems, search engine optimization and mobile applications also appeared as important qualifications. In 2009, only 2.8% of postings studied mentioned social media skills in their job description; however, that number
jumped to 8.5% in 2010. News directors interviewed for the study stressed the need to post quickly to social. “News needs to be posted on the web as the reporters get the information. It can’t wait. Viewers expect it to be there. And social media lets the viewers know that the information is there on our site,” a news director in Baton Rouge said (Wenger and Owens, 2013).

Studies and professional observation show that journalists consistently use social media, but how they use it varies from newsroom to newsroom. Despite the new medium, studies show that journalists continue to adhere to traditional routines in newsgathering while integrating social media into their work (Moon and Hadley, 2014).

Most newsrooms have adopted both Twitter and Facebook use into their newsgathering and news dissemination processes, which are found to be particularly useful during breaking news situations. Journalists report that the instantaneous nature of social platforms presents both opportunities and challenges in their daily work. High concern remains for truth and accuracy in reporting, but with an abundance of information now available, journalists are tasked with much more sifting (Lysak, Cremedas and Wolf, 2012).

Some believe stories become more powerful when they include an everyday person as a representation of a greater issue, but a challenge often arises in locating these anecdotal figures. Social media platforms allow journalists to network without relying on random happenstance or cold calling to find these anecdotal sources. Studies have shown social tools can bring new community voices into news coverage (Lysak, Cremedas and Wolf, 2012).
Lysak, Cremedas and Wolf (2012) wanted to understand how newsrooms are using social media and the impact social media use has on its staff’s routines. Lysak, Cremedas and Wolf (2012) asked what platforms local broadcast newsrooms are using, how journalists are using social media, what polices are in place to monitor social media, who is responsible for postings and how have these routines impacted editorial content? Using a questionnaire, the researchers identified 98% of surveyed local television newsrooms used Facebook in their newsgathering. They found journalists create personal and professional pages and use these profiles to find sources for their work. Although, the respondents answered using a Likert-type scale and short answers so a deep description of how they did this is not given. One respondent said, “If they are looking to find people to talk about a specific issue, let’s say Autism, they might put out a message they are seeking parents of autistic children to interview.” The survey indicated the journalistic value of social media depends on the station and the stations’ goals and values.

These findings attest to what social media and community journalism researcher Joy Mayer (2013) writes is a no-size-fits-all approach to social media by journalists. She stresses that an understanding of the tools isn’t enough in a journalistic capacity. Mayer (2013) writes journalists need to consider why they are posting before they post. An understanding of the why-factor will influence the type of post created, from structure to syntax. Mayer (2013) also suggests newsrooms identify how they will measure success in their social use. This can range from easy-to-digest reporting to collecting interactions, like shares, likes and retweets.
Retweets offer a very specific look at social use by journalists. Molyneux (2014) used retweets to identify patterns by working journalists in their Twitter use, as well as broader themes those patterns suggest.

He found that social media platforms allow journalists more editorial freedom than traditional reporting platforms, like newscasts or printed newspaper articles. Using his analysis, Molyneux (2014) determined that journalists have more freedom to stray from traditional journalistic norms in their retweets. Retweets catalogued included opinion, humor and personal brand development, which can be discouraged in more traditional reporting capacities. He writes, “main reports are expected to be free of opinion according to the objectivity norm, a and go to great lengths to ensure neutrality. Retweets, on the other hand, are a space where journalists feel more at liberty to pass along opinions.” He also identified a routine norm in which journalists include in their profiles “retweets do not equal endorsements” as a way of protecting their reputation of objectivity.

Molyneux (2014) also found tweets often were not stand-alone pieces of news content, but more snippets of information. The study also identified that journalists more often use original tweets, opposed to retweets, for links to their own reporting. Molyneux (2014) deduces the choices involved in retweets helps add to the personal brand the reporter is building for his or herself, independent from his or her news agency.

While broadcasters say they are in favor of using the medium, they also say there remains concern for the extent of truth and the expectation of accuracy that results from including information gathered from social media in their reporting. Industry leaders say a respect for truth and accuracy remains imperative when reporting on social media and
established policies can strengthen the ability to do so while driving traffic. James Hohmann of the ASNE Ethics and Values Commission (2011) reminds journalists engaging with audiences is encouraged but must be done in a professional manner, social networking is a tool and its usage to be taken seriously, and transparency includes admitting or acknowledging mistakes when they are made. Journalists have embraced social as a place to humanize themselves by acknowledging mistakes and building relationships. Attention to errors signals credibility to users (Hayes, Singer and Ceppos, 2007).

**Digital journalism**

Digital journalism gives journalists the opportunity to expand their reporting by giving context and soliciting feedback from their audiences. Before its advent, broadcast news reporters were limited to two minutes in a video format; however, now digital platforms give endless opportunity to give audiences more. Because a news story is just one small piece of a larger picture of an issue’s coverage, it becomes increasingly important more is given (Hayes, Singer and Ceppos, 2007).

Americans utilize multiple platforms to receive their news. They report often utilizing television newscast to first learn of an issue or breaking news situation, but go online for follow up and additional clarification. The digital landscape makes following a story easier and more effective (The Media Insight Project, 2014).

With a change in publication, comes a change in how to measure success. This is one part of social media strategies Mayer (2013) outlined in the previous section. Many digital journalists measure their success based on audience reaction (Agarwal and Barthel, 2013). Because of this, the routines by digital journalists are different than
journalists of previous generations. Agarwal and Barthel (2013) identified digital-only journalists place more emphasis on the ability to aggregate material and tap into ongoing conversations than create new content and break stories. Digital journalists do this through pointed social media use via RSS feeds and Twitter.

Industry professionals reinforce social media and digital journalism isn’t about putting lipstick on the pig. It must be rooted in good, ethical journalism and then utilized under an agreement of what merits success. While there is an expanding emphasis on digital techniques, news directors still value professional experience, strong writing, news judgment, production skills and the ability to work under deadline (Wenger and Owens, 2013).

Methodology

It’s a point that has been reiterated throughout the entirety of this paper: “Sources and journalists…must have access to each other before information can become news (Gans, 1979, p. 81) This research seeks to tackle the issue Gans raised decades ago in identifying ways in which broadcast news reporters are diminishing the barriers between their news organization and their community. The invisible distance provided by social media allows sources easy and free opportunities to suggest, critique and encourage their local news teams.

I hope to build upon the literature that seeks to understand this opportunity by using two qualitative research methods: observation and semi-structured interviews. For this project, I will visit at least five stations with varying market size and use open-ended questions to identify the importance of community relationships is to the journalist, the ways in which they utilize social media and the vision they have for utilizing it more
effectively. At each of the stations I will interview two journalists, the news director and
the web/interactive director if applicable. A proposed list of stations to visit and the
questions I intend to ask are in include in the appendix of this proposal. Stacey Woelfel is
IRB (Institutional Review Board) certified and will oversee my use of human subjects
throughout my interview process.

Sarah Tracey (2013) writes in *Qualitative Research Methods* that interviews can
reveal information that is often left out of official documentation (p. 133). I will use
several suggestions from Tracey for my interviews. I will bring a list of questions to the
newsroom, but the goal will be to allow the conversation to flow naturally. I believe a
narrative interview style will work best because it will encourage the reporter to draw
from personal anecdotes to best answer my questions. I believe themes will emerge from
these anecdotes, which will be the basis for my conclusions.

Several of the studies included cited in this proposal used methodologies similar
to the one I am proposing. Kurpius (2000) drew conclusions after observing newsrooms
and interviewing journalists and managers about their practices. This methodology
allowed him to identity newsroom values and their impact on editorial decisions.
Agarwal and Barthel (2013) also conducted interviews to identify a “thick description of
an emerging professional environment (p.5).” These interviews allowed them to
determine traditional newsroom norms and routines change when working for digital-
only publications. Lysak, Cremedas and Wolf (2012) analyzed the results of a web-based
survey, but allowed for open-ended, short answer questions. These answers provided the
support they needed to determine what and how broadcast news reporters used social
tools in their daily routines.
I believe because of the timeliness of this research, it would be attractive at a digital journalism conference or in a journal of digital journalism research. I also hope to share my findings with the reporting team at KOMU 8 News. I hope to learn how television reporters have embraced social media tools in 2015 and how they have impacted their ability to tap into conversations within their community. I believe that an understanding of Gatekeeping theory, traditional sourcing and routine practices is critical to ensure the change in practices is visible. Social media offers limitless opportunities for television reporting, this research seeks to identify insight into a small window of those possibilities.
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Appendix:

**Proposed questions for journalists:**

Which social media platforms do you use as a broadcast journalist?
Do you maintain separate professional and personal account? For which platforms?
How do you integrate social posts into your reporting routine?
Does social media use feel like a natural part of your reporting process?
What instructions did you receive?
   - Do you think they’re reasonable?
   - Can you give me an example?
Do you see your social use as a newsgathering or news-promoting tool? Why?
How is your social use enhancing your storytelling?

How do you maintain relationships with sources?
How often do you interact with followers on your social accounts? For what purpose?

What strategies do you use for enterprise reporting?
How has social media led you to a non-traditional source?
How has an interaction social media influenced a story idea?

What was the purpose of your last tweet? (Was it to meet an expectation? Tease to your story for broadcast?)

What experience did you have with social media prior to your taking the position here?

**Proposed questions for news directors and/or web interactive directors:**

How would you describe the culture of the newsroom?

Which social platforms do your reporters use?
If any, which platforms does your station use separately?

What are your expectations of your reporters on social?
How do you measure their success?

How do you identify the issues that are the most important to your community?
What is the value of social media to your station?

How do you determine which stories to post to Facebook?
How do you measure the success of a post on Facebook?
What is the role of your homepage – how important is the homepage relative to Facebook profile?
At what point in a story’s development does its publication on a social platform become relevant?

What kind of training do you provide to your reporters on social media?

To what extent do you foster enterprise journalism in your newsroom?
How much emphasis is on breaking news?
Which projects do you feel are enhanced most strongly by additional social?
How often do you receive user-generated content? What are the processes for handing that content?

What value does station branding have with or over a reporters personal branding on social media?

How does your station strive to connect with the community?
What’s the biggest challenge in doing so? Success?

Recruitment letter

Dear [insert news director name],

My name is Lee Anne Denyer and I am a graduate student at the University of Missouri. I received your contact information from [insert contact name here]. He/she suggested your station would be a good fit for my upcoming research project. My research focuses on broadcast newsrooms and social media use. I would be thrilled to have your team contribute to my findings.

My research focuses on social media use, station values and sourcing techniques. The hope is to identify ways in which social tools can be used to identify non-official sources and community narratives. I would be happy to give you additional details on the specifics of the research methods over the phone or by email if you would like further clarification or have any questions.

This research should not pose an excessive inconvenience to you or your team. I would speak with you, your web/interactive director, and one to two of your reporters over the course of one to two days. I would like to be a part of a story meeting, as well as observe work on your web desk.

I am confident in this project because of my background in both the newsroom and with academic research. I work at the NBC affiliate in Columbia, Mo. as an anchor, reporter and digital producer. I have also completed the broadcast news course work.

Prior to beginning the master’s program at MU, I received my BA from the University of Oregon School of Journalism and worked as a production assistant at KGO-TV for two years.
I am very excited about this project and feel there is much to learn from your team, as well as about the topic I am studying. I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,
Lee Anne Denyer
Graduate student, Radio-Television program
Appendix B. Transcripts

News Director

News director for name of station removed for anonymity and name of station removed for anonymity serves CBS, NBC and a Telemundo at this point.

LD: Can you tell me a little about your background with TV news? How you got here?

[A section of this interview has been removed due to identifying descriptions.]

...My wife and I decided to move back to city removed and that's how I got in the TV side. It was whoever could get a job first and then once [phone rings] Hold on a sec.

Anyway — but we moved here to city removed and we both went to school here and we wanted to move our family here. For all I knew I was going to get a job, could have been anything. In fact I was a finalist for an outdoor advertising. Looking for places to secure signs, lease management. I had a lot of experience with dealing with planning departments with my city hall reporting so that gave me a leg up on that. I didn't get the job and then not long after that I answered an ad for an assignment manager at the NBC station, which was call letters removed. I went there and that's where I started on the TV side. I started running the desk there and that was in 1998.

LD: And how long have you been in that position?

We were downtown. Right right. As time went on we merged and I became — during that time I became an interim news director and then I eventually became the news director for the whole thing.

LD: And how long have you been in that position?

I guess you could say I was news director, official news director, like 2001 to 2006 and then I was fired in 2006, August. And that was, we had consultants coming in and this and that. It was like a baseball team firing a manager. It was nothing I did bad. Nothing, ratings actually weren't that bad. We had this dynamic that I was always trying to let people know, people would watch, when you start to simulcast you're dividing your audience, anyway, they all wanted these monster ratings. And this dynamic I thought was almost washing out in a way. But anyway, I was let go. About, a few months later my first general manager was a general manager at call letters removed in city removed and he wanted some help for his newsroom. He asked if I would help him because it was dysfunctional for various reasons so I went there for three months kind of as a consultant. I ended up just running their desk for a while. And next thing you know,
they want me to stay so I end up working there and commuting back to city removed on the weekends for close to five years. We had a few; I worked under two news directors during that time. I never put in for the news director job because I never thought I wanted to stay there and keep commuting. But essentially I was kind of another news director that they had, which was fine and was good. We worked through the uh I worked through the recession and stayed employed so about 2011 my GM who fired me called me and he asked what I was doing and I said I was trying to get back to city removed and pretty much do anything. He asked me to critique their five o'clock so I sent him a long report. And then about a week later he asked if I would come back.

LD: Wow.

So I came back. That was, that's kind of, since then we were definitely under capitalized, we were under a lot of debt we had furloughs we were going through, equipment was old...anyway about maybe about almost two years these new people company removed started kicking the tires and anyway they're back and I kept my job. Because you never know when new ownership comes in. I learned the TV side came in here, left, learned a little market, different worked in a different market which was refreshing in city removed and came back. Still here. Again.

LD: You must love city removed

We do. We love it. We do. And we're lucky to be able to work here. My wife she is senior vice president at the bank and she's the controller. She loves her job there. I just don't, if I were to go somewhere and take another gig. I would have to go. She wouldn't go. She was like 'why would I want to go?' So uh, we don’t need to. She doesn't need to. We're here.

LD: It's a good town

It's not a bad place. It's been good to us.

LD: Shifting gears on you - What social platforms are your reporters using?

They are using, I mean, our web, our Facebook, our Twitter. Some are on Instagram, our Instagram account, are active on it and but our main focus is Facebook, Twitter and our mobile and our web right now.

LD: Which platforms does the station use separately? So you have your reporters using their own?

No, they, they are, they use their own but we are, they feed the Facebook, our station name Facebook page. Our twitter handle. Our station name @station name Twitter
handle so they're asked to be active on that. They have — Some have their own professional pages but then they have their own responsibilities for feeding and posting on the website. I mean their stories, not only their stories, but just pitching in as well. Everybody is a web producer.

LD: What are your expectations of your reporters when it comes to social media?

To be as active as possible create each day create a conversation with our followers about whether it's about what they're doing, whether it's asking uh for some input or looking for people who may want to participate in the story so crowdsourcing. Being active in Twitter is you know I think that we're still below where we want to be on our Twitter activity but you know to create a good level of activity there... We want to be, the whole goal of this digital and all platforms of broadcast is the whole goal of our, our mission is to be the best small news market. News station in the country, in the country. And so we everybody we want them to, on average we're thinking in our minds that they should be posting between at least four and five stories on the web, you know uh including theirs. So we like them to post their story and get their stuff posted and then also pick from AP or anything that they can help contribute, but you know like, name removed is on top of it so much. I mean, he's taking a lot of pressure off of me because I was thinking I have to post, and I do, but I call him up and I'll post something and he's already done it. He's really quick. He's got a good eye. So anyway that, that's a whole evolution of having name removed and a weekend guy there to. But it's I believe we're trying to hit at least, I think 50 stories a day between every body.

LD: On which?

On the web, on the web. We want our weather guys to post at least, at least two updates on Facebook. That's a minimum. We want them to be active on Twitter. Our sports guy we want, they've really picked it up. Same expectations. We've built a local scoreboard that we want them to update so and then part of that. We have an overall expectation for the whole station to watch and look at our platforms. And that's really a big quality control thing. It's about seeing something and taking action. Seeing something and saying this is "why is this this way? I'm going to flag it" or "wow, that was good" or you know a better ways to do stuff or there was a misspelling. Any of that. We're trying, everybody has a stake in making the website the best, easy to use, easy to understand, easy to get your information.

LD: How do you measure success on your website?

I think really we're metrics of views, just like, so I look at... There are deeper analytics, but right now because we're still, I would say in our infancy, but we've, I mean pause boy name is really good at digging in. Right now it's sessions, users, page views.
LD: So you're using Google Analytics?

Yeah, Google Analytics. Yeah. We keep an eye on these. We have a, I don't know, did name removed talk to you about our growth?

LD: Not yet. We haven't done a formal chat

OK. Yeah yeah. Without specific numbers it's been phenomenal. I think well over expectations. Giving the days when we switched over from to a new content managements system. We've had a digital I think now maybe close to three years. We finally I got someone to say you know we need a full time digital person so that was about probably maybe 30 months ago, 32 months ago so we had hired name removed and then we brought it name removed who was kind of an intern. But we, that gave us just a central hub for somebody to manage the system to feed the system, to look it over, QC it, to crack the whip on our overall culture change, which we have been going through. And then that was a matter of the culture change really relates to fitting the social media platform activities that we all need to do into your workflow of your broadcast workflow and now it's, so we won't think of it that way anymore maybe two or three years from now. We'll think of it as just part of the overall news information workflow. I'm thinking, but there's, we're good. We've made great strides there. And I think you may have dealt with that and heard that in other newsrooms. Certain people are like "oh my god, what am I going to do?" "Why do I have to feed that?" I dealt with that at call letters removed. The old time reporters and it doesn't mean that all old time reporters are not in to it because that's not true. Member of news team's name removed is into it. I remember name removed, who is a good friend of mine, she would say "ok, so if I've got a story and I need to post. I need to get it ready for the 5 but you want me to post. What do I do first?" Ok you know, figure it out. Just don't be that way, but those are the things you're fighting. Every station is at its own stage I'm sure still. This place immediately recognized where they needed to be to get ahead of the curve so we've got a full time. we've got someone to cover the weekends. Next year I'm sure we'll have someone to cover the evenings. We had a big, event removed so our CEO, that happened around 3 in the morning. On a Sunday? Sunday at 3. We're not staffed at 3 a.m. here at all. We don't have a morning news on Sundays So our CEO name removed is, he's in South Carolina. North Carolina? South Carolina? Hilton Head, wherever that is. And anyway name removed come in around 8:30. She posts something. It's three hours over there. He doesn't see anything on our website so you know it's we're like red alert, he's not happy and then you know I you know explain to him there's a lot of reasons that he didn't get this alert because we don't have anybody there. And he's like "What are we going to do about it?" OK. Well these are our options. That led to our ok, let's get somebody on the weekends.

Now they're like what happens if something happens at 6 am in the morning. Well, right now the way we're staffing it. We're going to look for the sweet spots. Sweet spot in the
day. So we're going to staff between 1 and 3 and then you know so that's kind of the spot when we you know the weekend reporters going out and doing stuff and the evening producer/anchor is coming in so we're kind of filling that gap. And look we have a game plan if something overnight happens. We've added that. And that game plan is anybody at the station says "oh my god, name removed, 2 in the morning did you hear there's a big plane crash." You know, something big that we should probably get on the web. And then I can either ring name removed at home or I can come in here and post it as soon as we can, and that's. But we have a contingency plan for that. But pause we're looking at, if you look at our whole staffing, which we have about 29. Everybody is a contributor, ok? But name removed and a guy that works two days a week are the, are the primary guys so. I think anyone can see where we're going that's out of whack. We'll be building a digital news hub and go broader from there. But I think we get a lot of mileage out of what we're doing right now and the way we're doing it. Plus we've got good buy in from our reporters out in the field and feeding in. I think that our competition. They, we in frequency is [looking at competition's page two hours], ok 11, one two, three four. OK, they've posted three stories today. 11:51. Am I reading that right?

LD: Does this reflect in your ratings?

Yeah, that's another thing. So we've got this huge numbers and when let's just say 2 to 2.5 years ago they had us by 10,000 likes we now have them by 6146 as of about an hour ago.

LD: So you're measuring success?

The question is, the question is are we getting something from that halo effect? And we are. I'm kind of impatient and want more. There morning show, they have a really good anchor. She still dominates. Our 11 beats them, our 5 is a horse race, but we're really looking at just our efforts and we think we have a much better product. Hey, we should get a good halo effect. And you know, this is interesting because you can see the analytics. It's a diary market and you're comparing as far as our broadcast numbers we're going by the Neilson diaries and those you know are kind of wishy-washy weird. I think that they're even off. 21:37 Obviously that's what it's about and it's about going to where people are getting their news. 21:41 I don't know. The 5 o'clock news. Is that going to be obsolete? You know?

LD: I don't know.

Who knows. In a local news market, probably not. I don't know. It's all still complimentary.

LD: And I get the sense you love city name. I think that's fair to say. So how do you identify then issues that are important just the everyday people that live. How are you tapping into, everyday moms, dads, kids want form their newscast?
Well we've done market research and that was about, we're I've got it in a pile over there. Smith and Geiger. Smith Geiger is our research consultant. Broadcast coach. That's the latest as far as just going on and getting hard research about top 10 people that they're interested in and not just what they're interested in but within the weather, what do they want, they're just most interested in the next 12 hours our research tells us. Our audience is, I don't know if that's much different but public safety, scams, environmental stories ehhh down on the scale. OK? But so there's that part. Then there's the pause with social media. With what we post looking over closely the activity the likes, the views, our Facebook what was it yesterday it was the horse rescue. And so, right away it was those are going to get big numbers. Instead of, anyway, we gave that effort we said ok we got to do more for the 11. That was one way of doing it. It's the conversation that we're listening to on Facebook. Mostly you're hearing it, you're seeing it on Facebook. Hey why don't you do a story about this. Why don't you do a story about that. We definitely have our ear close to the ground on that and they email us as well.

LD: So you mean conversation between your staff and viewers commenting?

Yeah. Yeah. What we post. Even they'll post us without, they'll just post us because they have this connection. But you know looking over the comments to see if there's a thread or a theme about concerns about a certain story that we would pull out of a story that we post. It's digging into those and digging into that conversation. And name he's good at that. That's kind of his primary job. And then other reporters some are more into it that others. So like name removed my desk guy hey these guys posted this this and this. They get a lot of leads from there name removed is another one. They're, they watch that stuff like a hawk. You know it's, part of it is you build that and you call them. It doesn't always mean you're going to get a story out of them or it's going to go anywhere, but at least you listened to them. This allows us to give them some skin in the game and feel like they do, you know, have someone to listen to them about something. Sometimes it's just hey we probably not a story but this is what you want to do or we just jump right on it. So we know right now the biggest concern right now is public safety and for good reason.

LD: Yeah. It's dark here.

SH: [laughs.]

LD: Those streets are so dark! It was the first thing i noticed when i was driving around last night.

The, city name removed it's downtown plaza. We've had this issue and maybe it's an aftermath from the recession and people trying to get meaningful work, but there's a lot more homeless out there. And so that, they get a bum wrap but our downtown is - things
have gotten better because there's been a reaction and a plan and those are things and then we have the whole marijuana situation, legalize marijuana. And that is spinning of a lot of some serious crime some small time crime. Those are the things. That's the big thing right now. And I know your families they’re interested in where our education is going and how the money is being spent. Crime, education for their kids and stuff to do is another thing. It's an interesting place if you compare with city name removed has much better facilities and there's a little jealousy there.

LD: So how important is I guess social media savvy when you're looking for a new person for your team whether it's a reporter or producer?

Yeah! I mean it's a pause it's a critical qualities that we'll always seek in someone. I think for the most part the new candidates are coming built in with that. That wasn't the case probably 4, 5,6 years ago, but I think we're kind really progressing into that just, you almost expect it now. If someone has the basics, I kind of expect that. What catches my eye is how innovative they are with those platforms so you can look at something and post something and I don't know be snarky or do whatever the hell you want, but there's also ways to leverage them and some people do much people do better than others and are.

LD: Can you give an example of something innovative that you saw recently that you were like, "Wow, I really like what you did there."

Yeah. Let me think.

LD: If not specifically more conceptual is ok.

You know I just, crowdsourcing is a basic one that some are using. I'm trying to think of a - let me get back on that one. There was a case where I thought, "oh that was a good way to be innovative and using it to tell stories."

LD: Can you elaborate on that?

There's some research that says that people don’t like reading other people's comments on social media on a TV screen. There's ways, but there's ways to do that. I think that just as we go out and get MOSs out on the street. I don't think that's much different than grabbing some well thought out comments and reactions to stories that can help frame a story. You know everything is still a snap shot. It just is, but you're, when you know, in an MOS you're going out and asking someone "will you talk to me?” but in a comment you're, you're, you're seeing a prompt. Someone who is actively making the choice to read something or come to you to say this is my voice this is what i have to say about it and that's got a lot of value to it and you need to pay attention to it.
I think we take it for granted in a lot of ways and we dismiss it too many times, but those are and so some reporters are good about how they weave that into their storytelling. Because I'll talk to a reporter and I'll ask what have you seen, what's the vibe about what you've posted and they'll go yeah, they're doing this. And I go, well so how are you going to bring that into your story? And they'll be like well, ok. I say just weave it in there. Figure it out. You can do it. It's a good part of the story. And then that just leads to more interaction and conversation, we hope.

LD: This is a bit of another shift, but how important is enterprise journalism to you as a news director.

It's always, it's very important. It's a product of you know a reporter learning, getting there, learning their area and getting to know people. I think it's important because I think those stories that come out of those ideas and if somebody says, usually if i get pitched a story and well that's not on our plan today. It's out of the...and they have an idea or a passion that's to me that's going to come across in a news line up. You know? As fresh. As a different look than our competitors. It's a way to zig when they're zagging that I appreciate. I look both, I'm surfing our competition and there's just days when they're just doing the same things. There's arguments laughs you guys do the same stories. It's true. I just love the days when I can say that's predictable stuff and ours is not because that reporter you know had the sense to on another story talk about something and bring it and remember it and bring it back and work it. This market is, and in TV, it's easier said than done to pause to, enterprising one thing is one thing giving it you know a good effort is another and it's not always easy to do. That's a great story. I don't think I can turn that today laugh I need to turn something today. And I don't want to, I'll back off it. Let's not try to turn that today. Let's do it in bits and pieces and some producers will say just turn it, but in the end it gets a fresh feel to our viewers. Yeah. It's and it think right now we have a good group that's bringing stuff to the table. And assignment editors name removed demands it. Three pitches a day, that's his thing. Give it to me. It's even though he knows reporters are going to come and say I don’t have anything, but he's going to say three pitches a day, three pitches a day. That's our mantra. For the most part everybody comes to work with, thinking about something. It's important. It's kind half enterprising, half desk driven right now in our.

LD: I don't want to take too much of your time of course. I think my last question is, what is your biggest challenge in connecting with your community and really trying to be spokesperson for the people who live here.

You know it's, it's the turn over that we have in our group, in our frontline reporting staff. You know you talk to the people out there because I've been around for awhile now and one of the things is "there's always somebody new" and it is. It's hard to do that. We pause It's good. We have a mix of veterans and what we do is we try to give our new
people a crash course in our institutional memory about what's going on. As long as we have that core. It think we maintain that pretty well the way we're doing that. The new eyes. The fresh eyes that come in. I almost want them to look at stuff however be curious they have a new fresh, they have a fresh set of eyes. they may see something much different and so it's, I think if, I'd be interested to see if new ownership came in and said [news director name removed] now we want our own news director because it did happen with some [laughs] of the department heads here. it does happen. And a whole new news director and then [name removed], him and I worked together. And then you have [anchor name removed] and there's [anchor name removed] and they've been around here too. It would have been interesting to see how they would have regrouped and connected. I don't know. Sometimes you put too much value into that. I'll tell you social media especially obviously Facebook and the way we're connecting I think it's created a bond where it's even, even before social media uh you know the viewer I think what you want is them to feel an ownership of their station. Like, they depend on you. There's an ownership factor and now we've [pause] but I don't know if you put a 100 viewers in a box and how many of that percentage feel that way or it's just the news and I’m turning it on and I don’t care. And I laugh at them or whatever then I go onto my next thing or how many of them think that's my station or that's my news and those are my anchors. That's my stuff. I think with social media that bond and opportunity to connect is obviously, it's a huge opportunity. It's an engagement. It's almost like brand engagement. You're able to give them more value and ownership back and forth. Gove something more, even more than hey you're my thing. That's how I find out about what's going on in my neighborhood. That's you. I go this this and I go to that. And I go to that and hopefully it's all one [station named removed] behind it. Whatever station, that's what they really want to do and that's the beauty of our social media effort and I don't know. I's been weird. I’m kind of in the cusp of all this. I grew up and didn't have a microwave. I tell these guys I grew up before microwaves. I've seen - I have one foot in the no cell phones and just phone calls and faxes and that's it and walking around downtown talking to people. I've seen that. And then this coming at me and wondering do I even know how to manage this and figure it out. The trick to get people like [named removed] and others underneath to help with that. That’s critical. Newsrooms are - It's going to be interesting to see. Small and medium markets I'm sure they are there's a lot out there that they're struggling with the transition. We were just kind of this is the way it's going to be. This company even developed its own digital ad agency. So we have our own agency and it's the only here in the north state. We have specific sales people that just do digital now. it's not like hey advertise with us and we'll get you a website, we'll get you a page. It's totally focused on just digital. That's how important these this ownership has been doing. And I have I tell everyone what your audience is it's [name removed] on the east coast. And that guy is watching our stuff and he has expectations that helps drive the culture and the motivation and believe me. [news director name removed], why did we fail there? Why did you do that? Usually I've been able to give him pretty good answers. They just want stuff to be so good so fast. They're not unreasonable or anything, but that's a huge driver to change
culture. It's been an interesting education for me. They want me to fly 50,000 feet up as best I can, but I'll go out with the camera. I'll still go shoot stuff. I'm still a reporter.

LD: That's awesome.

Oh yeah.

LD: I love it.

I think I'm one of the better shooters around here.

LD: laughs

That's an overview.

LD: Is there anything that I didn't ask about that you think is important to get in there?

I think one thing that we It was another meeting we talked about. When we were changing over to Synapse and doing this whole thing and when we hired our digital guy we just said let's make weekly an touch bases. And so we did. Really informal. name removed and I would just go in and then we said you know what we got to get more people involved with this. Anyway, we meet every Tuesday at 10:30, 10:45. It's our digital meeting. We go over, and it's all about quality control, it's all about new initiatives and tracking them. Putting dates on them and touching bases and that's how important that is. We have daily editorial meetings obviously in the afternoon those are just touch bases, but I don't do a QC meeting for my news every week like that. I mean we do our every two week management meeting. This is a focused very concentrated get together on what were doing all things digital. everything. It even covers sales contests and all that. The other day, part of it is, ask Were asking everyone to click around the website. Anything looks weird? I've caught something laugh earlier in the week. Not yet. This page not fond thing. We're trying to figure that out. It's a minor thing. It's not going to kill anybody but those are the things that we're on top of. We're just not letting this thing, here's your new website now let it ride. And It's a pretty quick meeting. It's like 15 minutes for the most part, and we come up with new ideas and new solution. And it's just amazing how many fronts you have. It did lead to us synapse. We're all pretty much happy with this platform here on the web, but we don't like our mobile. And so we are changing that app and that was the result of that. And it was a facing reality that especially our weather it's not as good as what 7 has. And then this company approached us and they showed us what they could do and I believe we're going to change out. That's all part of that process. That's how important all this is. It would be interesting to see just what the news flow is news is five years from now.

LD: Oh yeah.
I don’t know. Maybe I can retire.

LD: Anything else you want to add?

No, we just do our meetings. Another meeting. You know what these guys don't dwell. Our meetings are quick. There's no whining. There's nothing like that. That's the good thing. We just get down to business. We're going to buy a drone.

LD: Nice.
News Director — Dayside Executive Producer

[Author's note: Researcher interviewed the dayside executive producer in place of news director who was out of town]

name removed for anonymity. I'm the executive producer dayside.

LD: How is social media playing a role in the actual newscast that go on the air?

It definitely changed the way we cover news because I think a lot of people now with social media they can see everything that's happening now so we've had to adjust our newscasts to happening now. People can get their information at any moment so you have to pretty much treat your live broadcast that way as well. We changed our format a little bit to incorporate that. Probably like maybe five, maybe 10 years you know we would have stories which would break in the morning and then by the time they'd air people would know about them already so now we change them up. We follow everything that's going on social and we take that into consideration when we're writing. You know, something you may have heard of an hour ago or something you may have tracked on social media now we've found out x, y and z and we also try and find different elements of a story that you cannot get on social media and we'll just hog until it airs. It's definitely changed the way we cover news and how we deliver it as well.

LD: So just to clarify what you're saying, you're saying you're using some process writing in your actual newscasts? Like, "we saw this on social media..."

Right.

LD: We saw this on Twitter. So you're including that kind of language in your newscast?

Definitely. We're, we just went through a whole process writing change over a year and a half ago, about a year and a half ago. We're slowly getting to it. Just like on Friday we had a story about a piano that was on top of a rock. Well that day at 6 we said you know this blowing up on Facebook and social media and on the Internet. It's one of our top searches and or top stories that you guys are looking at. This is x, y and z. We're definitely incorporating language like that into our newscasts.

LD: If you had to teach a new reporter how to do that, how would you tell them in a couple sentences?

Be transparent. Just be, I mean bottom line, transparent. How did you get your information? How did you get true information? Walk people through how you got your story.

LD: What are your expectation of your reporter in terms of their social media use?

We, for instance, if we send a reporter to a particular case, a court case, that's just the easiest one to think of right now. Or a hearing. They're in there. They can hear quotes.
They can hear just about anything. Just tweet as you go. They're just tweeting, tweeting, tweeting and we follow around as well. Sometimes there's reporters who tweet their sound bites like if there's a sound bite in court or a hearing or in a news conference or wherever they are. Oh, the mother just told me x, y and z and they'll use that sound bite or they'll, mother just told me that she's devastated that her kid is gone at 5 her biggest regret in life. You know? And that's something that's giving something to our Twitter followers, but at the same time teasing them to hey stick around for the newscast. It can go both ways, but definitely they are to be engaged on their Facebook pages and their Twitter accounts and break news throughout the day.

LD: How do you measure their success? How do you know who is doing well and who needs guidance and help?

That's more for our digital department to let us know. They're pretty engaged with and they can track who is tweeting what and so they know the ones who are big tweeters and the one who may tweet once a month big laughs so some people need a little push. It's a big change.

LD: How important is it that the broadcast producers are working with the digital producers? What's that relationship like?

Extremely important. We're all one. It's not two different departments anymore. We're all one now. And that's the reason why, it used to be in our newsroom and they've got prime real estate, trust me laughs, prime real estate in our newsroom and since we moved over there's now a web person at the assignment desk so you're something, you tweet something. Sometimes you hear something or you say something here, you hear it you tweet it. After you've verified all that stuff of course. That helps us break news there and it helps in the language when we are putting our newscast together. We just broke this on our station name removed app. And since then we've found out a, b and c. You know? We broke this on our station name removed app. I can't even say it. Good thing I'm not an anchor. And on our website and you guys have been asking for more information and we just found out a, b and c. We incorporate that language. And also it's very important in our, the stories that we put on the air, the producers know how to engage in do a lot of cross promotion. The web and our app they allow us to give more information without putting it on the air because we only have a certain amount of time on the air of course, but we'll put the most interesting nugget on the air, but also tease something that they can't get on the air or tease something to allow them to engage on our digital platforms.

LD: I know your news director is not here.

Mhm.

LD: Can you tell me a little bit about what kind of values the station has? What are you trying to do with your community? How do you want to reach them or be a spokesperson for them? Some overarching themes for your station?
Our top, our priorities are breaking news and investigative journalism. Those are our two top priorities. Breaking news - people tune in. There are a number of things that happened in region name removed and the biggest one is earthquakes. People need to know right now. They'll just turn you on and you have to stay on and reassure them that everything is going to be ok. Earthquakes, fires pause those are the big ones. And Hollywood deaths big laugh. This is the, the industry is here. Breaking news and investigative journalism. We're beefing up our investigative unit. I mean, to the biggest I've ever seen it here. It started out with just I think when I first got here, three people if that, and now it's almost up to 12.

LD: Wow.

And they are pumping out stories and I mean, like left and right. These are stories that you can't get anywhere else. They are stories that you go into the community, you're cutting the red tape. You are actually engaging with the viewer and hearing their complaint and knowing that there are probably 20,000 other people just like them who want, who need to hear this story. So we try to get them that information as well. That's in, our investigative unit definitely plays into our branding name removed. We have this whole, hear it is branding name removed. That's what we're trying to do be there branding removed. You tell us what your problem is we go out and go there and find the answers for you. If we know there's some corruption we'll go out there and find the information. And we also try to incorporate that in our daily coverage of our newscast. We always, we call them anchor engagement opportunities. That's an area - so we talk about, say we put a story on about kidnappings. We try and find the branding removed what the worst place in region name removed for kidnappings or have the most kidnapping is this area and here's why. You know? That's an opportunity for our reporters to be engaged, for our anchor to be engaged and it's also an opportunity you know we have the hottest place for kidnapping and we also put compiled an entire list on our website or on our app. IT also ties into each other.

LD: So when you say anchor engagement, do you mean that in a...

A breakout. More information. More information. The reporter is more topical. The anchor component is more of a, it includes a little information you probably didn't think about but we've got it for you. A little extra.

LD: So how long have you been in this market?

I've been in this market for 2 and half years.

LD: Two and half? Where did you come from?

I came from Dallas.

LD: Dallas. So how well do you think you understand this market, what the people here want?
I grew up in state name removed. And halfway here in region name removed and halfway in region name removed. When you become, when you move to market to market the best thing you can do is research the history, research the, look at the audience research that each station has. Got out and find what the viewers want and historically how this market has been covered and how the other station is covering it as well. So I've been through all of the research on other stations and here. I've researched the other stations as far as watching them every single day and seeing what kind of stories they cover and how we can be different. How we can be better.

LD: How, What is your

By our philosophy, the brand name removed. Everyone covers the same stories pretty much and that's the reason why we have the brand name removed. We're going to give you the extra information. We're going to investigate that nugget that nobody is going to think about.

LD: That's the break out, engagement type thinking when you're putting together your newscast?

Yes. What extra can we give them? That's where our investigative unit comes in as well. I'm trying to think of the story, take the UC Berkeley kid from yesterday. We had name removed in our investigative unit finding out why did it take police so long. This is before the body was found. There's something missing and so we had someone digging on that while the reporter was covering just the story on where he was and the timeline of events. And so we do that with every big story sometimes there's something to report, sometimes there's not. But we try to be ready and when there's a water main break. We'll go and cover it how it's impacting, but we also put somebody in our investigative unit trying to find out why we're having water main breaks, pipelines bursting. And we're able to give that extra nugget every single time. And that's where our brand comes in.

LD: I noticed it comes up in the story meeting. Someone noted it.

Mhm.

LD: It's kind of floating around at all times amongst the different departments. 11:01 So it's pretty cross platform

Oh yeah. Definitely. We're trying just to get it in everyone's minds. It's still relatively new. We switched over probably a year and a half ago. We were always brand but we just didn't enforce it. And now we have the staff, the people and the mindset. It's really taking shape.

LD: What do you think the biggest challenge you think the station has in terms of its social media presence or use?
It's hard to say the challenges. I know, it's just a big area. You know? It's hard to say the challenges. I can only think of the things

LD: Is there things, or a goal for social media?

The biggest goal for social media, ok the biggest challenge, getting people to just engage with us when they hear a big story like something happens in city removed or in the actual city and so uh we're trying to get them to think oh, LA let's go to station name removed and so getting to them or just going to our website or going to our Twitter handle or whatever. One getting them to understand the difference and getting them to come to us.

LD: So would you say getting them more involved in the pre reporting opposed to just the post reporting stage?

Uhm

LD: is that what you're saying?

No, just getting them, just getting them involved period. When you put out news alerts they only go to your followers.

LD: Right.

So just getting more people to engage and like just so we can reach a wider audience. We have what like 15 million people in this area, but we have what 800 thousand followers on Facebook and I can't remember exactly what the twitter. I think it's like 80k. I think it's that high. But hum, anyway just getting more people. Getting more reach so you can expand, but you know, we say it on the air we tease it on the air and it's coming along.

LD: Any tips for people who are starting out who aren't in a big market like this. What advice do you give to them for trying to get their personal brand or station brand...

If they're starting out in a market like this?

LD: No, just starting out in a smaller market..

Ok. Gotcha. I was like whoa. Engage in all of it. Understand social media. I would say just as it's all one platform now. It's not separate.

LD: Really understanding the tool that you use?

It's just like a camera. It's your camera. It's your script. And it's social media. It's all one now. Incorporated all in your coverage. DO not see it as something that's secondary or an extra, or extra work.
LD: I hear that.

And the topic, what should be top of my mind is break it on the web first. That sometimes can be far more reaching than TV. You can pull people to the television by breaking it on social media or the web first.

LD: IS there anything else you want to add?

So what is the overall goal?

LD: So I'm talk to reporters and digital folks about how they're using social media to find story ideas and find sources. Trying to tap more into what the community is talking about opposed to maybe "we got this press release" Really trying to figure out what people are talking about. Seeing how people are engaging on social media to figure that out.

Another thing, this is what I do, I've found a lot of stories this way. Read the comments. Reading comments I do this every night, it's kind of my — It's my guilty pleasure. I actually read Fox news comments because it's so entertaining. No one should ever read Fox News comments, but I do. But you can get a lot of stories. I'll just see a regular story and I'll go to the comments section because people say oh my god i had a sister who went through that or you know what I just set up a foundation because of this. You never know. people are, these are just regular people. people that we want to cover. Get engaged with. So yeah, I would suggest any person that is best way to get stories. And a way to get those stories when you have, when everyone has the same headline on the web. That's the way of telling the story a little different and giving something you're not going to get on the web. You know? So everybody knows about the kidnapping and we're covering it, and they've got the headline on the web, but did you know about this women who has kidnapped now is watching it closely because she was found and she believes this guy can be found too. I don't know. I just made that up. Hoping that story comes around today.

LD: Do you think your reporters are really tapping into that? Trying to find these humanized ways to humanize their stories?

Yes. Actually we just started a new thing where we're counting and tracking how many officials we have on the air and how many regular people we have on the air. Name removed who is on the assignment desk — she has a sheet every single day that she goes through the newscast and she tracks so we're able to see that.

LD: What's the goal with that?

The goal to stop putting so many officials and put regular people on the air. People who look like the people watching.

LD: That's what I like. That's sort of what prompted this whole project for me.
You don't always have to put them on camera. Sometimes we don't. We'll say OK just tell us what you found or send a photographer to the news conference or just tell them to send us a news release, we'll have that and we'll cover the people's story.

LD: Do you have an example of one of those stories that worked really well?

Typically what does well is when we have the crime reports. One came up two weeks ago, we didn't end up doing the story, but because we had breaking news on something, but you get the crime stats. we get the community, this is what it says how do you feel? it says crime is better, but how do you feel about where you live now? So that's, I think that's the best way to do a story. City council, they pass all kinds of stuff that impacts neighborhoods, well go to that neighborhood and find out how they feel about it or how this is going to change their lives and what their tax dollars are being used for this. You don't need the officials. Minimum wage, you dint need the vote you don't need the board members saying time for this. Go get the people who are making minus wage how is this ten cents more, ten cent increase going to help your daily life? With your groceries?

LD: Do you think social media helps cuts down some of those barriers in reaching those people?

I think so. It helps us. I mean that's what the, that's the upside of social media. It gives us a lot of reach as far reaching people because they're making comments. People want to comment about lots of stuff so we're able to email them or text them or contact them and say hey do you want to talk? It's easier than driving 40 miles and knocking on their door. And you have all these citizen journalists who shoot video, the skateboard video the woman who was beaten with the skateboard.

LD: And the piano video

Yeah! I mean, this sis the new way. This is the new way of doing journalism.

LD: Thank you so much. Anything else you can think of you want to add?

There's also downsides of Twitter and social media. Check your sources. Verify! Verify! Verify! If you're in doubt, leave it out.

LD: Yes.

A lot of people have been burned in verifying twitter handles. You may see something that says George Bush, but it might not be the president. That's an extreme one, but make sure these people are real.

LD: Is there a routine or some sort of process writing to cover your basis?

If something is trending, you'll get that one or two. If something is trending and it's a
crime you can call and find out. If something is trending that someone has, some kid has a kidney transplant and they're having fundraiser you can contact someone and get them on the phone, typically. So it's not that hard, it's just verifying someone emails you or you get a letter in the mail. Do you say “oh, I want to contact this person.” We have a series of different checks on the desk that they can use to contact people.

LD: All right. That's all I got for you. Thank you so much for your time.
News Director

*Name removed for anonymity* and I'm Vice President of News.

LD: All right. What do you expect from your reporters in terms of their social media use?

Two things — for them to be using social media to find stories and be aware of what's going on locally, and nationally, and then using social media to report not just report on TV, but use report on social media through the course of their day reporting. Kind of a real time reporting mechanism.

LD: When someone is doing that successfully? First, how do you know or how do you know they're being successful?

It's I would say it's a matter of quantity and quality so if they only put out one tweet on a story that they've been on since 10 o'clock in the morning and their first package on TV isn't until 4 o'clock or 5 o'clock, they probably haven't been doing a good job of reporting on social media. It all depends on the story they're on. Sometimes they're on a story that's developing, breaking. Say it's a stand off with police and people are being kept away from the neighborhood and there's a lot of developments to be tweeted. Every story is a little bit different. We want them to be reporting on social media as their story is developing and coming together.

LD: How do you think their social media use sets a tone for the station?

I don't know if it's, I don't know if it sets a tone, but it's definitely it's a goal of the station to be the leader in, on all platforms of reporting. We can't be, the team is only as good as all the individuals. If all the individuals aren't good at social media we're not going to be good as a team, as a station. We're in a place where social media previously was like oh, there's also Facebook and Twitter now it's we really have to change the mentality that it's not this extra thing you have to do that it's part of the job as much as reporting on TV. It's the same level of importance. For instance, when we're looking at people to recruit to come work here I do it, I know my boss does, we see somebody, they look great on television, they have a good background as far as education and all that, we look at their tape, we look at their social media. We look them up on Facebook and Twitter and see how many Facebook followers they have, how many Twitter followers they have fans, likes, whatever. And their activity, if they haven't posted something in a couple of days that's not a good sign. If they haven’t tweeted because well they've been on their weekend, you know, that's not a good sign either. Nobody is going to work 24/7, but often the people who just use Twitter in their normal life, whether it's retweeting or they may not be reporting on a story but they may retweeting something that's happening in the world. That shows that Twitter is just part of their life. I would say you know it's really become a tool for us to see is this the kind of employee we want. Somebody who is active in a positive way on social media.
LD: How do you determine what sorts of issues are important to your community or your audience here?

It’s the drought. We’re in a drought of historic proportions people figuring out how to cut back on water from showering to not washing your cars, things that affect daily life we think are important to people. We know safety is a big issue. There's just certain things that traditionally through years of being journalists, television journalists, we know are important to people.

LD: Are there ways to use social media you think to become more attune to those conversations?

Oh sure. I think you know stories that are trending. We have different programs, software that we have purchased or use that helps us know when something local is happening. If we see a lot of local activity on something then we'll be interested in it. OK, not just report it but maybe we have a local a reporter you know cover the story because oh this is really popping on social media.

LD: I've noticed from walking around and from watching the newscast it seems like there's a lot of emphasis right now on telling specific stories, having representatives from the community. Walking through the hall there's the specific people, there's the firefighters in the conference room. Can you tell me a little bit about the thinking behind that?

It's about franchise name or telling their stories. We want a way to not just promote our talent but show that our talent are storytellers and that in this area there are a lot of people who do a lot of good things and we're the station that tells those stories, inspiring stories, good news stories. I think in general local news gets a bad rap for doing too much crime, too much negative. We really don’t do a whole lot of that. We do have a good mix of national news. When somebody takes a plane down, we're going to report that. We're going to report all the things that are coming out about that story. We feel it's our obligation to inform but we can't not cover things because well that's negative, that's too negative. Crime stories, a shooting here a shooting there, sure, we can say hey, it's got to hit a certain threshold before we report it. I think people are curious and we should be serving that curiosity as much as we can.

LD: Was it a conscious shift then to try to do the local stars?

No, we've always been doing the stories it's just a shift in deciding to promote them.
LD: Hmm.

So, that's you know. We've been doing the stories. They just weren't getting promoted. Now they're getting promoted.

LD: Interesting. It has a cool look to it. It has a cool look to it. It's unique.

Good.

LD: What kind of training do the reporters go through for social media?

Probably not enough. It kind of depends on their aptitude. We have done some training as a group. I would say it's a lot like a bell curve. You have some who are great. [Watching the newscast] What is that graphic towards name removed? You have some, the most, in the middle that the bulk of the people are kind of in the middle. Then you have some great ones here and then pause so we give a lot of feedback on what people are doing, encouragement, that sort of thing. As far as one-on-one training on social, we don't do a lot of that. I noticed one of our reporters was posting on Facebook, but all they were posting was a link like no copy, no picture so I said to our digital producer, "Can you get with this reporter because I think she's having some mechanical problems on Facebook. I think she thinks she's posting a picture and all we're getting is a link." We know that's not going to have any engagement. Right now the, I think we're at a place with our team that they know they have to be on Facebook, they know they have to be tweeting. Now it's about engagement. And how do they get engagement. Are they tweeting, posting about things that are going to be interesting to the audience? And that's, you think, "I'm tweeting all the time! Why am I..." We have a program called Share Rocket that ranks...

LD: Oh!

...All the station and the talent in the market. Like top 10. And then top 10 just for us and so that's where we can see who is doing well, who had a good day because they were very engaging.

LD: Interesting. What do you think the engagement does for the reporter? What's the benefit to them engaging with their audience?

Hopefully it will lead to more stories. Hopefully someone who is following them will you know say hey, give them a story or retweet our reporter to a larger audience. They may have somebody who, what we call, an influencer. Say reporter name removed does a story on HIV. That's been her beat and she always surfaces those stories. If she does a story and the top researcher at hospital name removed retweets to his audience. That's great exposure for name removed and it could lead to something else. I think, yesterday we had a story about the Armenian genocide. It's the 100th anniversary. There was a
banner on location removed as you go across the place name removed. The person who pitched it to us is obviously very active in the Armenian community and she was in the story. She was so excited. She was so pleased with the story right after she contacted us and said can I please get a link as soon as possible I want to send it out to our whole organization, 30,000 people and I want to send it to Armenians in city name removed and city name removed and name removed where there are other Armenian communities. For that one story to be spread far and wide through social media is terrific. You just never know which stories are going to, we had a story a couple of weeks ago about a library that had just tossed out a bunch of old books and that went wild on social media. People were just outraged. That really hit with people.

LD: Can you tell me a little bit about what you do to foster enterprise journalism here?

Yeah. We talk about it a lot. We expect reporters to pitch stories that are not in the day file. That are not in the newspaper. That are reporters have specialized beats. They don't cover their beat every single day, but we hope they can, we just talk about it a lot and certainly give props to people who do break a story on their beat or enterprise something that hasn't been done elsewhere. As far as quotas and they have to have it that's kind of hard to do. I would just say, overall encouragement, you know, in our process of talking and asking questions and encouraging people.

LD: Would you say, is it fair, if you had to put a rank on in to be like breaking, daily, enterprise. Is that kind of how the flow would be?

Well breaking certainly is important, but you can't plan for that. When there is breaking we want to be the best at it. I hope there's enterprise within daily you know usually

LD: That's a good point.

There were a few things yesterday, identifying information removed was a huge story.

LD: Right. With the governor.

TW: At the snow pack survey, which was there was no snow. It was an amazing picture. That turned into team coverage and you know there's no way we can not cover that story. Today a memorial for a police officer, we have to cover that story with multiple people. On any given day there's a few stories that you, we just all agree ok we have to cover that. That usually leaves a couple of other reporters to do an enterprise story such as name removed with team removed and the Autism awareness day. Chances are other stations are not covering that today. I would say we want to have a good mix when we have a breaking somebody might be broken off the story to go cover that so that we can have the best coverage. Fair amount of daily, but honestly if we had seven reporters and all seven of them pitched enterprise stories that were A block stories. We can't have
seven enterprise features stories. You've got to have some lead stories, but if they pitch an A block enterprise, I'd love to see a day like that. we have days, there was one day a few weeks ago, we had three stories from reporters that all came from viewer emails. I get the viewer emails and then I pass them on and say hey, there was one day three viewer emails came through as really good stories that's how unusual. But that's another source is tips from viewers. I would say 90 percent of them don't work out to be good stories, but then you have 10 percent that do.

LD: So how do you, I guess, manage your time? You can't vet every single one of them that comes in. How do you handle that?

Some of them, I just look at it and I think, a lot of them are people asking for money. Can you please show my gofundme page? We can't do that. We're not a service like that. I pass, I delegate them to other people who can make the calls to find out. Sometimes it's just a phone call and it's like this isn't really what we thought it was. Sometimes they turn into stories. Some stories just don't necessarily work out for whatever reason. But you give it a shot.

LD: What is your biggest, or the station's, biggest obstacle in connecting with the community? Is there a piece of negative feedback you get a lot that you're trying to overcome?

No, I think the biggest challenge is really getting viewers to watch television. You know people are using their phones. They can't get warm and friendly what they get from the anchors and interpretation, the human quality, you're not going to get from your phones, but lives are so busy now. Sitting at home and watching the news at 5 o'clock is not what people really do anymore so how do we stay relevant? That's our biggest challenge is staying relevant and running a business with a decline built in basically. And being relevant on our phones and tablets and making sure we're the best option for people in this market.

LD: Do you think there's an pause how big of an opportunity do you think it is to include or mobile use into the newscast. Like I saw the tagboard in the newscast. The concept of "we broke this on Twitter"

Yeah.

LD: Using that kind of language in your newscast.

Yeah.

LD: Do you think that's something that's up and coming?
Yeah. Oh definitely. I think anchor name removed talked about that in her coverage of the memorial was that a lot of people were tweeting from inside the memorial, which a few years ago I don't think would be doing that. So I would say, we know that people don't necessarily want to read Facebook on TV or read tweets, but I think a lot of tweets are great capturing great pictures, great messages. Showing what we showed with the memorial today was an indication of the community and people sharing a lot of nice things. We have to be in that space because that's where our viewers an users are. We're probably talking to some people who are sitting at home going what is Twitter, an older demo, but I think that's less of a risk than not doing it at all and not being in touch with younger people who are using it so much.

LD: My last question for you - what is your biggest hope for the future in the next couple of years your hope for the reporters on social?

Yeah. I guess just telling good stories, being good journalists, whenever there is a big story in the region removed really being the best at informing the community. I think identifying information removed I think our station really rose to the occasion and we did really well. We felt that, we heard from viewers that we really did help people. We had the best information and coverage and pictures. We weren’t hysterical about the coverage we were explaining exactly what it was. I just hope that all our journalists keep using social media in newer and better ways as Meerkat and Periscope and all these new apps come up. Really the challenge is keeping up with it because there's always something new. How, you just learned one thing and then there's something better out there. It's moving at the speed of light and how do we keep up with it you know do our regular jobs and explore all these new ways of storytelling> I think it's really exciting. I think who knows maybe doing the traditional news package with video and sound bites and editing it together maybe we wont be reporting that way. I mean maybe we will be just reporting on Twitter.

LD: Maybe.

...in a new and different way.

LD: It's exciting.

It is. It’s fun to see people who experiment and do well and try things and really embrace it. I think that's the key is you have to embrace it because it's not going away.

LD: Is there anything you can think of about social media either at the reporter or station level that I haven’t asked you about yet that you think is really critical?

I would just say that it's really critical for the reporters - we have a couple reporters who really know how to mine social media to track down you know finding people in the old
days we'd have a cross directory and you know you'd find people by looking up their phones numbers and now we track down by social media so it's the reporters who understand how to find people through friends of friends and you know I think that's really critical to being a good reporter is just the investigative part of it. How do you use it to get a story?

LD: Great.

That's it.

LD: That's all I got for you.
News Director

It's name removed. And I'm the news director at station name removed

LD: Could you describe the culture of your newsroom? What's it like here?

Oh! That's a great question. We are a, and I know I'm kind of a proud mom because they're my kids, but I would say that we are a pause very high performing news operation. We, I think first and foremost, we are enterprising. And I would say that the three pillars on which we stand that we try to be strongest on are three things: enterprise, investigative and breaking news. The bar that we set, we know that everybody stations all do kind of the same stories. What we are passionate about is digging and drilling down. It's not just the everyday story it's how does that really impact people. It's not just what you see on the surface. it's how can we drill down to get to stronger and new information that our viewers want to know. That's the enterprise. Investigative is not just the investigative unit, but it's using that investigative lens on almost every story that we do. Again, it's the same thing, it's drilling down not just here's what happened, but why and why it's important to you. It's covering, but also uncovering and that's kind of our mantra. And then, breaking news. Everybody does breaking news, breaking news nowadays is like a siren. Everybody knows it. It's really more important to do it right. And breaking news is not just being on the air first or being online first. It's getting it right. And it's giving it context. And so it's acting and reacting quickly, smartly, always knowing that our credibility is on the line.

LD: How has social media changed any of those goals in the last couple of years?

First and foremost, gone are the days where we tell the world, we are on at 5 o'clock meet us there. Everybody gather round at 5 o'clock. We throw the party at 5, come to our party at 5 o'clock. Party is 24/7. So number one it's not, we're not just at 5 o'clock it is 24/7. Number 2, and this is big, it is arrogant to ask people to come to us at 5. We have to be where they are. In the past we asked viewers to come to us now we have to go to them. We have to be wherever they are all times of the day. We have to be on mobile all the time. Our news is constant. 5 o'clock is maybe the biggest room in the house, but it's not the only place and so we have to think of news all of the time. We have to erase lines. We have to get rid of silos. We have to understand that we are, we are building news all the time. And this is how people, social media is how they get it.

LD: What do you expect of your reporters with their social media?

I like it when our reporters do what I call progressive reporting. They bring users and viewers into kind of the process of how they're building their stories. It's not always just presenting them with here's the story as I found. I gathered for hours now here it is. I really like it when we bring them along. I'm on my way to go interview blah blah blah, here's what we're going to ask them. Here's what we want to know. I finished with this, boy, this is going to be a great part of my piece. We're hearing that. We're off to go find it. It's bringing users and it's bringing viewers too along for the ride as we're building
LD: How do you measure how your reporters are doing? You, you're getting it and you maybe want to work on it a little bit.

I think, you know, first of all, by how I observe them. The tweets are good. They're already tweeting. I've already tweeted. I love it when I say blah blah is on his way to the story. Oh, yeah, he's already tweeted about that. Or knowing that they're on their way and they've already done something on social media. Without having, they don't have to wait for us to tell them. They just do it. And then I would say, the other way too, is just engagement. If they are posting something on Facebook or tweeting or whatever that they get people engaging them. Then I know that people are out there and they're listening to what we're doing. We also do know when the competition is paying attention because if we're using social media as we should then the competition is watching. Or not even competition, potential sources. The fire department. Yeah, we saw you guys tweeting about blah blah blah. We love that. It means they're watching. They're paying attention.

LD: How important is it to have everyday people and not just agencies or spokespeople in your newscast? And why is that important if it is?

You mean like regular Joe blow? Critically important. Oh my gosh. It's funny that you mention that. I was watching a newscast I think it was last, not this past Saturday but the Saturday before. On Saturday I was watching not as the news director, but I was watching as the viewer. I watched the first 15 minutes of one of our newscast and I was floored and I was excited. I emailed that producer right away. Do you know why I loved your first block, your A block? I loved it because I didn't see a single official. She had probably sound bites from 12 to 15 people on various stories and they were all real people. They were not agencies. They were not cops. They were not fire department. They were real people. Because that's who people connect to. I dare say we haven't done it in this newsroom yet, but that day is getting here. I want to do an entire day, an official free day. I think people respond to people. People connect with people and that you don't always have to see the PIO. You don't always have to see the cop. They respond and connect with the mom who lost their kid, the person who is looking for a job, the guy who is pumping gas and wow, can't believe prices are going down. The real people. That's critically important.

LD: What opportunities do you think social has for getting more of those people on to your television broadcast?

I think it's huge. I think it's not just the goal is not just for us to go out and push social media. We want social media to also work for television. So we want people that are following us all day long then to come to the party at 5 o'clock. We're hoping that it's not just, we go out and invite you, we want you to come. We think that's important.

LD: Is that what you think the main goal is then is still to drive people to the newscast...
I think so...

LD: ...Is that the underlying mission?

I think so. We, I would like to think that we're more than just a television station, we're a brand. The station removed brand is where you get your news. You get it. You get it where the news comes first. You get it from social media, you get it from online you get it on TV, wherever. Right now the metric is television. That's the main metric of what we do, but really there's going to come a day where those are going to be blurred and it's really going to be, we're going to take the metric of digital and television and combine them. That's going to be how we're really judged not just by TV.

LD: It's interesting. The branding conversation is one I didn't anticipate coming into the project. That's something I keep hearing whether it's individual brand, reporter based, or the station brand.

That's kind of where my vision for this, we've got, it's not TV and digital. Post it on the web – no, no, no. It's station name. A Coke is a coke no matter where you go in this world. It's because Coke is a brand. I know that if I go to an airport in Stockholm I know what it's going to taste like before I open it up. If I go to Hawaii and I open up a can of Coke, I know what it's going to taste like. It's a brand. I know what Coke is. It's consistent. It doesn't differ from place to place. That's kind of what I envision for here. When you hear station name removed it doesn't matter if it's here, there, it doesn't matter. You know? On your desktop or whatever. It's the same.

LD: Shifting gears a little bit...

Sure.

LD: When you're looking for new members of your team how are you using their social footprint I guess as a way to measure how they'll do here?

You know, aside from just kind of looking them up. I use that to kind of vet them to see. We ask them, a reporter for example, we just hired two new reporters, we had two openings. And so the questions that we wanted to know, and I wanted to know, is how do you use social to get your news? How do you use that to connect? And I watched their reaction to it. And now it's kind of obvious. If they kind of tap dance, well I use it, I kind of use it then it's, you know, meh. If they're passionate about it. I also watch how it's driven in their newsroom. Maybe they're passionate about it, but maybe their bosses don't push it as much. That's just them on their own. That tells me that they're interested in it. That they use it anyway. Regardless of what their management is doing they're using it to report. And hopefully ultimately to become better reporters.

LD: Last question, what is your biggest goal for station name's social media in the next year or so?
That's a good question. Biggest goal - Aside I guess from increasing our numbers of users, I think it's the branding. I think it's getting inside the newsroom and outside the newsroom. I think it's increasing our branding and our understanding the power of that. Inside the newsroom it's getting people to understand that it's not "either or" it's "and." The digital is not the other side of the room. Literally or figuratively. It's here. It's wherever you are. It's making sure that we are constantly thinking that way. It's not that television is not important it's that we're moving. And I think outside it's getting people to understand that station name is not just station name TV. name is wherever you are. If you want the, the goal is I want to know what's going on I don't have to find a TV to get what station name is doing. We're hearing that there's station is wherever you are, whenever you want it. From the moment you go to bed to the moment you wake up you turn to station in whatever form and it's there for you.

LD: Wow.

It's planting that seed I think.

LD: Is there anything that I haven't asked you about that you think is important in terms of what you guys are doing here?

No, I think the thing that's scary to me. I've been asked this before. I was just speaking to a bunch of students last week at school removed and I was talking to some students at school removed a couple of weeks before that sighs. What, you know it used to be things would change and when you looked at what was old you'd say that was so five years ago, but things are changing so rapidly. It is scary and it's frightening, scary and exciting at the same time. Things are changing so fast that what was hot four months ago is so old. Nobody is paying attention to that anymore. And so great example, now it's, you'll laugh I was telling the students last week at school removed and they laughed, but about a week and a half ago I'm sitting here at my desk and I hear this commotion out in the newsroom. What the heck is going on? And I saw everybody huddled over name removed desk and they were looking at this. I'm like what the heck is going on? Have you heard about Periscope? Have you heard about Periscope? I'm like no, what? Someone said it's like Meerkat. I have Meerkat. No, it's Periscope! And it had just debuted! It had just debuted! And everyone is huddled. And we're watching this. I'm like oh my god. This is game changing. And so someone started doing it. Wow! Jeez! So you're automatically thinking, how can we use this? How is this going to change how we're going to consume this? You automatically have to think, ok brand new toy, huge from my perspective how can we use it? From my perspective, what are the pitfalls? Because one day it's not that I'm going to take you to a party or a concert one day I'm going to show someone getting murdered, getting beaten up. I'm thinking that way. So old school is no longer 5 or 6 years ago, old school is like 2 or 3 months ago. Things are really changing fast. And then I would say the other thing that's scary to me and this is just from a competitive stand point. We used to laugh kind of at newspapers because we're like oh my god, they're such dinosaurs what do they know. They didn't jump on fast enough. they're slow, slow, slow. Well hello, they've finally woken up. They finally woke up! And what they're doing is, they realize the paper itself, you're right, people aren't into that. Now they're getting in on
our game. Now they're getting in on our game. Now they've got cameras. They've got equipment. They're doing everything that we're doing. The thing about a newspaper staff is it tend to be larger. The reporter staff of a newspaper tends to be larger than a reporting staff at a television station. If all of a sudden they're arming themselves with cameras and all of a sudden now they're on our battlefield. They've got more people. 16:11 WE can laugh at them all we want. they've got more people. On the battlefield of compassion they've not got more soldiers. Now they're arming themselves with our weapons. And so now, now we've got another body we've got to look at. it's not just our completion, it's not just other television stations. Now it's newspapers. They're using our tools to play our game. They, in some places newspapers are winning Emmy Awards.

LD: Yeah!

They're winning Emmy awards! This is happening, when I was in Chicago and Milwaukee. They're winning Emmy awards because they're shooting video.

LD: Wow.

So.

LD: So what do we do?

We evolve. And we keep reinventing ourselves. We never, we don't rest on laurels. You can't, just when you're getting comfortable someone’s got to knock the stool out from under you. When you're getting too comfortable that's when you know that's a bad thing. But at the same time, as you're exploring you have to also remember, this is my job, you have to be ethical about it. Because we're, this is new frontier, but now everybody is becoming a journalist and you've got to really worry about the citizen journalists that don't have the filters, that don't have the credibility.17:38 And to make sure that we are very discerning about where we get our information.

LD: Is there anything else you want to add?

Is that enough? Does that work?

LD: Yes. Thank you.
News Director

*Name removed.* News director.

LD: Could you tell me a little bit about what your job requires?

I am newly in this job. I've been here for about a week and a half in the official title. I oversee the entire news department. I'm also looking at all platforms so not only am I in charge on newscasts, our website, our app, all of our social media sites. Those are all things that I oversee even though we have managers in charge of those. I do a lot of the direct working with reporters and producers and helping them improve, anchors, meteorologists, sports department. All of those folks I am working hand in hand with to make sure we're operating as the best newsroom that we can. And that budget. That's really fun. All the money stuff. All the recruiting. That's really fun too.

LD: So lots of down time I'm sure.

Absolutely.

LD: And how have you been in this market?

Five and half months.

LD: You came in as assistant news director?

Came in as assistant news director.

LD: Ok. Cool. What can you tell me about the culture of this newsroom here?

I would say that we're very much a teamwork culture. That is very much focused on digital-first. It is something that we hit the mark on sometimes and sometimes miss the mark. It's definitely something we remain focused on because we know that it is the future. And by teamwork, we are all a part of that. The president of our company came in and said raise your hand if you're a social media producer and we had a heads up on that question so all of us were ready to raise our hands, but he had been to some other television stations where people didn't raise their hands. And he said, everyone’s hands should be up. We're all in this together when it comes to social media and digital. But I think as far as the culture of our newsroom goes, it's a team effort. When news breaks even on slow days for everyday that we face we're not only looking for content that drives viewers to our social media pages because that in turn drives viewers to our website. Every link that we post the forwarding site that gets the most is Facebook. Many people are clicking on our website because of what we post on Facebook and Twitter. I think when it comes to an all hands on deck situation, everyone is an administrator on our pages. Everyone has access to Presto, which is our system that allows us to post web articles. Everyone has guides that help them when posting at pushes. Everyone has access to the Twitter page. It is not something where I need so and so to send a push. I this
person to post to Facebook. Everyone has access and everyone is expected to post, but also monitor. We can't just put something out there 3:41 and then not join the conversation. That happens way too often in newsrooms and you will see ten posts in an hour and then typically not a lot of activity. We're definitely when it comes to Facebook focused on quality posts, but if it's going to be something that's getting a lot of attention or even something that is really drawing a conversation we have to be there. We have to join that conversation. That's not just on things, posts that we post that's also posts to our page. This is definitely a place where, and everyone's hands, I'm sure you've seen the smart phones in the meetings. They're all looking at them but often times not really referencing them or talking about them as much. I said, all of you are sitting here waiting to pitch go to post to our Facebook page and see what people are telling us. Sometimes those will be some of the best ideas.

LD: Oh yeah.

Our competition certainly monitors that page. And if we let a story idea sit there they'll pick up on it and reach out to the person on Facebook. We've had that happen once since I've been here. It was a story when a guy ended up. I don't want to say it wrong, let's look. The Chop House charged his bank account for an 80,000 dollar bill for their meal. He posted it to our Facebook page. let's see if it's still there. It was definitely under the post to page, this section. He had posted the picture of the receipt to our page and said look at this bill. A competition station found him before we saw it.

LD: Shoot.

They had it at 11 o'clock and we unfortunately had it the next day at 6. We had a tough conversation in the morning meeting. It never feels good to get beat, but this is a lesson to learn. We have good story ideas that are getting posted to our page. Now it's almost a situation if there's a story idea that's sitting there I can almost guarantee you it's something everyone will go through and mention. Especially if the first reporter comes in and pitches it and then that person heads out on assignment. Hey, did we see that post to our Facebook page? This is another one. We've got a car accident with a car upside. I'm going to call the desk and make sure we've seen that. [on phone with desk] It's a good picture. They shared two of them. Ok. So that is definitely something where ideally the first person who sees it would alert someone and say hey this is something that could end up in our newscast or hey we need to be calling about this. Some people will start to comment or some people will start to comment and say "is everyone ok?" See people are talking and see this is 30 minutes ago and we need to be joining that conversation. Let's keep going down and see.

LD: What is the policy or procedures for using submitted content like that?

We have very strict ones. Has anyone shared with you the document that we've been provided by company name removed? I past it out to everyone. It might just be on everyone’s desk. It's the one with the different columns.
LD: Oh I have seen that.

And so. Yes. We have different rules for different for different sides. Instagram, Facebook and Twitter. One of the things we've recently been doing is this. Asking for permission. Just because *name* post this to our page does that not mean that *name* says you can use that on air and you can use it on your website. It's a very tough policy. Before it was so easy. We'd just right click and save and put it on the news and there we go. We're still waiting for *name* to get back to us - nope, see he hasn't told us. We'll probably need to ask him can we use your picture. That's something where we'll figure it out. But I think that is something where you definitely have to have permission because they often times don't know. Some station are creating language on Facebook that lets them know that when you're posting that picture to Facebook that you understand that this could mean that this picture makes it on television or on our website. The good thing about your *franchise removed* is that absolutely know they're sending us the picture for air. That's why we encourage that so much. Then they're uploading it straight to our site. It's a link that's on our app. It's on our web page. Either way you're doing it, phone or desktop, even iPad. I think it's on their too. Then you know that you're getting permission. When it comes to Twitter same thing. We're asking for permission. It's really important, here we go, *franchise name*. And so it's really not all of them. It's on the desktop. This app is still working out its bugs. Then I want to upload a picture upload my photo they know it's coming to us. It's not a situation where they've uploaded it to their own Facebook page and then there's the question of do they know we're going to show this picture? And it's more, more or less about these news events, but more about their weather pictures. Sometimes they'll want to say well that's my picture and you've shown in ten times. That's why you certainly need permission for it. The more and more you see YouTube video because that's a whole other ball game. You now have companies that are going and buying the rights to that video and then following up with you and saying you ran our video of the puppy chasing the cat and now you owe us 10,000 dollars. That happened just this week with the South Carolina police officer video. Down in Charleston they said that he now has sold the right to the video and wants any station that is going to profit from it, have it on their website, have it on the show in the future you will have to pay up big time. Now, for the first time ever I've seen *network* issue a station wide alert do not run this video make sure it's out of our archives and the same thing for *network* and they were all making sure we were on top of it and not running that video.

LD: Wow, that's interesting.

It's an interesting reversal of everything.

LD: All right. Shifting gears on you a little bit. What are your expectation of your reporters with their social media use?

I would say we have a high expectation of engagement. And ideally when we have our social media manger solely focused on monitoring she can be kind of the, I hate to say the enforcer, but more the encourager. I've tried to get people to really engage. Right now I think that our main engagement I would have to say is on our *station page*. Our main
focus is on our station page. When we are, when folks are trying to get traction on their personal page, they're having a tough time. name removed is a great example of this. He's done a very good job of someone who has kind of figured out the strategy. Post video, don't post frequently. Don't just post a few lines and let that be it. He's making sure there's always video. he's finding ways for there to be links. I think he's done a really good job of figuring out the algorithm. Because it's tough for people. If they haven't been active on their page, see he's almost up to 10,000 and we're excited for him, but he knows that video is going to do very well. He knows that is going to help him have more likes. People will see what happens on our page and they'll get defeated. They'll say, station has 500 likes and you know, 1,000 shares and I think people get defeated when it comes to social media. He knows again post a picture. He's got a link. Again, almost up in the 200s that's good. Here not the best, but still doing pretty well. He is making it in people's feeds. He is beat that kind of Facebook algorithm. Now you go to someone else who is equally trying hard to post. Almost the same number of likes, just 3,000 likes and she has a tough time breaking into it. She'll say, I only got 33 likes. I only got 25. 283 that's good! Sometimes it can get a little bit defeating when you're trying to break in. There are so many stations right now that almost make it a competition. We don't do that. That wouldn't be very us. Some people will take a software I'm going to forget what it's called right now. Not simple reach, not chart beat.

LD: I should know this... It gives the list at the end of the day.

Share Rocket. Share Rocket is. Let me find some images.

LD: You don't use Share Rocket? Yup. That's it.

It will actually rate you against other stations. It will rank you within your own newroom. I don't think that we're in that position where we have to do that. I don't have staff members who are posting that infrequently. Some of the ones who work weekends, it's tough for them. The traffic time is up on Wednesdays and Thursday or Mondays and Tuesdays and they're not there. They're not part of the conversation so I really encourage people to auto post. I very much do. A lot of times what's ending up happening is our talent especially the younger ones, the MMJ and the younger anchors, they're the ones that are here sometimes for anchor name removed she's the one that's driving the content on the main page, but I'd be interested to see what you would tell just by a quick scan of all of our talent who have Facebook pages. I would think that most of them are doing a pretty goo job. It's been a few weeks since I've gone through. Just because I know that many of them have the like pages. Some of them are in that in-between phase where they're on the friend page and they haven't made it to the 5,000 so they haven't switched over to the like page. That's a, a weird situation because you want to encourage them to get over to a like page, but you actually have more reach if you're a friend page. Until they get to the 5,000 I kind of, let them stay in that mode. We have some who have maxed out. They're reached their 5,000 and they haven't moved over yet. That's something we're in the process of doing.

LD: You kind of have to play Facebook's game a little bit.
It's all about playing Facebook's game. But it's such a great tool. You can't ignore it. You can't get defeated by it. You have to let it challenge you. You have to let it inspire you to want to beat the game because it is something where if you don't tackle it with a strategy then you will fail. I think that's what you see time and time again and local TV stations. They haven't figured out the strategy. One of the best stations that I've worked for has not figured out the strategy. They have an incredible amount of likes. Very much up there with us, but this is a top 20 market. I would go so far as to say their frequency is too high. They're doing a good job with, there's 22 minutes ago. Only 7 people liked it. There's an hour ago, 8 people liked this. There's another hour ago, two hours ago.

LD: People just aren't engaging with them.

And if you look at what they're doing. There's no one there. There's no one commenting. You're not seeing a station where station name is going back and writing to that post. I had a post, I can show you this one. I had a post this was an idea that we had. So I had a post, this was an idea that we had on Super Bowl night. We know that our promotions department was going to run this promo during the super bowl. We were going to be there with the winner. A campaign we did for 5 super stories. We get 2 30 seconds spots during the super bowl. Let's not focus it on us. Let's focus on our viewers. We had five franchise removed stories. And we were going to show one of those spots in the middle of the super bowl. Now, if we waited for that story to air at 11:45 or whenever we came on the air that night, we have absolutely missed an opportunity to own that story so we had to be ready. WE had to be ready to engage and post that story first on .com and Facebook and so that's why name was simply assigned to do social and web that night so he could do this. So he creates this is. Reporter name is already assigned. We've already got this on the left side because name gave it to us early. We know that he's going to win. He doesn't know that he's going to win. So name is there recording his video and is going to send it back to us on the backpack.

LD: That's sweet. So he's watching it live.

Mhm. But he is

LD: Ton of likes!

This is engagement was one of the highest that we've ever seen. This was one of two posts. When you look at how many people liked it we had 2,000 plus likes, 68 thousand views. This was the originally post. Our in case you missed it the next day got equally as many. When you add it. Here, I can probably, I typed it up. Our combined reach for am and pm was 424,000 people with 150,000 views. Maybe we had 3, maybe we had 3 posts. That right there was a story that if you didn't have the digital first mind set. If you were thinking back in the old TV way of things. Here's your chance to be not only point on with your brand, here's your chance to engage with an audience. What are hey doing? They're sitting at home with their phones in their hands watching the Super Bowl. If you waited until 11:45 to have that story and you didn't own it on digital you would have had
an incredible missed opportunity. I think that's something where it's just, it's tough because so many stations they won't see this initially. When you take the time to build a Facebook audience like we have the payoff is so huge. 21:33 It's a no brainer for us. We have to do it. If we don't my goodness we have missed out on the chance of reaching close to half a million people. That's something where they're all over the country and you look at the insight on our Facebook page. It's really an inspiring thing because that's, that right there is a 100 percent rating.

LD: Right.

That's how many people are in this area. If we were going to look at the rating sheet for how many people were watching us after the Super Bowl I think we got a 15, but on digital we got a 100! It's everybody who is here in the viewing audience. When you put it in perspective that way for people and I mean I'm not a math genius I can't tell you that's exactly right. I think when you have the impact of a Facebook page it changes everything for how you think of things. You think of Contagious. I think of I'm giving viewers the chance to be a seat at our assignment desk, which is a huge deal for them. You're making them feel involved in the process. You're engaging with them. They not, they can have a conversation with you at all times. You're sitting right there at the computer and any of us can jump on. Any of us are administrators. I will wake up on a Saturday morning because I know there are only two people in this newsroom during that show and so I will jump on and start posting to the page and commenting to people. "Thanks! Gorgeous sunrise picture. We appreciate it. We'll pass it around the weather team. Yes! Please do!" Those are the types of things where that is someone who watches your news, not every day, but watches your news as a fan. They want you to use your picture and they want you to say their name. Sometimes they're going there to give you great story ideas. If you're not engaging and you're not looking at that you're missing out in a big way.

LD: For your, you have all MMJs here, correct?

Correct.

LD: They're busy. They're running around doing everything. What do you tell people when they say I just ran out of time. I just couldn't get on social today.

I recently went down to the start of the marathon. It was definitely freezing I think that night or that morning. I was not prepared for how cold it was. It was frigid. I went down there because I wanted to see how our new weather anchor and our reporter were going to do it. They had two backpacks and I hadn't seen it. I've always been used to live trucks and I wanted to see that. I went down there and I had this great moment all this action coming at me. I see name is doing live shots, name is trying to jump into the back of a sprinter van to be in the back with backpack and her photographer covering everything as it heads down the road toward as they're doing the start of the race. I said, "Oh none of them are doing pictures. I'll send in pictures." But it was so cold. My hands were freezing and I’m sitting there trying to make sure that no one steals the gear because they wanted to go down and get a better shot, and what I thought, what we are asking people to do.
This is crazy" Then the phone dies. It's so cold the phone dies. I'm whipping my nose. It's nasty. I'm just. It's cold. I said I would have given up by now, but I have the money shot that sends, that gets the race started and so I did. I got all ten pictures sent in so that we could make a slideshow. I'd finally gotten to race back to my car to charge my phone back up, but then I saw my picture and my video go on Facebook and I saw it go to our website and I saw that 10,0000 video had watched the race start video. what a great feeling. And so I think it just really takes those moments where 25:36 a station gives the all the managers to understand what they're going through. That's a happy story. that's an easy action story so we're reaching out to you. We're reaching out to you saying you need to post, you need to post on Facebook, get something up there. It's not something that I think that enough managers in our business know about how much goes into it. Especially when you're an MMJ and you're thinking about so many other things. I do encourage a lot of them to them to just take the time and the five minutes to not only give yourself a break because that's a good thing, get your thoughts together before you're back on the road and think again. Give yourself five minutes. In that five minutes it gives you a chance to summarize your story in your head. Call back to me. Call back to a manager. Let us know where you are. And post to Twitter and Facebook. You're good. But I think that a lot of times stations are trying so hard to get everyone to fan out across and really get them to increase their Facebook number and increase their twitter likes and it can become overwhelming for sure.

LD: My last question for you - what's your biggest hope for the station's social presence in the next year?

I would say that it's encouraging to see how much we continue to grow every week. Let's go to the most recent report that we did. So I think to continue to see us climbing every week by a thousand. A thousand new people have liked us on Facebook and a thousand new people have liked us on Twitter. If we can keep up with that speed we're doing something right. I think when we see those numbers start to go down, I take that back, every two weeks. That's a thousand in 2 weeks. If we can keep up with that speed then I feel good. If we have stopped reaching that speed then I know that we need to ramp up efforts. I think that this is our main site. Our next focus is really going to be on those personal pages. I think that's where we have room for improvement. I think that the personal pages if it even has a fraction of what we're seeing on our main page we're going to be in a wonderful position to do great things. That social platform across all angles. It's reaching people with a different voice and will people have trouble and will they struggle and will they not figure out the algorithm and will they get stressed? Absolutely. That's why I'm not going out and tell all the MMJs and send a note that says you must be posting three times to Facebook and four times to Twitter and this is why. I think that right now what people are asked to do is a lot. That's why will ask, just send a picture in. Just voice to text. Send me a few lines, something that when you know it's contagious. When you know it's a big deal. When you know it's breaking, dealing with information that people are going to want right now, send it to us. And we'll post it for you. That's something that I think a lot of people think they're all on their own, but there are plenty of us that are here that have access and can post it for them.
LD: Is there anything else you want to add in terms of social growth?

I think that all the new sites are coming up right now will be a challenge for TV stations. I think when you're talking about Snapchat and Instagram, I think Google+ is we don't have a very big following there. I think Instagram and Snapchat we do a lot with Pinterest. I think Pinterest is interesting especially with our Live at 5 at 4 audience and recipes. Really trying to get ahead of what is new and different, this whole Periscope thing seems to be the new thing. I'm just trying to figure out how that's not a bunch of stalkers. We did it last night. We tried Periscope. name did it when he did morning sports. He let people watch him on Periscope when was doing morning sports. I certainly think it would work for news conferences. We're a big part of it. Especially the company we work for is a huge part of thinking of the newsroom of the future and how that newscast of the future is going to look. If you're relying on a newscast of the future that's based solely on stories that are already on your website that you've already put on Facebook and Twitter, how are you tuning people in to watch television. You're giving it all to them ahead of time. What are you saving and how are you teasing ahead to what's going to come on TV. That'll be our biggest challenge. That'll be television's biggest challenge ahead. As a company we're working on that. I think that one of the biggest goals we have that I think, I can't remember if I've shared this with you before, they say if we roll a show open animation come out to a 2 shot at a wooden desk, run a bunch of stories that scare people then do some weather temperatures and then we do some sports highlights and a kicker about a cat we are certainly not going to survive. But what does every TV station in the country do right now? I think that's our biggest challenge. Social is advancing. Digital is advancing. We're building some really cool sets and we're coming up with neat ways to showcase things, but what are we really doing to change our industry and I think that will be our biggest challenge in the next ten year. Social and digital will certainly help us get there. That's our biggest challenge right now. The neat thing is we have such a great following in this market that I think we will be able to figure it out. We certainly have some of the brightest minds coming out of school, I won't name which school, some of the best journalism schools in the country are here. If we're going to figure out how to do I think we have a better change than others because we have people who are young, hungry, innovative, wanting to tackle this and finding out what that newscast of the future is going to look like is certainly is a goal that is at the top of our minds. We're not there yet, but we're focused on it and we certainly have a company that's pushing us to do that. It'll be interesting to see I think.

LD: I did have one thing I wanted to ask if you have time. Can you tell me why it's so important to have these very human interest community rooted stories in your newscast? Of all the stations, I think I've ever been to there was more community journalism here than I've seen anywhere. Why is that?

It's a big part of our brand. For 30 years we've had a brand that viewers recognize and they hold us accountable for. When you're seeing up there are five crime stories back to back. I am the gatekeeper of that brand. I have to say I know that we're going to have someone post on Facebook or send us an email about thanks station name for all the death and distraction today. Thanks for giving us something to look forward to. I'm not
saying we censor the news by any means. I'm saying we report it but do we do it in such a way that people can stomach it. It's a newscast that people want to sit down and watch with their children. Am I giving them a newscast that day that they can watch as a family? If people are giving us the honor of having appointment television and they're watching us and they're watching us by the thousands, what are we doing to live up to that community expectation they've set for us. That's a big part of, that's a big part of what drives our coverage every day. The crime often times doesn't have to be the lead story. Is it some days? Absolutely. Do we take an approach to how we tell that story because we are a community station. Absolutely. name had to be very careful today. One of the best examples recently would be the Powerball winner. He didn't want interviews. He didn't want to be on camera. We knew that. We're not going to go knock on his door, stand of his lawn or interview his neighbors. We're going to leave him alone. Because there's a lot that goes into that. You show where he lives. You show where a new Powerball winner lives is highly irresponsible specially when he doesn't want it to be shown. What does the unnamed competition go do? Exactly what I told you. That to me, I'm proud to work in a place that prides itself in thinking that's good journalism. It's just not. It's not what this community wants to see. It's not what we pride ourselves on when we come to work everyday. I think that the community part of a station also gets back to we're allowed to be on television for nine and half hours we're allowed to be on television for nine and half hours. People turn on their TV, invite us in their homes, not for all nine and half hours but we're allowed to be if we wanted to. What 30 minutes of televisions is allowed to be on television that doesn't make someone feel something? Or have a emotion, laugh, smile, feel bad. Not like what they're seeing. Think that, feel sorry for someone. What 30 minutes is allowed to be on television that doesn't do all those things, sadly it's local news. We don't have, we don't have a rule that we have to elicit an emotion from the people watching us. But we should. Think about all the other shows that are on there. If you sit down and watch on your DVR you might fast forward through the commercials, but you laugh, you cry, you feel good about something. You feel bad about something. You can get through 30 minutes of local news and sometimes feel nothing. If at the end of the day we've done that for nine and half hours then shame on us. I think that's one of the things about being a community station that makes it so simple. If you're telling the stories about people in your area and you're making me feel something and you're finding a real person and you're connecting with me as a viewer. I'm going to come back the next night. You're going to be the station that I watch. If I sit down and watch and you show me a bunch of mug shots and a bunch of maps and I bunch of death and crime, why am I coming back to watch that? I can read that on your website all day long. What's the reason that I watch your news. I think that's the difference between a community station and one that chases breaking news or one that claims to be a certain slogan. Coverage you can count on, on your side, all those things. franchise removed, that's a pretty big deal. And that's certainly a great station to work for. And then once you're here, it's very tough to go someplace else because it's not the same. It'll never be the same. There's a handful of stations that do it this way and many of them are within this company so that's helpful.
General Manager

Listen to 'em. They'll tell you a lot about what's going on. That's the secret, right?

LD: Absolutely. I think. From your perspective a) how well do you think the station does at reflecting what people are talking about and are passionate about?

I don't think anyone does that well. We should all be better at it. We haven't been doing it forever. The attempt is there and our hearts are there to do it, but I think we should be better at it and have a variety of sources and not listen to those who are the loudest. It's like you don't want to listen to the people who call in on talk radio or listen to the extremes. That's politics these days. So much of politics is managed by the extreme ends of both parties and that's not who most of us are. If you listen to the common sense people in the middle, middle of politics, middle of all the ways you divide us up, religion and race and income and all that. If you listen to the logical people that are in the middle and not shouting craziness then you're probably on the right track. You've got to figure out how to listen to them more than the people who make a living at screaming.

LD: So how do you encourage your team to do that?

I think we have, you're going to say I'm an old guy here, but you can see I think we have made a great effort in our social media involvement. I think our Facebook is 200 something and our Twitter is 770 or 80 thousand. Those are real. Some people have grown those things by having contests and stuff like that. Ours are real. We have real engagement with the people and I think they know they can trust us. We monitor it. It's a place to go that they're comfortable and they don't need to have concerns, but I think we've made it. Our company, our overall company, has made a great effort and has encouraged us and created products where we're in the arena. Maybe because we have the strongest television station we have the chance to listen to the most people. Hopefully that's the case and we've made every effort to let them know we want to listen and we want to hear your feedback.

LD: When you say, are you the number one in your market then?

I think so. I don't know how you. I haven't seen it, but name removed can tell you. She keeps track of the stats. I know the Facebook is 250 ish and Twitter is close to 80. That's where we get breaking news is from Twitter these days. It's there before it's any place else.

LD: Can you tell me about station name removed brand.

Now, now you've got something I can talk about.

LD: What sort of things are you fostering?

Our brand, do you know our brand?
LD: Not too well. Not too well.

Do you know the name of it? The slogan?

LD: identifying information removed

That's close enough for someone out of town. Here's the coolest thing, that brand is 30 something years old. Name a product, any kind of product, whoever those shoes are that has a slogan that's 30 years old. Nobody does. Hot shots come in and they change the slogan. Coca Cola has one every time you turn around. Think about the products you use that you really like. You say "This is mine." They change their slogans all the time. The people that came before us created a brand that people believe and we've lived up to it and we haven't changed it because most people some new guy like me will say "I can make that, I can jazz that up." First thing you know is you've veered off from your brand so our brand the viewers believe we live in a medium size southern college town, people care. They're from here and they have expectations. We don't show a lot of big city car wrecks and stuff like that. We present the news in a way that they want it not the way we think they ought to have it. And we think we've lived up to our brand and it's an internal thing the way we treat each other. There's two things that's going for us: We have a brand and we can teach our new people this is the way we do business. This is the expectation and this is the viewer's expectation and management's expectation. This is how we relate to the viewers externally and this is also the way we treat each other in this building. This is the way we do our stories in a franchise removed manner. It's a goal. It's a path. People know what our expectations are. Some cities say go cover that story. We say cover the story but take this angle. You know? Here's one of my favorite ones. A parent loses a child there's two ways to cover it. I'm going to test you. A parent loses a child, you're set out to cover it. What are you going to say?

[section of interview removed due to relevancy to project.]

The worst thing you can say is how do you feel. The best one is, tell me about your child. Our approach is talk to me about your child and they will do that. That's what I'm most proud of as a brand that means something. Second thing I'm proud of is we do nine and half hours of local TV a day. That's way ahead. Three of it is over on the Fox station, but it doesn't matter, it's still us. We're the most local station and we know who we are. Those are the two things that I'm most proud of and the reason we are the leading station.

LD: Say you have a new reporter who comes in and they want to live up to that brand. What sort of advice do you have for them in terms of everyday routines that they're doing?

They'll pick up on it. We'll tell you this is the way we do stuff. When you go out there here's your angle and this is how it fits. It's really cool because most of it doesn't come from management. It'll come from the other folks that are doing your job. This is the way we do it here and they'll pick up on it. We think we have caring, nurturing newsroom.
Most everybody here is in their second job and they had their biggest growth spurt with us. They will tell you that. If you ask them, "have you grown since you've been here?" "yeah." you get a lot of reps. We do nine and a half a day. You're going to be on TV. You're not going to say well I didn't get my story on today. You're getting on. Everybody is. It's a good chance to get better and you're around people that if you pay attention you can, they'll help you grow.

LD: What sort of challenges have you had as more and more viewers have started turning to Facebook or Twitter for their news?

I call it fragmentation. They have so many choices. We have to figure out how to be relevant in some people's lives. It's not automatic. they have so many choices. They have expectations of anywhere, anytime. Whenever they want for their music video, what they want to read, everything. I've got four things: user, reader, listener, viewer. Those four things. They have all kinds of choices and we're just one of them and have the content they want anywhere anytime they want it. That's the future.

LD: To play Devil's advocate - why do we still put so many resources in the broadcast?

That's still where most of the people are. Yeah, there are some over there. The issue is not that they're over there when they're over there they're here. They're everywhere. They use all our products. Nobody has monitored the new products as fast as the money is leaving the core business. Eyeballs are moving all over the place but the money is still there. That's where advertisers feel safe. They understand it. They still buy traditional media even though we don't have as many people. They slide a nickel over towards a digital thing. They don't say, "Hey, half of my money is going over here." That terrifies them. They're still safety in the biggest chunk. It'll always be the biggest piece of our business, but there's all kinds of ways to get us and use us.

LD: Do you think it's important that the people on every level of the team are understanding that process?

Heck yes. Heck yes. We try to bring everybody along and say breaking news breaks fastest way to get it to them. Put it out the fastest way we can and that's not the first thing we go to. We get there, but that's not the first way we get it. I think the whole team understands, especially people your age. That's how you use the product. Not so much me. I read the newspaper today. I'm going to read two newspapers today. I feel comfortable with that. I listen to the radio. I've got an iPod. I get stuff at night on my iPad. I've got music on my phone or my Sirius Radio in the car. I don't listen to regular radio, but they still have good businesses over there, but I'm gone. I might find a basketball game on there sometimes if I'm really interested in 12:48, which is not often. I've got 200 songs on my iPod.

LD: In the morning meeting I heard a lot of "people stories" and the community is doing this or that. Can you tell me a little bit about why city name is so receptive to that?
We're not the only city. This is the first place I've lived that has a real sense of community. All the other states list removed. Everybody is from someplace else; 50 percent of the people in Florida have been there less than five years. That's Florida. 50 percent of the people here have been here all their lives.

LD: Wow, that's really interesting.

There's a lot of cities like this. Everybody is from there and they care. This is one of the places like that. The people your age who might want to go try city removed. It works for many of them but many say I just miss the simplicity of city removed. We have everything that a big city has but none of the problems so they come back. This is a place that cares, which makes it easier for us to relative in their lives. What was your question? I didn't quite answer it.

LD: Why city removed is so receptive to community journalism?

We have a city with a sense of community and they care. They're not from someplace else. They're from here.

LD: I never really thought that through before.

I've never lived in a place like this. The university gives this place a vibrancy. It's really important in a city our size, like Columbia. It's gigantic the influence of the university. Look in the stands. It's very few students. identifying information removed. We didn't go to school here, but we love the school.

LD: What sort of steps do you take to figure out what the market wants? What they want to hear?

We do market research, not every year, we used to. We call it a tracking study. We ask the viewers what subjects are important to them. We'll show them some promotions and we'll ask them to rank news, environment, crime, government, all the subjects that might be in our newscasts. It comes out the same all the time: weather is the first and most important thing and then they want to know about their government, but they don't want a bunch of stats or politicians spitting out. We should go talk to a person and say "the government is gong to raise your taxes, what's that going to change for you?" or the government says you can't water your yard, I'll take a California subject, what are you going to do about it? That's the people story. That's what we want to put.

LD: How long do the reporters typically stay here?

It's different. It's generally their second job. The Missouri kids, we count this as their second job because they've all worked at KOMU. They're ready to go. Some stay and some move on. We moved 11 people to other stations last year, including three department heads. They got bigger jobs. That's fine. We promoted people. We reload. You asked me, some stay. They get involved in their community. They get involved.
They get married, but some say I've learned a lot here I want to learn someplace else where I can grow even more. And that's fine too. I can't say for sure if anybody is going to stay just one cycle or two cycles.

LD: So when they first get here how do you - because most of them would be in that small transport population - how do you help them figure out this place?

Yeah. We show them marketing. Here's who we are. Give them a feel of who we are. Mainly it happens in that room with the other people that do their job and help them figure it out. This is the way it's done here. They'll help them figure out the community. It doesn't take long. They get it. Oh I see. We're not doing car wrecks. We're going to tell people stories and talk to people.

LD: My last question is what is your biggest hope for the station with its social media and digital?

Stay relevant! It's a big dang deal. Stay relevant! When they have so many choices, you know, let them know we're here for them. We'll give them the stuff they want wherever, whenever. I could say it better than that. We have the content that you want and we'll give it to you whenever and wherever you need it. We want to be a part of your lives. We think we have things we think you'll need or appreciate or enjoy. Stay relevant on what we know now and for stuff that's coming around the corner that we've never heard of. In a couple of years, that's one reason I'm still here, people like you say, "Hey! this is a new deal that does that." Huh? How can that be? I got a new radio in my car and it has a hard drive in it. I dumped some of my music on there. I wanted it sorted differently. It had sorted it alphabetically.

LD: That was nice of it.

I said it's smarter than I am. Now I've got to figure out how to change the order. But I learned they tell me stuff all the time. I think it's cool. Keeps me where I'm not a complete dunce.
Web Director

LD: So if I could have you say and spell your name and give your title for me.

_Name removed for anonymity. Web Director. Station name removed._

LD: And what sort of experience did you have before you took this position?

Two internships and college degree

LD: And what were you doing at your internships?

My first internship was a kind of reporter, newsroom everything and then my second internship was more digital based.

LD: Ok. So jumping right in. Which social platforms are your reporters using? Or the reporters you oversee?

Facebook and Twitter.

LD: And what about the station separately?

Facebook, Twitter, Google+, Instagram

LD: OK. So the station has Instagram and Google+ as well.

The Google+ is more of a we have it. We haven't utilized as much as we would hope to and everything else yeah, we use.

LD: OK. And what are your expectations of the reporters on social media?

They're expected to have their own professional page on Facebook. Twitter accounts and they're expected to tweet of their stories during the day while they're in the field about their stories or tease to broadcast with information about their stories and also write a story for the web that can be posted that can be posted to the _station name removed_ Facebook page.

LD: It's a lot of stuff.

Really when you boil it down, it's really not. It's just write a story on your, write a web story on your package and tweet once or twice so it's really not all that much. Once you have your pages, you're there.
LD: How do you measure success of the reporters? How do you know when they're doing a good job versus need to step it up a bit.

Really the way I gauge it is just if they do it or not. It's kind of a struggle to get everyone consistently doing what's asked of them. If I get, if the reporters are tweeting a couple of times a day and posting the web story. I would call that success.

LD: What do you do when they're not doing that?

Tell them that their video is not going to get to the website and they're not going to reach as many people unless they get active on social media so they're only hurting themselves.

LD: All right.

And that's a good motivation because I tell the anchors if they don't post a web story don't post their video and if their video doesn't get posted it's not going to get shared on our Facebook page. They want as many people to see their stuff as they can and that's worked pretty well.

LD: OK. So it seems like you and name removed work pretty closely to figure out what stories are going on the web or going on television. Finding stories.

Yeah, I think name removed does a lot more of that than I do, but yeah. That's fair to say.

LD: OK. So how do you identify stories or issues that you think are important to your viewers? Local.

You kind of just get an idea what matters to people. I've gotten better at it just by through my time here you see the things that you post that really resonate with people and the things that people just kind of don't care about. Don't click on. And I think the analytics kind of show it all for me. What people care about.

LD: So you measure how much a story resonates with your audience based on the analytics you're finding from Facebook or Google?

A lot of times. Yes. Just to gauge what people care about, but also you know, if you post a story and it gets maybe it didn't get all the clicks in the world, but it got 250 Facebook comments. That was a story that matters to people around here. Just because my job is all digital, that's the way I think. I bet name removed would have a different answer, but that's the way I think.
LD: That makes sense. How important are maintaining the social channels to your news operations here?

From my point of view, I would say it's extremely important and essential but I would feel that a lot of people probably don't have the exact same feelings about that. They would say it's a side thing, where I see, I think that it's just as important as the newscast itself and the way our brand is and how we reach people.

LD: How does your work then influence the brand?

Just that we, that the brand is visible and reliable across all kinds of different platforms not just the, you can see station name removed on TV you can see it on Facebook you can see it on Twitter and you're going to get solid news everywhere.

LD: How do you determine how which stories you're going to put on Facebook or not?

You kind of saw how I was going through today. It's really just a guess and check. You know? I've been doing it long enough to where I see the kind of things that people click on. The goal is obviously to drive as many people to the website as possible so a story that is getting something like, I think I posted a story yesterday or the day before that was in Colorado and it was a girl who got arrested for attempted murder because she tried to kill her mom with bleach because her mom took her cell phone away. I think that's the second most viewed story we've had all week. Something like, you see stuff like that, along those lines I'll put that up. Big local stories. I'll put that up, but I just try and determine. I use my best judgment as to what people will want to click on. A lot of times what would I want to click and I spend a lot of time kind of browsing other stuff and seeing what people are clicking on other stuff. Taking stuff, borrowing stuff, stealing ideas.

LD: As you're going through your day and you're working with the reporters, at what point in the whole process does how it's going to be used on social media come into the conversation? Or does it all?

As far as when say when you're meeting. It doesn't. It's more of an after. It's expected. It's not a, unless there's a say there's a big press conference and we wanted to go, we thought we should have someone to live tweet it or something like that then it would. On a day to day basis, average stories, it's broadcast driven not social media web driven.

LD: Do you think that's ok or do you think that's an opportunity for you guys?

I would say it's definitely an opportunity. I think. I've tried to encourage people to do it. I think what would be cool, we do a web tease type deal and I think that if we even get. Have you heard of string wire? It's like a new NBC VOD thing and they're trying to
encourage people where you can just get video straight to your website, straight to your online. I think we can use stuff like that. I think you. If we could get video online and just get stuff more real time. We're pretty good at getting breaking news online, but if we had video and kind of had if we could have a web tease. Say name removed, what if he had someone while he was in that helicopter today shoot video of him in the helicopter and say I'll tell you why I'm up in this helicopter, blah blah blah. That would have been like the coolest web tease you could have. I'd tune in to see that, but I mean, a lot of it is we don't have the man power to shoot something like that. And then we have to also get people, it has to become part of a routine and people aren't in that routine, but.... It's an opportunity.

LD: Interesting. Yeah, that would have been really cool. What sort of training are you doing for the reporters when they come in? Say a new reporter comes in, how do you work with them?

We would get them set up on the Facebook page.

LD: The station name Facebook page?

Yeah so they can post things to our Facebook if they want. Look at our messages. Browse story ideas. Have them get set up on the CMS, teach them the inner workings of all that. Just explain the policies with producing web copy. Basically just a crash course in what is expected of you and how to do what is expected of you.

LD: How do you think social media could play a part in better, or not better, in more enterprise opposed to breaking news situations? How do you see social media helping that kind of storytelling. That was kind of a convoluted question - sorry.

Try and explain that again.

LD: How do you think social media can help promote ideas for new features or new enterprise stories. More human interest. Kind of what you did this morning what you did with the payday loans.

I think social media is a great a way just to find out what matters to people. You really can you can literally get real time seeing what people are interested in. What's trending what's not, you can see what people care about at any given time. And how one story stacks up to another. I think it's only going become more involved that way.

LD: Are there certain stories that you think pause are enhanced by adding a social element to them?
I think any story is enhanced by adding a social element to it. I mean, what do you mean adding a social element to it? Like getting, just getting the story into social media for people to see? Or kind of making social media part of the story? I don't know. I don't think having social media involved with any news story hurts at all.

LD: That's a good point.

That's kind of the way I would put it.

LD: And also, I saw you guys have a lot of user generated content. People submitting photos or sharing video.

We do.

LD: How do you incorporate that into the newscast or online?

Like say for example you get a big storm coming through or something and you've got trees down. And you say, we cover a big area almost from 45 minutes south of here to nearly the state removed border. So you can get, you can't get everywhere. But you can say there's all these storms, send us some pictures and then I'll put together a photo gallery or something and I'll say storm pictures and that's kind of stuff people love to click on when you share on Facebook or periodically share it on Twitter. People also love it when you give them a shout out. So and so submitted this picture and then they tell all their friends, etc. They'll kind of be a fan of yours for life just for doing that. pause Sorry, I don't even really remember the question. It's not as much that we're asking for like hey oh you're close to that accident stop your car and go take a picture. It's when bigger things happen. We're not soliciting people to send us crazy breaking news. I mean we're not going to say no don't send it to us, but it's more when real big events happen and you're going to have people that send picture and everyone else is also going to be able to relate to it.

LD: So how often are you going through the comments and gauging how people are reacting and maybe looking for another story idea? How often are you doing that?

Pretty consistently.

LD: Can you tell me about that?

First off you have to patrol the comments just for the vulgar nature of some of. We have filters set up that is supposed to eliminate that, but memes get around it now. You have to patrol it just because of that. In dong so, at the same time, you're looking for story ideas. It's like so say we had put up the payday loans story without the thing without for contact us you still might see someone say 'oh yeah, I got a loan at such and such and they
screwed me over.' I could comment and say 'Joey, love to hear about that. Can you give us a call we're working on a story about that today?' That happens pretty consistently. Couple of times a day at least. And then you're always kind of scrolling messages and checking that, checking the post to your page and then I can see if people tweet us stuff on Tweet Deck right there.

LD: One sec.

It's nice to get out of the newsroom for a little bit.

LD: What do you think is the biggest challenge you have in connecting with the community? The every day people that watch you guys or see you guys online?

That's tough to get specifically.

LD: Or I guess might be like how in your opinion how well do you think the website or the Facebook reflect what's important to the community here?

I think that goes back to the same thing with analytics. You can see what's important to people by what's clicked on the most. I think you can see what's important just by the way things steer. Say the question again and I can probably give you something better.

LD: How well do you think the web page reflects issues that are important to the community right now?

I think it's pretty good. Just in the same way you can tell overall local stories tend to do the best. We have a positioning for our local stories at the top of the site so that's probably our demographic, everyone that is clicking on our site and visiting our site is clicking on local so we give them local when they first get there. We push that out on social media. We push that out on Twitter. I would say we, I would say our website what the people want to see pretty well. I mean it's tough to gauge. You can't make everyone happy ever so you're going to put stuff on Facebook and someone is going to say station name removed I'm sick of you posting all this click bait, blah, blah but then 140 other people shared it. You never know.

LD: I think my last question is what is your biggest hope for you guys on social for the next couple of years? What's something you'd really like to see?

I want to stay ahead of the competition. Want to reach as many people as we can and I'd like to right now get our other platforms stronger so I want to keep the numbers up that are traffic coming from Facebook, but I want to get more traffic coming from other platforms.
LD: Which ones?

Twitter specifically. I think the other - is this just social media? No, we then to get our app is probably our biggest priority right now. Just kind of, right now when I started here a year ago or so the digital brand was really, there wasn't really anything. I would say now it's for the market above average, but I think we have the potential to be so much better. And that's just kind of across everything. It's not, it's with the little things like getting our anchors to attach pictures with their stories so when you go on our website at 10 o'clock at night you're not seeing three stories with the station name removed logo on it. It's getting everyone to always tweet in the field, to always post their stories. Yeah. Getting an app that reflects how good our desktop looks like. Getting an active radar on our website. A weather radar. Things like that. That would just make it an overall much better product.

LD: What would you say you're most proud of in the last year?

Just overall growth. I think we, when I started we were out 12,000 Facebook likes and we were behind our competition by about 30,000 and we had a solid 7,000 like lead on them and we're over 62,000 or something like that. It's huge growth. And then we had huge growth on our website I think we went from 2013 we were out, thy were out 2.5 million page views overall and last year we hit 14 million.

LD: In a year?

We had a 12-million page view growth in one year.

LD: So in 2013, one year, there were 2/5 million page views and then in 2014

We had 14 million.

LD: Whoa

Yeah. The growth. That's been the combination of a lot of things. Just putting the social media aspect of it. You know they weren’t even linking stories Facebook. IT was just throwing it away. The potential to do it was there. The better web product, switching to Synapse has helped a lot. But yeah, that's definitely the biggest thing. I think we can still get more.

LD: Is there anything else you want to add? This has been great.

Nope.

LD: Thanks for letting me drill you a little bit.
It's fun.

LD: Good.
Vice President of Digital News

I'm name removed for anonymity and I'm the vice president for digital news at station name removed, which is one of the 10 owned in the company removed owned station group. I can tell you a little bit about the structure of our digital offerings and then what my job is and how it fits into that structure. Each station has its own digital offerings, it's own website, it's own mobile web news app, social media, but we also get support from a national digital team. They're based at location removed and they help with backend technical support so if you look at the websites and the mobile app and mobile web for all the markets, they're built on the same frame.

LD: OK.

There's a similarity in terms of the look and feel. We leverage economy of scale across the division to be able to ideally create something of a higher caliber. It would be too expensive to custom build for each market, but if we do it for all the markets, the idea is we get something better, higher quality. What we gain is a more sophisticated product, the compromise then is it's not quite as specific to the market. city removed is not list of other stations in group removed so we're always looking for ways to make sure we're always on our guard and looking for ways to make sure the content that we're offering and the way that we're delivering that content suits the needs of our audience. Our audience comes from everywhere because digital travels everywhere, but the audience that we're most interested in and most concerned about and most, most invested in is the audience in our DMA. The audience that we serve across all platforms: digital, broadcast, human direct contact and otherwise. We have, each market has its own digital team with a team leader so that's me here. We have a national team that supports us in state removed and then within the station the digital team works very closely with the broadcast operation. I work very, I work, I report directly to the general manager of the station name removed I'm not sure if you've met him yet. It'd be great to have you say hello to him. He's a great guy. I report directly to him, but I work very closely with our news director name removed, assistant news director name removed, managing editor name removed and all the EPs and all the show producers, the assignment desk to 3:21 interweave as much as possible our digital offerings with our broadcast offerings. Ideally we'd like it to be a seamless user experience where our audience can engage with, interact with us, consume what we're offering on any platform and feel like it all makes sense and it's all part of the same news experience. That they can send us things and then they might see something on TV or we can respond to them via email, Twitter or Facebook and they can feel like we are sort of living and breathing along with them in their lives 3:58 whether they're watching us on TV or a live streaming us or coming to us through social media, whatever. It's my job to understand what that means and to try to help realize that for people in their lives and reach as many people as possible in as many ways as possible. What that means is, I work with the news folks. Part of my job, it's a little different than a straight news job in that the digital realm crosses a lot of the traditional boundaries so my job also includes marketing and promotion. I work directly with the sales team. I work with finance to figure out budget because we have a lot of different tools that we're using all the time. 4:46 and introducing new tools and testing
new tools all the time and so that costs money and then also the tool that my team needs just to monitor the user experience so there's a lot. I have a lot of conversations with our finance guy. My hat in my hand asking him. There's also a lot of training involved in keeping up to speed on all the changes so sometimes we bring people in, sometimes we'll do, we'll participate in, sometimes I send people on the team to conferences and things. There's just a tremendous amount of professional development required to keep on top of, on the practical level, the actual tools and just more broadly what is the conversation right now. How are, how should we be thinking about this? And also, learning how to 5:34 understand the data and then also how to communicate that information effectively who aren't as familiar with it. There are hard skills and soft skills. There's just a lot. These jobs are becoming more and more complex all the time. That's kind of the high level description. In the day-to-day, you sat in on our meeting, we're there are a lot of meetings. The first meeting is at 8 and that's a dial-in meeting with the assignment desk and the morning team just sort of talks about any handoffs anything we need to launch early. Then I go to a meeting at 845 which is looking at the previous days ratings and also the previous days digital performance...

LD: And that's every day?

Mhm. And then at 9:15 there's the broadcast news meeting and then we met usually around 10:30 or so. That gives the producers time to assign the packages and figure out sort of the logistics of the day so that we have that in front of us and we can sort of deploy our resources on the packages and the other stories. 6:36 We don't wait for that. We're 24/7 pretty much so we've already got stories up and posted and we're constantly monitoring iNews, which is our assignment tool. We work in iNews as well so the assignment desk can see sort of what we're working on and who on the digital team is liking

Mhm. And then at 9:15 there's the broadcast news meeting and then we met usually around 10:30 or so. That gives the producers time to assign the packages and figure out sort of the logistics of the day so that we have that in front of us and we can sort of deploy our resources on the packages and the other stories. We don't wait for that. We're 24/7 pretty much so we've already got stories up and posted and we're constantly monitoring iNews, which is our assignment tool. We work in iNews as well so the assignment desk can see sort of what we're working on and who on the digital team is assigned to any individual story. But when we sit down it's like ok, this is at least for now, this is where the reporters are going and so we sort of parcel out are resources to make sure we're covering we have all our content covered. We're not limited by that. We're talking about added value things, different stories that might resonate with the digital audience, but that's kind of our starting point. My day it depends sort of on, news has its own ebb and flow, depends on the news of the day. If it's a really crazy, busy news day I actually have a seat out there and coordinate logistics and being competitive on breaking news or if we have a big I team story or big enterprise story I'll be coordinating with how are we going to present that. How are we going to roll it out on social? How are we going to promote it. I'll be talking to the promotions gal. I'll be talking to the producer. On the reporter, we'll be talking about language. We'll figure out the timing of
rolling out that content. Today's a little bit less crazy so it gives me a chance to catch up on lots of other things. For example, couple of things I'm working on right now are: we're updating our social security, our security around social media, one sheet. We put them up periodically, but you know as new social media platforms come into being and reporters get and talent get excited about trying new things, it also creates vulnerabilities. I work with our security team so we come up with a one sheet that's appropriate to help us with those things. And we put that out periodically as a reminder. Dos and don'ts and how to make sure that - we want them to have engagement, but be smart about it. And just tips on how to make sure they're protecting themselves, and the brand while also creating opportunities to have direct engagement with the audience which is so important. We're also working on developing, we're constantly evolving our best practices and how we're using our different platforms. How do use our app? How can we best use Facebook how can we best use Instagram, Twitter? Every platform has a different personality and the audience on every platform has different expectations. Instagram audience is very different from the Facebook audience. It could be the exact same people, but when they go on Instagram they're not looking for the same thing they're looking for on Facebook or Twitter or Snapchat or any other, Pinterest, Google+. You know, the list is endless. At its core, our job, my job and the job of my team is to do the best, to create, present and engage with the best possible digital content on all of our digital and social platforms. That's in a sentence what we do. All that stuff emanates from that.

LD: Right. How do you work with your reporters to better their use? Your team they're all kind of here working together, but they're not here with you. How do you work with them to make sure they're doing, using their best practices too.

Different ways. It really does start with the individual reporter and their personality. I mean, I think you'd probably here this from any news organization there have been in the past different approaches like if you go way back to when Facebook and Twitter came on the scene, there was a lot of fear and suspicion and concern and then it kind of, the pendulum swung far the other way when it was mandatory and everybody had to do everything and that didn't work either because it's not one size fits all. Different people gravitate toward different social platforms and feel comfortable in different social environments and so what works best is to work with the talent and help them figure out what they like and what works for them. At the end of the day, once you create the promise and a social media account is a promise, it's attached to the brand. if you put yourself out there on social media and you say you're going to be on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram whatever it is. You have to deliver on that promise constantly and if you don't then you're failing your audience. That is not good. That's not what we want so instead of making everyone do everything, force-feeding it, I mean you can imagine all the challenges that brings with it. Even if someone is trying to be a trooper and deliver, it's going to feel artificial. It's not going to feel genuine in their voice. It needs to have an authenticity. If that authenticity is missing, that bullshit meter is going to detect that pretty quickly and they're going to move on. That's another way that you fail. Even if the reporter is in name delivering on the promise if they're just doing it to fulfill a quota or an expectation without any sort of buy-in on their end. Without understanding the value of it and actually participating in it lacks authenticity and the audience and will detect that.
immediately.

LD: How do you measure that success or that failure?

You can see it. All you have to do is look at some of the accounts. So the first thing we do if you're not interested in Twitter. You know I mean, we try to encourage people. We say look at some of our colleagues. Look at how they're using it. We try and encourage them. Figure out a way to use it that's comfortable for you that makes sense for you. You don't have to do it like this person. What's important is for you to do it professionally, but also in a way that reflects you as a professional. Your professional brand. Not somebody else. There is no, you know, perfect way of doing it. The best way to do it is the way you do it. That's what it is going to really reflect in terms of you audience responding and getting excited. Same with Facebook, same with Instagram. Big laugh One thing we've noticed things just sort of take off and capture people's imagination like Periscope is just like... everybody is just so excited about it. It's actual value as a news delivery tool is I think it will have value as a news delivery tool and I think it's good for people to sort of practice and experiment with so they feel comfortable with it, but a lot of the stuff so far, we haven't seen any examples yet of it being used effectively as a news delivery tool. That will happen when there's a big breaking news event and it will be very effective. But just like we know from local TV news if you're doing a live breaking news story in front of a playground where there are no children and nothing is happening it's not good TV. And the same for, it's just, just because we can we're doing it. That's the same with Periscope. That's what is happening right now people are using it for live broadcast just because they can when there's nothing to see and so there's been this moment of everybody just excited about the new toy, but you sort of have to have that perfect storm of the new toy and the big breaking news event that come together. There are lots of variables. it is an education process. One is sitting down with the reporter listening to them, helping them feel safe so they don't feel stupid like they don't know what they're doing and they're not embarrassed because they don't how to use a tool, which at this point there are still people like that but nobody wants to admit it. My team, and I've talked to them a lot about this, there's no judgment it's like "ok, what are you doing? What aren't you doing? What do you like, what don't you like? Kind of having that sort of therapy session. That social media therapy session. Making sure they feel ok. And then, you know helping them take those steps this is at the most basic level. How can we help them take those steps to understand it and move forward. If it's someone who is already sophisticated, using the tools really well and they want to take it to the next level then you can show them things. You can help them kind of integrate their accounts, move forward so there are lots - once you get sort of into it there are lots of things you can do. One thing I like to do when I have time is I like to go on ride-along with the reporters.

LD: Really?

I'll schedule a day and I'll just go hang out with them for the day in the field as they're out reporting on stories. My background is in journalism. I'm a trained journalist so it's fun. It's fun to be out and about. And once they realize that I'm not just some talking head in a building and I'm actually a trained journalist then they're happy to have me with them.
as someone to bounce things off of. And then as they're out reporting their story I'll talk to them about how they're using social media over the course of their day. One thing that we really try to encourage or push the reporters is news process storytelling. Talk to the audience as they're getting the story so the audience knows I'm working on this right now. Here's a photo. This is really cool. I'm going to get the whole story and I'm going to have it all for you. 17:29 So come back at 5 and you can see the whole thing. When there are these moments - reporters feel very stressed. Very pressed for time. Their brain doesn't have any space to think of social media because it's full of the live shot and coordinating, writing their script so if I'm out with them and I'm observing quietly and I see a moment where they're checking their phone or they're waiting I can say, "you know this is a perfect opportunity right now." You can do this and it'll take less than five minutes. Take a picture that's a really cool thing right there. Take a picture of that, tweet it and just say "waiting for the mayor" you know?

LD: Just what you're doing.

Waiting for the mayor. Hoping to get some answers about the latest blah blah we'll have the details for you at 5. They're like, "really?" You think that's interesting. Yeah. That's actually really interesting to everyone to who is following you. We would retweet that. It tell people that you're working on the story right now. You don't just pop up at 5 o'clock with the whole thing done. You're out here right now. It's like 10 in the morning and you're already working on this story. This is what it takes to get it. it doesn't just happen like magic. There's work involved. "Oh yes! Yes! there's work involved. I should tell people!" You know who else is going to see that your working is your boss is the station manager and everybody is going to see how hard you're working. So I have found that to be very effective to spend a day with a reporter. It just helps them understand how all the benefits. It's not just another thing they have to do. It actually helps build their brand, it helps the audience see how hard they're working and there are ways to that you can incorporate it into your day without being like "Ok, now that I've done my scripts and I've got my live shot now I have to do social media. Now, what do I say?" Instead of it being this separate kind of burden after you've finished everything. Helping people figure out how they can just kind of more naturally and organically work it into their day. And that's a process. that's a process. You know we have the digital natives. We have the younger reporters, and not even always the younger ones, sometimes the older reporters who have really embraced it, but there's a whole category of people who have been doing this for a long time, legacy journalists, broadcast is a legacy medium. It's a lot of work for them to figure it out and we just a lot of reassurance. a lot of support. Positive reinforcement. When they do well, we really try our best to retweet everything as long as it's on brand and doesn't have any grammatical errors. If it does, we'll email them or call them and say ok leave that one alone and now just tweet it again. Like this and we'll retweet it. So we'll give them feedback on things like that as well. So yeah, we work directly with the reporters as much as we can. And then we also do group things like we'll, if we see something really good we'll do a little shout out and say, "great job so and so." We've done competitions in the past, but we've kind of moved away from that now just because people consume and use digital media in such different ways. Also because that kind of led down this path of the bot accounts like some of the reporters
were getting it padded out with fake accounts. We decided better to just encourage people
to speak with an authentic voice and have the audience come to them laughs or getting
what you can as much as possible and make it less of a numbers game.

LD: It's interesting to think not a one size fits all. I think that's one of the more interesting
things I've learned over these couple of days. it's really dependent on your personality and
you can't say ok you're required to do three posts today. mer mer mer. That doesn't seem.
That's really interesting. So how do think there are certain projects that tend to be more
enhanced by additional social elements. Are there certain stories that really can benefit
from extra attention on social?

Sure. You know, any big story well you know viral stories like the llamas on the loose.
That was fun. You know, authentically viral stories are hard to find now because now
viral is kind of been co-opted by corporate accounts and brands but authentically viral
stuff is really fun. But also big breaking news, big breaking news. You know name
removed plane crash. And also, that turned out not to be a very terrible, it wasn't like a
super serious story. It was a celebrity whose plane crashed in an airport. He had like a
hard landing, but he's ok. But it was name removed and it was city removed so that makes
it laughs.

LD: You also don't know.

You don't know at the time. But any big story like the Charlie Hebdo story or anything
related to national security or you know major events the plane crash in the Alps. Things
like that. Social media plays a very important role in getting the news out there and in us
sort of capturing stuff that we can then verify. Also, us pushing information out so it
works both ways. name removed probably showed you the tools that we use. We have a
bunch of tools that we use. And we're testing more because you know we're always
looking for different ways to capture that. I just have to respond to this email. I have a
timecard here. Anything else I can answer for you?

LD: It's kind of a more contextual. How well do you think this station's social media
activity reflects what people are actually talking about in the community?

Hmm. Hmmm. Well. I don't know. I don't know “what the community” is. I mean, sighs
I'm active on social media. I know. I follow conversations that have to do with the media
and other things that I'm interested in so I've sort of created my own communities of
interest. And I think that's what happens a lot. I don't know if there's an answer to that
question like what the community is talking about. I mean, sometimes things do bubble
up that are sort of the big conversation. The conversation points in the area and we'll see
those on our social mapping tools. We'll see, but in general it's very noisy. And
sometimes those things will become the dominant conversation but I think in general
what our job is to focus on news. And conversations around news and newsworthy
stories. There was just a really good Pew Study on I don't know if you saw it, but it's a
very good study, they looked at three small to mid size news markets to try to understand
how those communities thought about consumed and related to local news.
LD: I'll have to look that up.

Yeah. I guess that's one way of answering that question, which is communities do value news. They value local news. Local news is important to them so the conversations that we participate in are the ones that reflect that interest and appreciate it and try to engage with it. That's one community. The community of news consumers in our market. There are ten million other communities and you know news overalls with a lot of those different communities but there's no way that we can be a part of every community. Every social community and I don't think that's our job. We want to be the primary source for local news in the *region name removed* community if that is even a thing *big laugh* that can be defined that way. We want to be the place people go to when they want to talk about, think about, interact with, find out about local news. And that's what we do. That's who we are. Beyond that, we just can't, we can't be everything for everyone all the time. I think it would be a mistake to try and do that. Then we wouldn't be able. We would be wandering off from you know what we do best.

LD: And the last thing for you is, what is your biggest hope for the next maybe 6 months to a year for your department?

Well, that's actually pretty easy to answer. We're really focusing now on understanding our audience. There's not a lot of visibility into the digital audience on the different platforms like your broadcast so you know how much data and information there is about the broadcast audience and there's so much information you can get a lot of insight into who is watching what when why where how. You have a very a clear view of that, that does not exist for digital in the same way. We are actually working on developing some tools to help us understand our audience. Who is our audience? *pause* Why, how? What, We know what they're consuming, but we don't know why. So many times we get our daily reports, we can predict a lot of things, but some things are just baffling like *why was that interesting* to the audience? Why? Who? What were they looking for? Why did that... and so when you don't know why you can't create a better user experience based on what they did before. If you don't know why that piece of content was interesting to them then you can't think about how you can give them more content in the future that would reflect the why that got them to you in the first place. That's my biggest hope for the next 6 months is we get that insight. That's really going to help us understand our audience.

LD: That's all I got for you. Thank you so much.

You're very welcome. Good luck.
Digital Promotions Producer

LD: What was the franchise removed

So this is something that is on our Facebook page it is essentially a round up of four top news stories or you know stories that have potentially viral content or already have viral content on our Facebook page in 40 seconds and that's what some of my background in journalism is in editing video so that's how we came to think of this. This is something that is more of brand recognition this is how we're trying to get people to see are morning news team our anchors and think this story is in the morning news maybe I want to give them a shot and watch them in the morning. My whole role is about tune in, promoting tune in because this is the promos department. It's kind of an interesting design. Actually, this position that I'm in is I think the first out of any in the market to kind of straddle this divide as sort of halfway in the newsroom and halfway in promos. I mean, I, during the show I work down in the newsroom, I communicate with producers. I communicate sometimes with reporters out in the field and ask them what they have. I communicate with the digital producers. And I try to, I'll cut together a short video clip because video clips do well on Facebook because Facebook likes that when you spend more time on Facebook that's why they are constantly revising their algorithm and strategy. They want their users to stay on Facebook. We obviously want them on our digital page, our website Anything that we can kind of you know get our name out there our brand out their and our brand is obviously, so it's something, we're working on this we're doing this for you, it's all useful content, we don't like to just throw, you know, anything out there. so, yeah. That's what my role is about, promoting tune-in in the morning show. I will cut together short little video clips, like 15 seconds long depending on what it is I don't like to go much longer than that in the morning couple it with some copy and a link and say there's a live report or some kind of tease to watch the morning show so that could be, I don't like to say "get more" it has to be something more specific that somebody is going to want to tune in and watch so I do like 2 or 3 posts during the morning show and then and then in the semi-afternoon, around 10:30 is when I do the

LD: Your afternoon?

My afternoon, yeah. I get in at 3:30. I think that's what's interesting about this role is that it's sort of the first of any in the market, I don't know if they have them at other stations either, someone actively trying to promote tune in to work on these kind of more specialized product, uh projects. I'll also do from time to time, uh campaigns and work with those vendors if we have campaigns. Those are about you know sometimes we'll have contests, stuff like that. At the core of it it's news content that people are looking for on Facebook or, we're a hard news station and we want to get them, get them the news. Also sometimes we can have those talker stories, slip in every once and awhile.

LD: So how are you pause I guess able to determine what kind of hard news that they want. What might help you pick one story over another when you're picking?

It's really tricky in the morning. A lot has to do with what the producers are choosing for
the reporters to go out on, which is obviously out of my hands. We have 3 reporters on
different stories so it's kind of up to me or if I talk to about it with the producers. If I have
a question I'll go to and say hey what do you think is going to resonate more with our
viewers? And that can be, a mega crash on the freeways that's just going to mess
everyone's morning commute up that's something that people need to know about.
Something else can be, today there was a missing student over by... Yeah, it's usually
something determined by the producers. I'll always have will have the producer clear the
copy before, before I uh, shoot it out on Facebook. Sometimes if she doesn't have time
because it's just crazy bananas in the morning, I'll just have it proof read and then get it
up. That's kind of, that's kind of how it goes usually.

LD: Are you using any sort of analytics to help you make your decisions?

I do try to. In the morning it's a little more touch and go because everything is so
immediate and we're just getting, sometimes I have to write the stories because there's no
digital person in or they're not getting in for an hour so I have to write up the story and
get it up. A lot of times I try and see what's trending on Facebook already, but

LD: For station or nationally?

A lot of the time it's not always you don’t have time to read into that too much. However,
when I do the 4 in 40. I also kind of look at what's trending on my personal Facebook. I'll
see all my friends talking about it. that's also kind of helps in putting stories in the
rundown is just. I saw this crazy thing on Facebook guys. I know a lot of people are
talking about it. I know it's going to be a talker You know... today... all that's being
discussed at 3:30 in the morning. That plays a factor too. I also try and look at after I do 4
in 40, I compare the insights on Facebook insights, just to see you know what style of
writing does best with the posts.

LD: So that's using the insights for? 4 in 40 A versus 4 in 40 B. Like seeing them that
way?

Yeah, just different dates. Ill compare you know how I wrote the post on this one versus
this one. The spot placement of which I placed each story. pause So if it's like, typically
what I've found is when I'm placing the clips if it's the third or fourth one is sort of the
talker or just this crazy footage people are more willing to hang around for it so then the
views go from sometimes 15 seconds up to 25 on average, but yeah. That's kind
of looking around at what the insights are telling me, but it's tricky. Because people are
quite fickle on Facebook.

LD: Can you tell me a little more about how you work with the morning reporters.

So yeah,
LD: More specifically?

So, usually they have their own CP, the content producer, who is writing the stuff in the rundown for the show who is communicating with them, but if I need, for example on Friday, on Friday we had this story about this mystery piano up on the mountains.

LD: Oh yeah! I saw that!

Yeah! It was an awesome story because Adrian is just really good with social. I just said if you have, before he went out, I contacted him and said if you have time it would be great if you could send me photos or if not post them on social and grab them off social and I'll give you credit or retweet it from main account, stuff like that so what I did with that which proved to work out really well. When I posted kind of like a teaser video on Facebook it was on his ascent up the mountain so you just see him in the darkness he's just sweating because he's hiking and lugging all this camera stuff.

LD: Oh my gosh.

And he's like, "you know we're going to get up there, we're going to find it." So i had that and then as the story went on I was posting in the comment section photos he was tweeting out

LD: Cool.

So when he got to the top and it was just total darkness, but you just see this amazing view and then when the sun's coming up and there's a silhouette of him playing

LD: That's great process...

Yeah. I'm just trying to, and that's another thing that's big with our brand is process storytelling. This is what we did, this is what we're doing now, this is what we're going to do. 9:31 I try and incorporate that as much as possible to keep on brand.

LD: So just to make sure I get this right. Is he posting and you're like resharing or he's sending you content and you're posting?

I try and get them to send content, but sometimes they're just too busy that I just say, 'if you tweet it, I can grab it off of your social account and do it that way."

LD: So would you a download or a share?
Both.

LD: OK

I would download it and then put it in the Facebook section, in the comments. Then I would retweet it from the main account on Twitter. Then I would take the photo from twitter, download it, post it on Instagram. It's kind of like this whole — It's a lot of

LD: So how many platforms are you using?

So I am on. OK. Facebook, Instagram oh yeah also vines, vines are fun too, which we, I’ve quadrupled our presence on Vine

LD: Wow

Yeah. It's pretty cool. And then, so that's Facebook, Instagram, vine and then I'm also getting us on snap chat. I've been snapping in the morning for a month or... it's hard to keep track. a couple of weeks. Just to, I don’t think any other, I mean I know network news stations they do SnapChat and I follow them, but not a lot of local in the market so it's just kind of behind the scenes stuff: you can see the robotic cameras in the studio, anchors saying hi in the morning or I'll snap a clip of something that's going on during the show like this is what a reporter found and stuff like that

LD: And these are all, station accounts, correct?

Yes, they're all station accounts.

LD: They're not personal?

They're all station accounts.

LD: Ok.

All station, yeah.

LD: Ok. How did you get to this? How did you learn so much about social media?

Actually. I started. I got my, do you have enough time?

LD: Yeah. I don’t want to take too much of your time.

I got my bachelor's in communications way back then when I graduated in 2009. It was print journalism laughs. communications, print journalism. And then I did freelancing
and then like as a reporter taking photos all that kind of stuff. And then got a job as a technical copy writer because I was like I want to eat.

LD: Right, there is that.

And then after about three years of doing that I wasn't, I was just sitting in my cubicle like this is boring so I went back and got my master's degree from USC in broadcast and digital journalism so I learned a lot there and kind of freshened up my skills there. I was also working for the site at USC where I was handling the social accounts during my shifts so that was kind of nice jumping off point. Also a nice jumping off point to learn SEO I also worked, I forget about that, before I was a technical copywriter, I worked for an SEO kind of like a content farm. Almost like SEO in reverse. It was sort of like these click bait you know article headline and stuff like that pause so that was really funny. So then I did four rounds of internships with NBC Universal so I was on the digital team I was with the morning. Then I was with nightly news and the assignment desk. On the assignment desk you have to learn how to navigate social media and so yeah, from there I got this position and it's kind of just been a learning experience from that

LD: Some trial and error would you say?

Definitely a lot of trial and error because, another thing is trying to figure out... it's kind of odd because there's really not a lot of metrics to measure how many people are tuning in based off of your particular social post so that makes it more tricky, but just based upon engagement and you know the comment section what people are saying you can kind of gauge, ok that didn't work for sure because people are really mad about that you know if you tease to something and you don't give away enough information 'well like what the heck?' Which, but you also kind of have to take a lot of comments with a grain of salt because longer pause yeah. They can get, you know.... Nasty.

LD: How often are you like scrolling through those comments?

Oh I look all the time. I look right after I post. I look, I'm kind of always constantly scanning to see what people are saying. Constantly throughout the show and then I'll check on it alter on in my shift and sometimes I'll check back later when I’m at home because I'm obsessive about it and I'm like, 'what else are they saying?' So yeah, just kind of constantly.

LD: Is there anything that you're hope is for the reporters, whether here specifically or more conceptually, what they can be doing?

Oh. Absolutely. I want them to be more, so we only have... we have 1 reporter and 1 photog who are semi regularly on Vine, which I would love reporters to do more Vines because it'd be easy to re-vine, they'd be easy to Tweet and people love that kind of stuff.
Especially the behind the scenes stuff. I really want them to start snap chatting, but it's kind of like they're so busy sometimes. It's sort of crazy just to for them to finish up and package their story. When I ask for photos and content in the morning they're just like, 'look' you know 'I'm really jammed' I'm like, ok I get it. I try not to push too hard because I know that they are on deadline for going on air and stuff. Definitely Vine and snap chat most are pretty good with Instagram and yeah. And Twitter. I would say my hopes are to build up more stories with Vine and Snapchat.

LD: So more videos it seems.

Yeah. Definitely. I think the video content, and photos, I think we're a very visual society so I think that kind of grabs people. Twitter is kind of an exception, but still people see a photo and go 'oh I'm going to click on that'

LD: Great. Is there anything else you want to add? That was great.

I don't think so. I hope that was helpful.

LD: Thank you so much.
Director of Digital Strategy

My name is name removed. And I am the director of digital strategy and operations.

LD: And what does that mean exactly?

Essentially that means that I am managing and overseeing the digital department.

LD: What are the expectations you have of the reporters on social media?

At this point the expectations are to be utilizing social media platforms in their reporting and to be utilizing the tools to pause that go along with those platforms. Like, basically be utilizing - there's a lot of them so don't expect reporters to use everything, but at this point they should know what Facebook is and be using it. They should know what Twitter is and be using it. And ideally, they should know what Instagram is and be using it. To a lesser degree, they should definitely what Google+ is, but I can see why it's ok if they're not using it. And then they should be aware that all of these things - just know what they are because as you know it's important to be aware of all these things, even the new ones, and even some of the old ones that made comebacks, are being used. They're being used to report information. Whether we're using them or not, viewers, people are using them to get their information. We need to know about those and reporters should be aware of that and using and active on those platforms. It's helpful for them to do the work that they need to do to be able to use things like TweetDeck to monitor tweets or some of this stuff is going to be hard to do out in the field all day long. They're not, they're not going to be expected to sit there and monitor it, but you should know what your station is doing on Twitter and Facebook. If you're on a story chances are, you know, a competitor is probably on the same story at times. It will help you keep an eye on what your sources are doing, what your competition is doing. I think it facilitated a change in mindset when reporters start going, "oh, wait a minute we're attributing that statement to the police department, but they, it was a tweet. ah..." That was an official statement. People say things on Twitter. They say things on Facebook. It's not just a thing - it's communication. It's important to just have a, I think each reporter needs to have their on program and continuing education on how this stuff is being used and how it can help them. It's about helping them do their jobs. People get stories they would have never got. Nobody is going to call up and say, people do call up and say I've got a story for you, but a lot of stories are found because of stuff that's just something someone tweeted about or did on Facebook.

LD: From what I've gathered today, there's a huge emphasis on the telling this community's stories. It's very people driven.

Yeah.

LD: Would you say that's correct?
Yeah.

LD: So how is that kind of mindset or mission manifesting itself with the social platforms?

The idea and the notion of telling this community's story is really central to what a journalist is going to do. TV station reporter, newspaper - anybody who is reporting news. I think it's kind of central to that. Whether it's on TV or it's in the newspaper or a magazine or a blog or a Twitter account or a tumblr account, they're all telling a story about someone. It's not like using social media changes that. It's less about, it's not going to change the storytelling. It's not going to change the fundamental thing that you're trying to do: tell stories and give information about a place or a thing or a community. It's just recognizing that this is where people are going to get their information. You want to be telling your story there too.

LD: So how do you measure how successful the reporters are on social media?

At the most simple end of the spectrum, it's just the eye test. You can look at someone’s account and see they have only tweeted once in the last three weeks. They were really active from the scene of the fire today: they tweeted video, they tweeted a photo, they live tweeted a press conference with the fire chief from the scene and then they tweeted a Vine. Its just the eye test will tell you a lot. And then beyond that, there are metrics and web based services and reporting tools you can look at. That, you know, will give, will provide you with metrics or data that you can use to put a picture together of what the activity looks like.

LD: How often are you kind of checking in with how they're doing?

All day, every day. I mean another simple thing, web producers use TweetDeck and you mean you set a column, a list of your talent and all day long you just look at it. It's just part of monitoring your news sources. Sometimes they'll break news. They'll tweet a photo. They'll publish some sort of media that you can use on the site or on the air. So they're out there reporting. It's helpful for us to monitor. That's how fast things are now. You used to have to call into the station, talk to the assignment desk, the assignment desk disseminates it. Now, if I'm an assignment editor, I'm going to be looking at them on Twitter to see what they're saying. The developments are not only going out to you, they're going out to everybody. Along with a picture, sometimes sound, sometimes both. You can do that. You can monitor them, follow them on Twitter. The same thing on Facebook. You can make lists on Facebook.

LD: So after a reporter gets their story for the day, at what point does how it’s going to be put on social come into the conversation. Are you waiting for the reporter to make a move?

It kinds of depends. It kind of depends. Ideally, they use this stuff in what they do already. Ideally, I mean, a reporter gets an assignment in the morning and may already
have something to say about. You may not necessarily need any kind of direction. If I'm a reporter and I know I'm going to go follow up on a suspicious fire that happened last night, first thing in the morning, if I want to, I can say, "I'm going be following up. I'm going to talk to this person today at this time about this fire from last night." You can communicate to start telling that story today or you can say, "there's a press conference scheduled at this time. We'll be there. I'll let you know what I find out" Ideally they should just always be in line with what you're doing in my mind. In terms of like a third party reaching the subject it could come in during an editorial meeting, the morning editorial meeting.

LD: So it's pretty situational?

That would be a good time to do it. It is situational. For me it's a responsibly of someone who is reporting to just be utilizing this stuff anyway. When you, before you even walk out the door your viewers, your constituents are online. They're on social media already, maybe learning details about your story. I think you already, there's already a need for you to be present there. In terms of guidance or instruction from an EP or somebody else. That can happen in a meeting. It's situational. It happened at an editorial meeting. You're pitching your story and someone says, "You know what, if you tweet back five or six photos from this house that you're going to, we'll put a slideshow up on the website." It could be a web producer or a digital content producer contacts a reporter and says, "hey can you get this?" or "could you verify some info?" Maybe a digital content producer reaches out for something.

LD: I sat in on the morning meeting, the 9:15 meeting and to be knowledge there wasn't someone from web at that meeting.

I think that was because of today. I think they were just preparing for the memorial service.

LD: I thought so. I'm glad we got that cleared up. How do you think what's happening on social is building trust and a relationship with the viewers? 10:47

I couldn't necessarily say categorically it's building trust. *laughs* If you like look at the commentary on social media, it's just about not trust, mistrust as it is about trust, but I think that's part of the nature of news and media. We're telling people stories and we're giving out information, we're investigating things, we're bringing up controversy. 11:17 THere's always multiple sides. I don't know if you're building trust. It can help you build trust, but that's more about you indivudually as a reporter or a media organization as an organization. Do people in general trust them? That's still where the trust comes from it's another platform. They either trust you or they don't trust you. It can help you build trust if you're being a trusted news source in general.

LD: I guess my question though is, how do you do that then if it's not on social?

How do you build trust? I think you build trust by being timely and being accurate and
being transparent and honest. All of those tenants of journalism. That's got to, that's got to not change on whatever platform you're using.

LD: You need the same fundamentals regardless of what platform you're working on that minute.

Right. And there can be different technical challenges involved. Sometimes it's easier to - it's in the details like you can have a CG or a super and then leave out something on the television screen which would really have provided a piece of context that was needed. In a tweet, maybe it's easier to put it in there. It's the same tenants but you want it to apply to whatever platform you're using to report.

LD: So is this, the team here, is it promoting already gathered content. Let me rephrase the question - is there more news gathering or news promoting or what's the ratio within your team?

That's a good question. In this digital department, it's kind of hard to articulate it. We do in the social media monitoring tools help a lot. For digital, just a web producer not a digital reporter, but a web producer, you're producing. You're not at the assignment desk. you're not on beat. You're not really news gathering, but when web producers, they're typically exposed to the social media and they're looking at it more, they're looking at the internet more. Obviously there's a ton of information so they see stuff and hear about stuff. There's the difference between gathering the news and hearing about something versus verifying or confirming it. We see stuff and hear about stuff, but maybe kind of getting leads on things before other people who are not spending all their time in that digital and social media space. If you want to consider that newsgathering, they do, web producers do a fair amount of that. Then you've got web-based tools that will give you news alerts for trending items. That kind of thing over time as you educate a newsroom more people can use those services. At one point, no one used TweetDeck. If the competition was saying something or the fire department said something, the web producers were the only ones that were going to see it. They would have to email a link to it or make a phone call to it and say, "We heard this from this." Now you've got monitoring tools that more people throughout the newsroom are using so web producers don't have to do that, even if they do see more. That is one role of the web producer in news gathering. Another would be since, at its simplest, they're more active and savvy with Twitter. If we get a tip or see something we're in the best position to verify and ask for an interview. Ask for permission to use a photo or ask a question.

LD: Does that happen pretty often?

That kind of thing happens all the time. The thing about social media is it's two way. We're putting stuff out, but TV runs it they watch. Here, they put something out and everybody can respond to it right away and there's they can send you a direct message, something to your inbox on Facebook, they can tag you on something on Instagram. There's many ways to interact. That kind of interaction happen a lot.
LD: Do you then take it to the desk or keep it here?

Sometimes yeah. Sometimes it's a, I mean, not all - so it's like picking up the phone in the newsroom. What are the odds? It may be something it might not be anything. When you think it is something you pass it along.

LD: Ok. Shifting gears a little bit when you're seeing reporters come through, what are some qualities that you're really looking for in a good reporter who is good on social or good digitally.

The question that I usually ask in regard to being good on social media and digital. I'll just ask, like in regard to being good on social media and digital, and I'll just ask, "how do you work this stuff into your daily work?" Pretty much tells you right there. If someone has a program or a habit or practices at that point they'll tell you how. "Here's what I do: in the morning I'll tweet about what I'm going to do. If I get sent to this kind of story, I'll tweet a photo. As I'm compiling my notes..." Even to take it a step further, how much do they really think about digital? As I'm putting together my notes for an afternoon update, I'll put together a little web script to send to the digital department so they can get a story on the site. You can just ask generally, "how do you work?" You can literally say, "how do you work social media and digital into your daily work?" And if they don't have an answer, then you know that they don't or they might say, "at the end of every day I'll do a Facebook post" or "I try to tweet two times a day." There's different degrees to what peoples abilities are there sensibility about it. That's as simple as it is in terms of how they work it in. Once I ask that question generally you can do into, if you wanted to you could go in. If they're active enough, if someone goes through and says here's the various things, chances are they know how to tag people in a tweet. They understand hash tags on Instagram they know a little bit about things. You can dig further into it by asking about some of the technical. I've asked them, "What social media apps do you use?" That'll tell you a lot.

LD: Are you part of the interviewing process with new people?

Yeah.

LD: Cool.

Yeah.

LD: Interesting.

I don't think I'm 100 percent in there, but there is always one point.

LD: So what do you think is the biggest opportunity for reporters to improve on with their social use?

The biggest opportunity or the biggest thing reporters need to improve on?
LD: Yeah.

It's tough. Every reporter is at their own individual, their own level of aptitude. I guess if I had to address reporters in general as like one big group I think they still need to work on understanding how people consume information on the different platforms so like - just understanding people, the whole generation notion people are now on mobile just as much, if not more, than a desktop for instance. It's not even just computers anymore. It's not that people are shifting from TV to a computer, people do everything on a phone or a tablet. And that's how they're finding out about what your entire station is doing and they literally may never watch television. If they want to watch television they can even do that on the phone. If you really understand that you can go from there and you can go, "Man, I need to understand how Facebook really works. How do people really consume Facebook. How can I make sure I'm making my content available to them in the most robust informational way." Understand that what - so this is TV reporters I'm talking about. They get really locked into their main job, not that it's any less important but the job is like you've got the get on TV. There's a spot that you cannot miss. That is crucial, but to understand that our customers, our viewers, our constituents, whatever you want to call it, people, just people in general, the first thing they do in the morning is not necessarily turn the TV on it's turn the alarm off on the phone and see a Facebook notification. Understand that is how people get their info so that they can become very digital minded social minded because it's - whether we like it or think it's good or not good, it doesn't have to be good or bad, it's just where people get info.

LD: Is there something I haven't asked you about that you think is particularly important to either your hopes for the department or the mission of the department?

No, there isn't. You really asked a lot of the central themes of social media and the role of digital in the news right now.

LD: OK.

One thing, one thing I guess that's important is to know that it's always changing. There's a new app every day. Facebook, you may think you have the best practice and you know how to use Facebook, they change their algorithm every week, probably every day. They don't tell anyone. They're so like - it's not a situation of many, many years finely tuned things. It's new and it's changing. And I think that's kind of in the nature of it.

LD: I have one question I wanted to ask. What the difference in purpose for the homepage versus the Facebook profile?

What do you mean?

LD: Do they serve the same purpose or is there separate goals for each of them?

There's separate goals because - there's not really a separate goal but if you think about
what you can provide on a homepage versus what you can provide on Facebook. Facebook has features in it that's what you can do. You can post a picture. You can post video. You can post a story. It comes in a certain format. It displays in a certain way, which we now know most of us don't - what displays for me, we know now is not the same way it displays for you. It may not display the same way you two days in a row. That's just one of the natural aspects that's native to Facebook. On a website, we know it's a domain. It's html. It's station name removed.com. It's its own platform. It's not social media. Nobody comes and follows this page. It's not the networking aspect of social media. This is not that. I mean it's just two totally different platforms with their own characteristics and their own, literally, following. You don't have to like this page to see what's on it. If you, all those things that are inherent to the social. Remember when it was all social networking versus social media? You don't have that here. It's literally a domain on the internet. I don't even know if they still say the world wide web, but this is a location on that. Where Facebook is not. It's social media. It's networking. There's an inbox you can leave, you can leave comments on stories here for now. Some sites you can't leave comments for instance. It's a website. it's just different. The language that you use. You use html and xml and php, you don't do any of that for Facebook. You don't need any of that. The resources that you need to maintain both of them are totally different. This is managed by a content management system. Facebook, much more simple because it's not, it's much more simple.

LD: That makes sense.

Does that help?

LD: Yeah. Is there anything else you can think of that I haven't touched on.

Probably.

LD: I guess the one thing I feel like I'm missing is - how are the station's values manifesting themselves on the social sites? Every station has things that are important to them and I'm not quite understanding how those values are appearing on the sites.

What might be an example of something that a station values?

LD: Do you have the station page pulled up? So like - I guess just like are you trying to have a conversation with people? Are you trying to put breaking news on there? What are these tangible things you're trying to accomplish?

Well let's look - we can just look at this page right now. This says station name removed, franchise name removed. Franchise name is this community initiative, community branding type message. There's one instance of that happening on the Facebook page. Today, lots of coverage on an officer that was killed. We're covering that with live coverage. It's visual.

LD: So that's referencing back to the broadcast
What I'm talking about is the content itself. What are we talking about in the community. One thing that, one part of it is like and it's probably the same on all - they're just different platform. It's about what you cover and how you cover it so this is what one way it manifests is what are you talking about? If this was all cats and dogs that would tell you something about what the station values. We're talking about a local police officer. We do talk about some cats and dogs don't get me wrong *laughs* people want to know about that stuff. Here's breaking news. It's in what you cover like in a newscast, different platform, but if you tune in and you're like, "all they talk about is what did all the democratic far-left-leaning people to today?" You go, "That's what they value." A lot of it is in what you cover and then how do you talk about it. What part of it is important? Are you exploiting your subjects to make money? Or to make a game out of your station? Is it all marketing or self-promotion? Like what do you, what is your content and how do you cover it?

LD: OK. That makes more sense. Thank you for going back to that.

One thing that, one of the things that I want to do is make it more of a two-way conversation. I think that's at the root of what social media can give you. It's very challenging like we don't do it as much as I'd like to. It's difficult. You have 564,000 people following this page and they could all email today. I can't read all that. It's a challenge, but it's there's something in there to acknowledging a viewer. You know? Back in the day when TV was the only thing you can't talk back to the TV. You can't hear anything. Here people can reach out directly and you can acknowledge that. You can have essentially have more of a connection with your community or you can at least be perceived that way or opposite you could be perceived as you don't acknowledge us. They're still just them.

LD: If there was a ton of questions that just went unanswered that would look bad.

It can look bad, but that's been, that's kind of been the status quo with TV. You could call a desk and there's no customer line to call and say, "hey i want to talk to you about your story." But this, there is. But it's just as challenging as picking up the phone for every caller and having an in-depth thing.

LD: All right. Thank you for your time. Is there anything else you can think of?

Not right now. I hope that's helpful.
Digital Media Manager

We're going to call, what I like to call a digital huddle. After the morning meeting, I'll get with name removed. name removed will come over. We're not going to do that today because I'm going to hang out with you. The manager kind of discusses based on what we have today, we're clearly focused on the drought based on what we have today. Obviously with our reporters. What are covering locally and how does that translate into digital? One of the things we often talk about is content for air doesn't always translate for digital. There was this period over the last five years where reporters write their own web stories and it's basically the same kind of package just written differently for the web, but the direction we're trying to go is how to package the content digitally for that day. It can be something completely different, but related for your story. An example would be if we're doing something on, like name removed's story. Let's say name does something on a numbers look on how much rain did we get in the last 24 hours, rain and snow, and what more going forward. How do we package that online? Maybe do some sort of graphical display as a slideshow breaking down how much rain each city got and how much snow each city got because that's going to do better in terms of getting traffic, it'll do better on social. One of the things we often discuss, and this can be anything something from the newscast this can be something we post from our national team, I'll walk you through that in a second how we get contact. The question you always have to ask is, "Would I share this piece of content on my Facebook page, on Twitter? Because it's all about social. We do a little digital huddle so I'm going to let name removed know. We go old school with this with our white board

LD: I like it.

If I had the budget to have a white board that was digital, I'd get one, but I don't so we go old school with the regular white board. When did we debut this? Like a month ago? And the things we look at is: what's trending...

LD: In which geographic...

Trending on our site. Basically we'll look at Google Analytics and see what's happening in real time, what stories are doing well. For that part we kind of look at our top social posts, but going back to that, trending, yeah you're right, something that we know is trending that we want to tackle. In the meeting I mentioned, like we have this this weekend, the local team name removed story or the name making that comment with his mic on. That probably isn't doing well for us, but it's trending naturally. Here's the connection if you have something doing well that's trending, we'll put it on social. It might not do well if we put up the story on our site. It might not be one of our top five pieces of content, but it's clearly something that's being discussed. And so we should probably try to capitalize it on some level so it can be both what's trending for us and what's doing well on the social sphere. So do we have anything new name removed?

Power outage.
That's doing well?

It's the top story.

See. What's interesting about that...

I put it on Facebook right away so it's doing well there. I'm sending out alerts and whatnot.

What's kind of interesting about that is we're in the meeting and it's like we're not going to cover that from a TV standpoint, which makes sense right from a TV standpoint, it's not really our market, but we knew it would do well because it's a total city without power...a lot parents have

LD: A college town...

A lot of parents have kids that go there.

It's kind of a county without power too. It's a lot of people. People are sharing and tagging their friends.

By the way I have the worst handwriting ever.

LD: You are forgiven.

Is the Easter egg hunt story still doing well?

Yeah.

LD: What are you using to measure what's doing well? Is it likes or views?

I'm basing it off Google Analytics. What did well on social too.

Just looking at real time. What are people looking at right now? To that point, yeah, we'll get to top social posts, which for social posts the metric we care about is reach.

LD: Reach. yeah.

SB: We'll get to that here in a second.

SH: Just the mom that tried to kill her daughter from yesterday or the day before. I'm trying to find that story actually.

We wrote it Sunday.
Mhm.

With the Easter Egg hunt we might want to do an update.

I saw they didn't break the record.

Yeah. We might want to update that.

Should we write another story on that then? It's like all we have.

Hmm.

How would we? It's on my radar, but I don't know what to do with it.

Maybe just top it and then give it a new headline. And then video, this is just for us internally for us. What have we posted, what's good video out there?

LD: This is just your discretion? What you're interested in?

What we think will do well so like we have that Easter egg hunt video is still doing well, name remove's weather forecast, there's a story about how meth was found in an Easter bunny.

LD: It's kind of a creepy looking bunny.

Then we look at moments. This has been changed like five times. We were calling it highlights and then five moments and now it's just moments. Going back to, we've been changing a lot of how we've been thinking about our digital platforms and what's our overall goal. I'll let you in on a little something because it's a report.

LD: And confidential. I'm not listing stations in the report.

So for the last basically four years the key KPI for our digital platforms was page views.

LD: KPI?

Key Performance indicators: what is the metric that our success is based on in terms of how many page views our digital platforms get so that's website and all the mobile platforms whether it's the formal news app, the weather app, we have a standalone weather app, we have a stand alone alarm clock app. You've probably seen other stations have. When you take that all together how many page views does that equate to. You're given a number at the beginning of the year and it's your goal to hit that number by the end of the year. It's been page views for four years until 2015, which that KPI indicator. In 2015 it changed to sessions and sessions is how many visitors come to you r digital platforms during a 24-hour period. Here's why that's a big change and just having us reimagine how we go about our day in terms of work flow is page views the, and again
this is confidential I'll say it, you kind of gain that a little in the way you probably saw a
lot of websites do that was through a lot slideshows because out of one person if you
went to the website or the mobile app when you click 20 times that's now 20 page views
that I got out of you. It wasn't necessarily about how many people came, although that
was important because clearly more fish in the pond the more chances you are going to
get clicks, but with the key metric being page views it's like, "Ok lets just turn out
slideshow after slideshow after slideshow." We knew that if I can get 20 page views out
of you that's more important than 10 people are only getting one page view. I'm doubling
it. With sessions, that's obviously not the case. Sessions is going to be mostly driven by,
which you probably realize this, is social. In terms of how you get visitors to your site.

[section removed due to side conversation]

There's a couple ways you can do that. One is obviously with breaking news. People are
aggressive with alerts from mobile and email and then social and growing you social
platforms and trying to get referral traffic that way. That's why we say creating moments.
So what moment can we create today? We obviously have weather happening so name
removed probably want to run a future cast here.

Yeah, it's on my list.

Are you caught up with the timing of all this?

Yeah.

It's going to be pretty bad tomorrow morning.

For my drive in, that's what I hear!

So here's what we can do, is repackage, do we have a weather story up? Maybe refocus
that a little bit based on what name says at noon and basically craft it as your driving
commute timeline on what you can expect during the morning commute. Maybe like I'll
have name touch that up towards the end of her shift and have her send alerts maybe 9
o'clock ish.

Yeah.

Your morning drive weather timeline. It sounds like it'll be, we're going to get an inch of
rain.

The bulk is supposed to be 5 am.

That's good for us.

Wear my rain gear tomorrow! Got to find my boots!
So this is for us. What are we going to do? We know weather will be big. That'll get people in the door. People care about weather even in 2015. That's probably ready to get torn off. The big rig?

I'm waiting to hear back. I think one lane might be open. I'm checking Twitter.

I'm just going to take it off. I don't think. Here's where we'd maybe leave it on, let's say we had video of the big rig overturning. That could be a moment. Flipping that video, natively linking to the full video and the full story. That could have been a moment we created. We have video of the big rig overturned, but I've already done that in the morning. city removed power outage. I'm going to leave it up because it's doing well.

That's the only reason I put it up there. I don't know what else there is.

It's kind of where everything intersects in terms of how we cover something. TV is going to do the stories they need. They're giving people the nuts and bolts. They're giving people context. Our focus has been, we'll have those stories on there, but our focus has been building content that's practical and useful to people. Or spectacular, crazy images that we can put a clever headline to. We've had two recently. We did 20 photos that prove identifiable story, which is highly sharable. 15 photos that show identifiable. The slideshows were exactly the same. There was no difference. It was just repackaging it and nobody really knows the difference. You can share both on social and just because you share something on Facebook doesn't mean everyone's going to see it. It's just a small portion of the market. Maybe on the next one they do. It's the same content just repackaged, but we've done other things like how to save water in your kitchen or bathroom. What else have we done? name removed is doing a look back at previous draughts so the draught in the 70s and the 90s. People are interested in that stuff. They like looking at old things and most of our viewers lived during that time. It's got a nostalgic aspect to it even if in a negative way. The assignment desk is getting their business done. That's why we are so close. We're in constant communication with the desk. We do a lot of our information from Twitter obviously. We all have TweetDeck uploaded so we're using that as a way to gather and follow the reporters. The reporters are told you as responsible for tweeting updates, photos, video and then we update the story in real time based on what the reporters say. If it's a big breaking news story and we have like 2 or 3 reporters on it, let's say a massive fire, we use a program called ScribbleLive it's kind of like cover it live you can kind of aggregate Twitter accounts and also aggregate content so we'll use that for big coverage. Our workflow is name, who is the first person, she gets here at 5 Monday to Friday. I come in around, not today, but days around 7:30ish. And then name gets in, she's our digital editor, she gets in at 11:30 and then name who sits here is kind of our evening/weekend digital editor so he's here Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday from 2 to 11. He also works Sunday. Our newsroom treats and a lot of this is due to Sunday night football Sunday is the new Monday so a lot of people are here on Sundays. The reason for that is we really see numbers on Sundays because of Sunday night football. Obviously, it's not on now, but we still do well on Sundays.
So agency sends out their update.

LD: Are you going to attribute it to Twitter?

I would just say agency said in this case. It kind of depends on the case to be honest. If it's basic information like something is open or something is closed we'll just say agency said. If it's a direct quote from someone via Twitter then, "so and so said via Twitter."

LD: Interesting.

So reporter name just tweeted out looking for someone in city to show us their rain barrel and how it works. So he put that on his on Twitter now I'm going to retweet it. 0:55

LD: Do you guys use crowdsourcing pretty often?

Depends on the situation. In this particular case he's just looking for someone for his story. When it comes to crowdsourcing, if we're doing some sort of project like something more light: your favorite breakfast spot, something that's on the lighter side. I hate using Facebook for that reason.

LD: You do?

Yeah.

LD: Why?

Number one, it's not in real time. You don't know when someone is going to see that post in their newsfeed. I'm not getting a response necessarily when I want it. Number two: to me Facebook is more about the content and what's being shared. Yes, there's a conversation based on that content, but Twitter is more a communication form with a sense of I want to have a direct conversation with my audience. Where to me, Facebook is more about the conversation about that particular piece of content as opposed to communicating to somebody.

LD: Mhm. Right. Because you wouldn't share "we're looking for someone to talk". You would either be that person or not opposed to Twitter where you would either respond or not respond.

So that's kind of how we use each platform. We kind of have had this rule said "can you share this on the main station page?" Because no, it's probably not going to do us any good.

LD: Even if it does the reporter good?

We've never really had a case, for this instance, if I were to say this on Facebook I would say contact reporter name. We usually don't get a response.
Social media manager

My name is *name removed*. I am a newsroom manager; specifically, I am the social media manager.

LD: And what does that mean exactly?

I run all of our station's social accounts, which includes Facebook. We have multiple Facebook accounts. Twitter, we have multiple Twitter accounts. Instagram, we have one. Pinterest, we have one. We have one Google+, it's like no one is on it though. We have like seven followers. That's pretty much it.

LD: Can you explain where there is a difference between a station account and maybe a reporter account? How do those work differently?

That's a good question. Basically the big thing, the station accounts are, we are promoting the station as a whole whereas the reporter accounts really kind of are just promoting their individual stories for the most part. Obviously some of our reporters do promote station initiatives from time to time. Generally they're just promoting their own individual stories and their abilities as a journalist overall.

LD: What do you expect from the reporters when it comes to social media?

We expect, one of the big things, we expect all our reporters to have branded accounts. Their Twitter handle must include our call letters. They do not have to give us their password or anything crazy like that. We would never ask for that. Basically the idea is that we are promoting their Twitter handles by putting that on TV if we're going to do that they're going to need to put that they're an employee of *station removed*. We do not require that they use their personal accounts, they can have professional accounts. We, I'm trying to think if there is anything else, we obviously expect that they're representative, that they're good representatives of our station and our brand at all times with their language and what they're talking about. One thing, kind of at a local level that I've pushed really hard for, I'm really anti-selfie. I really, really, like we had a person who tweeted a selfie from a story a couple of days ago. Intending to have a conversation there. We have found through pretty extensive market research over the years that our region really doesn't respond well with people who they feel are bragging, which selfies are very much that. We really try to make sure that when these reporters are promoting their stories they're promoting it with a really awesome, cool picture not a picture of themselves. It's funny because I don't know if you've read this book called Contagious. If you haven't it's really, really good. It's all about social media. It's great. If you really look at, I read it when I took over this role and I feel like it really helped me. If you really think about what social media, people overall on social media are just selfish. They really are. And so, if you just kind of recognize that going into it and give them things, give them social currency like cool pictures they can show their friends or breaking news where they can pass this along to their friends and say oh look I informed you. If you give them that, that's what they want. It makes them feel like they're smarter as a result. If
you play into that, I feel like it helps and selfies don't. They're not going to make them look smart.

LD: That's a really interesting point. I've never really thought about it. It's giving them something.

That’s what the book talks about. They refer to it as social currency and how you just have to give your users social currency. Ultimately, overall that's what people want. It's just kind of like, I don't know. This is kind of off track, but if you look at these studies where people talk about how social, Facebook can cause depression because people look at other people lives and they think their life is so bad, but a lot of people are not really honest on social media. And it's like, I guess I would consider one of those people personally. I don't air my dirty laundry on Facebook. I never have. I don't think I ever will. I don't even talk about. I've had deaths in my family before where I've had people write on my wall and say "I'm so sorry for your loss" and I take it down. But I'll post a picture, in a way I'm not being honest either. If you looked at my Facebook profile you'd think my life is all cheery and there's nothing wrong. But I mean, that's even to an extent, when I say selfish or dishonest. I don't mean people are lying.

LD: It's selective.

It's selective. And it's not a true snapshot of this person's life. Anyway, didn't mean to go off on that. If you kind of play into that, attempt to give people social currency as station name I want to be sure I put out a really great picture. Cool picture that people are going to want to show their friends. I'm going to want to show this on my page. Oh my gosh, Lee Anne, look at this awesome picture because it makes me look like the person who delivered it even though station did. That's ok. That's fine. We can play that game. That's kind of where the selfies don't work for the most part.

LD: So how do you measure when a reporter, how do you measure for reporters doing well or not doing well with their social?

Honestly, we don't have a formal analytics set up for them. We do not have quotas as far as how many posts and that kind of thing. We don't really have quotas for our own page. We've tried to make it to where it's an organic process and just make every post count. It's kind of a different way of thinking. Our parent company did not always feel that way, but they since do feel that way now. Honestly, we don't have a good way to measure it. I'm an admin on some of our people's Facebook pages so I'll look at their analytics, but just the same way you'd be able to look at their insights. That's what we do.

LD: I'm making an assumption here, is it kind of just the reporters are expected to do it, but other than that it doesn't go much farther than that.

We've had instances where reporters have been on a breaking story and they didn't tweet at all and there were repercussions. There was a talking and you know this is an expectation. So there's that.
LD: Shifting back a little bit - are there any conversations like you're going out on this story, can you give us something we can put on social.

We actually did that today. I think it worked out really well. We have a reporter who, it seemed to work out decently well, we have a reporter doing a follow up story to 20 plus horses that were/are malnourished and they're not receiving care at a rescue group here in town. This was kind of the first time we got to see the horses at this place. I had the reporter give me five pictures from his video. We put that up on Facebook as a way to tease the story. The thought process there was kind of going with the social currency. A hard core tease doesn't always do that great. People won't share it. Some stories they will, but not in most cases. But this photo album had more engagement because there was a little more meat to it. It gave them these pictures of the horses opposed to just, you know what I mean? It did ok. Honestly, we could have put the same mini gallery on our website and done the same thing. We didn't but we could have. That is a good example of what we like to do.

LD: Was that conversation after he'd already gone at shot everything?

We'd discussed it. Someone had kind of mentioned it in the morning meeting. Like oh, that would be a good thing. Then when he got back I said hey can I have five pictures. He'd already tweeted one.

LD: Cool. And then, from talking to you it seems Facebook is the social of choice here. What is the difference to you in terms of the website or the homepage and the Facebook page. How do you decide what goes where?

Well we've something that we've really tried hard to do is the idea that you're not going to see anything on our Facebook page that you won't see on our news, on one of our programs. Bear in mind we have feature programming too. I feel like that's really true. We want to make sure we're using the same voice. As far as obviously our website has much, much deeper content. I try to put the best of the best on our Facebook page. Things that I know people are going to click on. We're focusing really hard on trying to use video when we can. We almost never do just a text post. If we put up a text only post it's because the world is blowing up around us. You know what I mean? So, really there's a lot of stories that go on our website that I would never put on Facebook just because people just don't care. And the idea is that every single post matters because every single post impacts our engagement and how many people are going to see the next post.

LD: Right. How much training do the reporters get when they start in terms of...

As far as the website they sit down the website with our website EP and go through training and that kind of thing. It's probably a couple of hours and then with social most of them already know how to operate social media and that kind of thing. We do run through kind of like a style guide on what's appropriate and what's not. That kind of thing.
LD: You guys have a style guide?

Mhm.

LD: Is that just for social or across platforms?

We have them for both.

LD: Are they different?

Well yeah, the style guide as in we would not format a Facebook post the same we would format a web story.

LD: Ok that makes sense. My last question is what is your biggest hope for the reporters specifically that they'll do over the next six month to a year?

I think that if they could, I feel like it's so easy to put yourself in your Facebook. Your Facebook and your tweets. Not necessarily as in a selfie but just, you know, I was out here today and stuff like that. That's really what we try to stay away from. Some stations really embrace that. It just, we don't.

LD: The "I collected this" " I did that" You don't like that?

Not particularly. No selfies. I really, it stinks sometimes we have had reporters who will be out on these big fires and stuff like that and I know they've got a lot going on, but then they don't tweet with the big great picture. So, it's unfortunate because it's just one more thing for them to do and their workdays aren't getting longer, not pay wise. I guess just being able to be aware of the moment that they're in and the really great images around them and being able to capture that for social.

LD: Is there anything else you want to add?

I don't think so. I think we're good. I think it worked out well.
Reporter

LD: If I could have you start off by saying and spelling your name for me and telling me your position here.

_Name removed for anonymity_. Reporter. _Station name removed_.

LD: And how long have you been in this market?

In this market — Let's see. 44 years.

LD: Wow. That's a long time.

Yeah.

LD: Would you see you know the audience pretty well at this point?

I probably. Yeah. I would think so.

LD: All right.

Yeah. And then, three years: one in New York. One in LA.

LD: Which social platforms are you using right now?

Facebook, Twitter. Facebook, Twitter. Well email.

LD: And do you have professional and personal accounts or one or the other?

I have a professional Facebook and a personal Facebook. And just a regular Twitter, professional and a professional email and a private email.

LD: How do you decide what information you put on your professional versus your personal Facebook?

Well on my professional _station name removed_ Facebook I occasionally do blogs and on my private or personal Facebook I'll you know do everything: photos of the family, correspond with friends, relatives.

LD: So how different, if someone was to scroll both accounts, how different do they look?

Totally different.

LD: Totally different?
Yeah.

LD: Can you walk me through what sort of your reporting routine looks like. When you get here in the morning to your live shot at night.

We have an editorial meeting, as you know, at 9:15 in the morning. We pitch our stories, get assigned and then once, and then we generally leave, do research you know throughout the day get interviews and then we're generally on two shows. 4 and 6, 4 and 5, 6. Two of those shows and try and make the stories different. And that's my schedule.

LD: At what point does your social media use come into play throughout the day?

Well we, you know, all of us have gone through classes here so that's number one. And those classes, we're constantly reminded that you've got to tweet, and tweet first so that's the basic edict is to tweet. Now the conflict, I think every reporter has, did you talking to someone else were you able to print that? The conflict I think most reporters go through with tweeting first is in the old days you, if you had an exclusive story, right? You would sit on it and then you'd break the news on the, you'd break the story on the newscast that evening. but in this day of social media you have this quandary, this conflict, so the conflict is, the quandary is do I tweet the story as you're told to do, right, immediately, to beat the competition. The whole point of tweeting in this day and age is to beat the competition on social media, but the conflict arises if you have an exclusive story do you sit on it, do you tweet it and if so when do you tweet it? And so that's, that's problematic with social media. laughs And I speak for name of other reporter removed by the way laughing from other reporter. You know, we're my own philosophy on this is, ok if I have an exclusive I generally wait. I pause I, generally wait until it's too late for the competition to recoup. That may be an hour before the story airs, that may be two hours, it may be a half hour. It all depends on the story, and how it easy it is to get. On the other hand, I always have the fear that another station may get it first and tweet it. Right? Because if I have a source telling me something, chances are it's out there. And another source or the same source may be telling a competitor.

LD: Right.

That's what news is. Right? News chasing. You don't know. That's a quandary. That's a problem with social media for us. Facebook is not really that much of a problem for me or I don't think for anyone really. I don't think anybody is told or anybody really tries to go first on Facebook. That's sort of like a social kind of thing. I don't do any real news reporting on Facebook, but I look at it in the course of a day to see if anyone else is or what's interesting. I don't get a lot of information for my day to day reporting from Facebook.

LD: Are you ever having you message you story ideas?

Yes.
LD: And what do you do with those messages?

So I get messages from Facebook pause either critiquing a story I did laughs or saying by the way I saw your story last night and there's another angle you might think of because I work in the industry blah blah blah. I do get messages from Facebook. I get messages from email of course. Of course I get emails and then I get messages of course I get Twitter responses too. So yeah, I do get information. Almost all my sources, however, come from email and that may only be because everybody is into email. A lot of people aren't into Facebook or Twitter...

LD: More universal.

But everybody is on Twitter, but everybody is on email.

LD: So when you do get these messages how do you sort of vet if you want to pursue it or not?

Well the first most important vetting is if it's from a really good source that I know or have a relationship. It's a given that I'm going to take it seriously. If it's from an unknown then I'll try and pry more information out of that person through responses through exchanging. And then if I get enough information to go to another source that's when I'll call or contact another source to corroborate and to expand what this person from social media told me. You get a lot of tips. I'd say 80 percent of them are untrue or if not untrue not solid enough to do a story. A lot of venting by people who you know have one agenda after another. You pretty much know after awhile what's a good story, what may be a good source. It's sort of intuitive out of awhile when you get to see of this stuff. Credibility is the most important thing and credibility comes by tips from sources that you know.

LD: ... You have pretty deep relationships with your sources. How do you develop those relationships? Does it just take time or what is it that makes a good relationship with a source?

You have to cultivate good sources. Number one. In the old days it meant taking them out for a drink, wishing them happy birthday on the phone, dropping by a bottle of Scotch during Christmas. I kid you not. You know things like that. So you, you cultivate them so you if it's a really important source you let them know that you're not just trying to use them. Obviously he knows you are, you know he knows you are, right, but you try to build that relationship on another level by letting them know that you like them as well. And you respect them and you trust them and that's hopefully build that relationship to another level. Not to appoint with me where I would socialize with most my sources on a personal level, scale, but just to make them know that hey that was really nice of name removed to wish my a happy birthday or drop by the bottle of scotch or go for a cup of coffee, but nowadays in this world of journalism that is an almost impossible unless you do it on your own. Before you could expense all those things. Now it's just basically you get a good source you just try to call them on occasions when you don't need anything.
Ok? Hey I heard you were in Spain! Listen, I was in Spain a long time ago. Did you go to such and such, welcome back. You were missed by the way this happened when you were gone. You know? How's your family? Hey, heard you became a father. The old days, I presume there are still print reporters who may still have a drink with somebody after work, but nowadays that afterword is late. Right? And you want to go home to your family. I don't think a lot of sourcing is done anymore except in the print.

LD: Has social media helped? Can you think of an example when social media helped you develop a source?

You know actually social media in lieu of the more personal relationships you have in the past I think has sort of made it, has sort of made it easier for you to have a personal pause in direct if you will relationship with a source because you can always email them without having to call and you can email them the same concerns and greetings through email without having to pick up the phone and talk to them so you can cultivate sources very well actually through email. You can always email them and it's not intrusive as calling them. Yeah. I think social media is an excellent way to cultivate sources. Just keep in contact.

LD: What's your biggest struggle with social media right now? With your reporting specifically?

I think it's the exclusivity factor. I'm a, I guess I would be considered a reporter who gets a lot of enterprise stories and we have enterprise stories or enterprise reporting a lot of that is by nature exclusive. I have that problem. I've been beaten on Twitter. Yeah, I was just beaten the other day...

LD: With something you had, but were holding?

Oh yeah! But somebody else tweeted it.

LD: hmm

Damn it. Gosh. I should have tweeted it, but you never know.

LD: You don't want to tip them off.

Yeah! Right! And then that story was a big story that I'd been tipped to that morning driving into work a city name removed police officer had been shot to death the night before and the cop source that called me in the morning told me hey we're hearing, I can tell you for a fact that all the computers in the police cars went down during that incident. It just there were so many cops responding the laptops

LD: It crashed the system?

It crashed in the patrol cars. The system crashed. It was overloaded and crashed. Cops use
GPS to response they didn't know where they were going if they weren't familiar with the area. They couldn't communicate because on the two way radio only one person can speak at a time. If there are 100 people trying to use the two way you've got to wait for your turn. Computer you can communicate with 100 people instantly so that ability was lost. Big story. Outdated computers all of that and so I told the morning meeting, but it's a good source but I wanted another source, but I could have gone with it because the source was so good, but I didn't. Again, I didn't want to tweet it. It was 9:30 in the morning, lots of time before the evening news. I figured I've got time to work on this, get a couple confirmations and then at some point I'll think about tweeting at some point in the day. 10 o'clock competition had it. Tweeted it.

LD: Dang.

Yeah!

LD: How frustrating.

Yeah! Then everybody was out there that day. Everybody! And that was the story d'jour, the story of the day. Yeah...

LD: Dang.

I know!

LD: That's difficult. It's difficult to know. long pause

[checking email] You've earned two tickets on a cruise line.

LD: Woo hoo.

Yeah, woo hoo.

LD: Do you remember the last tweet you sent out?

The last tweet, you know I do a lot of texting. Texting is really great. Tweets, yeah, it was yesterday. Yesterday. It was pause to check phone. That one.

LD: Could you talk me through the last couple of tweets? What was the point of them?

Let's see. This was a cab story I did yesterday a taxi cab story beaten. I included the image from the video

LD: It's a tease essentially to the newscast? The story at 5 and 6

Just enough.
LD: Do you know what time you sent that out?

22 hours... that was

LD: In the morning? Almost 24 hours ago.

It was after, it was probably after I got the video. You know what it was after I saw a channel number reporter snooping around. And I figured he must in city, at the hall of justice. When I was going to interview a cop, the PIO, I saw the station name removed truck I said, oh they're on the same story just to be sure I said forget it I'll tweet it. Probably 10:30 or so.

LD: Teasing to the newscast, included a picture.

I included the picture from the video. This one was the day before oh I was off the day before

LD: So you sent that...

So Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday yesterday was Wednesday. Yeah, it's Monday.

LD: So you sent that on your day off?

No I was working, I was off Tuesday. City police chief name removed says he'll know Friday which officers will be suspended, but

LD: An informational tweet...

Informational, yes this was also on Monday.

LD: Another informational one.

This is after a news conference by name removed on the crime lab scandal. A criminal tainted DNA samples in a trial. Here's a news conference by name removed the same day.

LD: What's your hope with these tweets? When you send it out what are you hoping your followers take away from it?

Well I hope they'll watch our show, number one. Obviously. The second thing is I'm hoping maybe down the, when I tweet something like this somebody may Retweet and tell me and send me a message saying here's another angle or I was a victim too. Hey, where are you? Can I interview you then? It's like you know what it is, it's like casting a wide net and trying to find out what you pull in. That, I think that's the thing with social media for reporting. It doesn't hurt unless it jeopardizes your exclusivity but in general it can only help you possibility bring in bigger audiences.
LD: Is there anything else that you want to add?

With social media? You know I think, I think it's an excellent tool, but what's happened with this I think is, is the number of citizen journalists who are out there I don't know if this is part of your thing, but you know, it's I think a lot of people are starting to form opinions too quickly. It's like the cable TV of the internet of the vast. Vast cloud or whatever it is. Right? Cable news has really sort of blown the lines of what is journalism and what is not journalism because cable news there's opinion you conservatives watch Fox, liberals watch MSNBC and you know there are no boundaries, there are no limits and there are not standards in cable news. The same with social media. The blogging, the citizen journalists, the vast information pool which they give is just you know limitless.

LD: And that's concerning to you?

That is because there's just too much information, too much unfiltered information and people start believing this and you know in a way it's good that all this information is out there but what is does it basically a lot of the blogging, citizen journalists they're not blogging or telling the truth. They're exaggerating the truth or they're making up things and whereas before you had television, radio and newspapers and that was the source of news. Now you have this vast I mean limitless area, platform where people are believing everything and writing about everything and you see that from your tweets, responses the messages and Facebook stuff. Where you know like, like here's one. Name removed forms task force and then... where is it...

LD: Is this someone responding to you? Notifications maybe?

Messages here... Where am I? Ok. [Looking for message]. Public officials name removed is a crook. How do you know? I mean, there was one that I just saw. Anyway.

LD: But people are putting information out there in response to you, but it's not...

VL: Prove it. right? It's just a lot of gibberish. There's this old saying about news that it goes something like people watch, listen and see the news based here it is it's not so much there's biased reporters it's biased listening, hearing and watching. People interrupt news according to their own biases that's why you have conservatives loving fox news loving MSNBC. It just reinforces what they believe. All of that is skewed. They're listening to it like oh yeah, just reinforcing their own biases. That's what the Internet. That’s a lot of what social media is doing as well. So you know, there's my vent.

LD: What is your biggest hope for you? Your social media accounts?

About?

LD: Your growth in the next year or so?
Mine?

LD: Anything you want?

In terms of?

LD: A goal, more followers? More interactions?

Oh I get it.

LD: Less. Delete it!

No, no, no. There really isn't. For me it is what it is. I mean, I'm sure I'm an old, old guy. The younger guys are really good at it. They're into it. I'm not as much into it. I should probably be writing more on my Facebook account, but it's pause what it's doing is it's added tasks for what used to be traditional reporting. Not only do we go out and work for the evening news trying to put our pieces together now you have to tweet, takes time out. You have to retweet, you have to do Facebook. They would like ideally for you to write something on Facebook every night about a story or a concern. Oh! And then responding to emails that may be important not to your story but to other things that you're chasing. There's a bigger demand on a reporter today than ever before because you're saddled with having to do journalism on another platform. And then if you look at the MMJs, the VJs. You know, not only do they have to do social media, they've got to write and shoot and do live shots and drive! Where's the journalism?

LD: Forget eating.

Where's the journalism? Yeah! Forget eating! Where's time for the research? The fact checking. All of that you know anything that cuts into the basic tenants of journalism, the important things like fact checking, gathering information 26:25, calling sources, corroborating leads, all of that is diminished the more tasks you have, the less time you have to do the basics. I’m talking journalism with a big J. And I think that's suffered. pause But I'll tell you on the other hand, on the positive. Thank god for Google. Thank god for search engines because in the old days you had nothing except Webster’s dictionary, 411 to get phone numbers and basically you had just the phone.

LD: yeah.

Right? You no had way to instantly get information.

LD: So it's helped bring down some barriers there?

Yeah. Oh my god with these search engines you can get anything you want and that's been a huge special for investigative journalists, that's been a huge advantage. I mean, it's just like yeah. I'll check. I'll Google. You get everything you need.
LD: It's pretty cool.

In that sense, unbelievable.

LD: Is there anything else you want to add?

That's it. That's it.

LD: That's great name removed. Thank you.
Reporter

LD: Ok, could I have you say and spell your name for me and tell me your position.

Sure. Name removed. Reporter here at station removed.

LD: Ok, can you tell me a little about how you found your source today?

Yeah…Uh… Well originally when I got in… my news director said I might want to crowd source and actually you know use Facebook as a way to find somebody who has dealt with payday loans before for my story about the new changes with the payday loan business, the industry. And so. You know, I initially went over to Brian Doyle, our social media, web guru. And said, hey can you help me out, post something out there to our viewers and I think we got a few comments on that post itself but in that post he asked if anyone would share their story to message us directly and then from there I think you remember it was like an hour and got a response and then I took a look at that response and messaged him back through the messaging platform on Facebook and then gave him my cell phone number and just told him to I could tell more about these changes and whether they would be a good thing for his family and his situation. And he called me when I was on the road to interview someone else. And I kind of gave him the gist of the story and said would you be up for, there’s a lot of people affected by payday loans and get into that cycle would you be up for being that voice today? I said I appreciate you reaching out. I think that’s hard to do talking about something like this. It’s very personal, financial and maybe the fact that he reached out to us is because he’s a little younger. Almost 24, not even 24. And so, and maybe the fact that he disclosed the information he did was because he was a, I just don’t know if I would have been able to have the same kind of situation today with an older viewer…

LD: Hmm.

Which is kind of something I was thinking about. It worked out. And it worked out pretty fast.

LD: What do you think having him in your story does to your story?

Humanizes it, and I think I could have humanized it by talking to this business that I did that no longer offers payday loans, but from what I know, people want to hear from people like them. And I think even though he’s a little younger, he’s got a family he has people he has to support so really a win-win situation to get him. He was real too. He was concerned. He was frustrated. I could tell he wasn’t just trying to get on TV. He wanted to warn other people about this so yeah, there were a lot of benefits, but mainly just that human element that people can relate to.

LD: How hard is it to get that human element without using social media?
I think like I told you, I don’t do this very often. Usually it’s a story where it’s already kind of set up or I know exactly who I am going to talk to I don’t exactly have to go looking too hard because I think a lot of the stories we do are more local than this. This was about taking a national story and localizing it.

LD: Mhm.

And I don’t do so many of those. Usually we just kind of local stories where we know the people that are the players or that are being affected or whatever. So, I think as I continue to do stories like this it will play a role. And like I told you, I’ve got to get on, get my own personal (meant professional) Facebook because it is weird sometime when I get on my personal Facebook and just message people on there if I am trying to get a hold of them. Because then there’s ‘who is this guy’ and I have to explain that.

LD: So what accounts do you have a professional account for now?

Just Twitter really. That’s basically what I use to keep people posted on what I’m working on through the day. I usually try to tweet at station so right away name will RT it and I’ll get some more exposure that way. In my last market in Alabama, Twitter was nothing. I was actually on Facebook. Twitter hadn’t really pause in my view pause caught on their yet.

LD: So what’s been your path? You went to school of journalism too?


LD: Yeah, I’m from the twin cities. After graduating in 2012, I went down to Dophen, Alabama for my first TV job. 6:29

LD: Why do you think that it didn’t work? What did you do and why don’t you think it worked?

Ok, so I, in addition to asking our social media guy to post something on Facebook, wondering, looking for some people I could talk to today to kind of crowd source. I also posted a question on Twitter. I tweeted out, “working on a story about pay day loans today in light of new proposals to regulate them. Anyone out there use them?” First of all, I don’t know if that’s worded that great. It’s probably not, but trying to keep it short and sweet, but it’s not like I have thousands of followers. I think that might be one reason. And, I think Facebook is an easier way for most people around here to communicate. I think Twitter is strong here, but when it comes to that dialogue and being able to message back and forth. You know? I think maybe some people maybe really don’t know that you can talk on Twitter where on Facebook I think for most people it’s pretty obvious you can go back and forth.

LD: Cool. So is there a reason you didn’t tag the station account and have them retweet you?
Looking back I should have… I wonder if I had enough characters.

LD: Mhm.

But looking at it now I think I did. I was just in a rush and forgot to do the @station name… if I would have done that I know name automatically would have retweeted it, but sometimes he’ll miss my tweet if I don’t tag @station name because he’s just doing a bunch of things, but I think he’s notified when someone tweets at him.

LD: Cool. Interesting. Looking a little at the dynamic between personal account and station accounts and when one shares the other, that’s really interesting to look at as well.

Interesting. Well, I try and keep them separate, but in a weird way I’ve kind of used my personal Facebook account to try and talk to people sometimes. And I kind of feel weird about it. I wonder if they’re going to look at my pictures now, you know? Check my privacy. Not that I have anything to hide. Laughs. So, it’s really the time. When I go to Fresno, to set up a personal Facebook account.
Reporter

_Name removed_. Reporter or Multimedia journalist, as you want to say.

LD: Can you tell me which social platforms you are using both professionally and personally?

Twitter. Facebook. Instagram. LinkedIn. That's it.

LD: Professional or personal? Which ones are which?

Twitter is — I only have one but I use it for both. Now, yeah. Facebook I have two pages. One for personal, one for personal one for work. LinkedIn is obviously professional. And then Instagram is more personal.

LD: How do you integrate social media into your reporting routine?

Routine? You use it for finding stories, obviously, on Twitter mainly. Also tweeting out previews or teases or tweeting out situations where you are - just to kind of show what you're working on for the day. I use it a lot teasing stuff, but also today for example sharing instant news on the point

LD: You said that you use it for finding stories. How do you do that specifically?

Look up hash tags. Look up hash tag _city name removed_. Look up hash tag _city name removed_, different things or go to different pages or groups. Look up stories that way. That's mainly how we use it. Yeah. It's....

LD: Can you think of a story from the last couple of weeks that you found through Twitter?

Oh yeah. It was - I wasn't working, but other people were working and it was at nighttime. I was scrolling on Twitter and I saw someone tweeted out body found at _name of university removed_

LD: Do you remember who tweeted it?

I think it was someone from the ER, the local newspaper here. I called into the newsroom and hey do you know about this and no one knew about it and like I was like well this girl is tweeting out that there's been a body found like two minutes ago and so we were the first news station there.

LD: The first TV news?

Yeah, TV news. So we got that footage that night. That's one example. You know of get ideas from it to because so many different stories you can spin to a different angle.
Especially with the whole drought situation. You see so many different things with the drought that I think ok someone did that. Did a story Monday about wells drying up here. I tweeted it out and I noticed another station the next day did the same story. It kind of works like that too. You can definitely take different ideas because the reason I got the well story is because I saw a newspaper article had been tweeted out on how much water is left in state removed where people are going to be getting their water, how people are selling their water from the rivers, but a lot of people are getting into wells. Getting into the well business. It leads to different stories.

LD: Very cool. And, what kind of instructions did you get in terms of social media when you first got here.

Here? Teasing stories. Tease them out. Tag the station. Hash tags that we use here for different cities. I remember specifically was it a storm that was coming through here county name removed got flooded and we did a hash tag region name storm. And that was big. That was big. So just hashtags. Sometimes we'll talk about to use. When I first got here they said remember to tag this we'll retweet you, that kind of thing.

LD: Did you do any formal training?

Hmmm. Not necessarily. No.

LD: It's not necessarily good or bad. Just curious. Do you think the expectations of you are reasonable...

Yeah!

LD: …when it comes to your social media?

Definitely. I think anybody now it's just expected to do some sort of social media. Especially in this industry, it’s kind of where it's going.

LD: Do you see your social as more news gathering or new promoting. Or what kind of ratio do you think it is?

I think there's three ways - well, yeah. Gathering yeah. News gathering, I'd say. I take in stuff, but I don't necessarily use it for my thing. I just like to learn stuff. I'd say 50-50 I guess.

LD: 50-50?

But I'm always checking it just for fun.

LD: How is it been or how have you built any contacts of sources through chatting over Twitter or Facebook.
Yeah. Definitely. I've had people like my page before and send me story ideas and I'll respond. Just last week I used - there was the body found and I was trying to find someone who knew the victim. I messaged someone on my Facebook page and I knew someone, someone to talk to and interview who I actually ended up knowing. We just didn't know how it worked out. I was able to use it that way. I remember specifically in my last market in Montana I kept saying this guy tweet out about crops in northern Montana and there was a farm bill that was being passed in DC. I messaged him about it on Twitter and he called me and I was able to interview him over the phone and he was from Twitter. From Twitter I was able to get in touch with him because I saw his tweets. He was totally down.

LD: How often are people tweeting at you - here in city name removed tweeting at you or Facebook-ing you after you post a story -

I mean today, with a hostage situation...

LD: On average.

On average?

LD: Or today.

It depends on how active you are during the day. It really does. Or how long you've been on air. If you have several hits, on average, maybe a couple a day.

LD: DO you usually respond?

Yeah. If it's, obviously there's occasions when I don't because it's unnecessary.

LD: What do you mean by unnecessary?

If there's a link to an article and I just don't click it and say what does this mean. like that. Hum pause I don't get too many people asking me questions.

LD: OK. After talking to your news director he did have an emphasis on enterprise reporting and coming up with new ideas for stories.

Yeah, definitely. What's big and what I like is Google alerts. I'm huge on Google alerts. I check it daily.

LD: What kind of alerts do you have set up?

I have every single city in the north state. I have every county. Different schools. Different news outlets around here. I get everything. What I like to do is read an article, a lot of people skip out on different cities that stem out from one story. They think
oh I'll do it another time. Or like with the water thing earlier this week that's a prime example because I do that all the time. Google alerts and one thing leads to the next thing. I'll see things from the city council meeting or something on Google Alerts.

LD: So coming up with ideas is just kind of domino effect...

Yeah! Like it's my mentor kind of showed me to look up quotes so when you read a newspaper article it's quotes have a lot of questions that are unanswered. You kind of take those and give someone a call kind of go that way too. Google Alerts is probably my biggest thing.

LD: Cool. And how has social media led you to a non-traditional source? So like, do you have any examples of when you've used an everyday person for a story idea that you found over social media.

That I found over social media? So you...

LD: That your reached out, that you ended up using in a story?

Besides that Montana reference. I don't know. I could probably look through my stories, but yeah, I don't know.

LD: That's fine. And then do you remember the last tweet you sent?

Yeah! I said, "Breaking: Suspect is in custody in the hostage situation"

LD: Why did you send that tweet?

To show the situation is coming to an end. People were obviously following me to see what today I got 10 followers just from doing that whole situation. People were waiting to see what's happening. So that kind of ends it.

LD: [talking to news director] All right great. Great to meet you.

Good luck with your project.

LD: Thank you. I think I'm almost out of here too.

LD: You said you got 10 followers just today?

Yeah, maybe a little more than that actually. People retweet me and then other people see me or the hash tags or situations unfolds. We were the first ones there today. Other news outlets followed when they see the tweets go out.

LD: Overall what’s your biggest goal for you on — let me rephrase. What's your biggest goal for your professional accounts? Either your Twitter or your Facebook. What do you
want to see happen over the next few years? Months?

Obviously. You know I don't know if I've ever really set a goal with my social media accounts. My goals with my accounts is to use it more. I don't think I'm as good with my Facebook page as I should be. I do have my Facebook linked to my Twitter so but I usually just tweet so probably be more active on my professional Facebook page. On my personal one I'm not really active either, but I definitely want to be more active and posting more, but Twitter is where I really do that stuff for work.

LD: Ok. How long have you been reporting?

Coming up on two years in June.

LD: Is this your first station?

My second..

LD: So you did one year in Montana and this is your second job

Yeah.

LD: Did you go journalism for school?

Yeah, broadcast journalism out of Cal State Fullerton. But a lot of the social media stuff I learned at my internship in college so because it's, I interned at KTLA in Los Angeles and it was the entertainment department. My job was to actually tweet out for our guests we were airing. It kind of got in that mindset. that before something airs or something you're doing because they're it's a lot different here...I don't know if you want to go into that.

LD: Yeah. Everyday they get a breakdown of what there ratings are every minute, every five minutes. You can literally see who will tune in after some sort of tweet there. It kind of puts you in the mindset of people will actually pay attention to that sort of thing. If you have a celebrity come on in four minutes people will tune in.

LD: Cool. All right. Is there anything else you can think of? I think that's about it.

No. That's it I think.

LD: Oh! So you're relatively new to city name removed and the market here.

Yeah.

LD: How well do you think you know your viewers?

Oh... there's such a random span of viewers here. I'm learning what they don't like which
is the crime here, which is increasing.

LD: How are you learning that?

The comments I see online, on social media. I mean obviously people are going to write comments on things that they're opposed to more than they like they're going to write. Looking at responses on social media you kind of learn and definitely know that I've seen people write, "we need more good news." I'm learning people are not liking the amount of crime here for sure. And we report it obviously because that's our job.

LD: So you think, you do look through those comments pretty frequently?

I really don't. I look at them when there are big stories or if I'm trying to look for a connection or interview possibly or more information I'll maybe reply to some of those responses that we get on stories. It didn't work out, but last week we were trying to get a victim a source who knew the victim. People were writing she did this. She would know. So I replied to a couple of them to see if they would be willing to talk on camera. That's when I look. I don't really care too much what they say but sometime it's important.

LD: OK, anything else you want to add?

Nope.

LD: Thank you so much.
Reporter

LD: Can you tell me which social accounts you are currently using?

Twitter. Facebook. Instagram

LD: And are they professional accounts or private accounts?

Yeah. They are accounts set up with the company’s protocol.

LD: And do you have personal accounts as well?

I do, but they're dormant. I don't use them.

LD: Ok. Can you tell me a little bit about what your expectations are as a GA reporter in terms of your reporting and your social media use?

Uh, well there are two sides to that. One is gathering information and the other is disseminating information. And it is pretty much expected that we publish on Twitter and Instagram uh I usually you know since there's that feature on Instagram that will allow you to publish to all three that's generally what I do. So I'll take a picture, write a little caption and that's the way I can update stories that are developing. I try and do that everyday. I don't publish a lot. Maybe two or three posts a day, but I try to get on the board everyday and more if it's a story where there are developing issues in it. The news gathering side, mostly it's breaking news like a refinery explosion or something like that. Twitter is great place to find pictures and videos and sources. Sometimes I use banjo and let them do the searching for me.

LD: Can you tell me a little more specifically how you would use Twitter in a breaking news situation?

The most recent example was that refinery fire down at Mobil and that was, we got pictures and it also guided us to people who were witnesses. There was an issue there with ash coming down from the sky or what we thought was ash it turned out it wasn't, but that was a way to find out where that was happening. Because otherwise it turned out, most of it was coming down three miles away and most of us at the refinery had no idea where it was coming down.

LD: So how did you do that? Did you do a search and then tweet at people? What was the logistics of finding these witnesses?

Mostly sending messages to people who had tweeted and posted pictures of ash what they thought was ash.
LD: Did the people, what was their reaction when they go your message?

They're usually receptive. Yeah. It was actually name removed that ended up doing the interview with the person who ended up having a lot of ash come down in her neighborhood.

LD: What sort of training did you get in terms of social media for reporting?

Several years ago the web department had a seminar and put out one sheet but there's been nothing formal since then. You'll have conversations. You'll get individual coaching, but nothing as formal as that for several years now.

LD: How long have you been working in this market?

This time around 31 years.

LD: Wow.

Previously I worked in city name removed for four years then was a nomad for a few years then came back. I've been at NBC for 31 years.

LD: Would you say you're pause what's the right word...

Old?

LD: Do you feel like you know what your viewers want at this point?

Well, I know city name removed and its history and its geography. But I don't know younger people as well as the younger reporters do. I know what baby boomers want. And baby boomers are a big chunk of our audience and I try to stay relevant to kids, but that's why we have a demographic spectrum of reporters here.

LD: How do you think your conversations with viewers, whether it's finding a source or someone contacting you for a different reason, how do you think having the social platforms helps you maybe reach younger people or reach viewers to get a better idea of what they're looking for? Pause Or do you think it does? It might not.

Every now and then, yeah. As I say, mostly it's for breaking news when I'm trying to get immediate information, tangible things that are happening. In terms of issues and what people are interested in, I'll post queries every now and then if I'm looking for someone who has had a personal experience I'm looking to interview for a story, but I don’t know
that I really mine it to try and find out what people are interested in. To the extent that I'll look at banjo every day and see what's trending on Banjo.

LD: What is Banjo?

Banjo basically is a glorified Twitter search engine. So it does the searching for you or at least using their protocols. Let me pull it up for you.

LD: Oh wow. So how do you search?

You don’t really. You let them do the searching for you. You go to news and it's all the trending news items.

LD: Is it by geographically?

It's by volume of traffic. They break it down by US and Canada. You can search to make it more local but the search they do is US and Canada and Asia, Africa.

LD: So you usually just look at the big ones?

And then they cluster them.

LD: So that's Las Vegas?

You pick a particular event and then they cluster all the tweets under the event

LD: So how does that help you find something to pitch here? Does it?

I don’t necessarily look at it for something to pitch. I just look at it to find out what's going on and what the Twitter sphere is talking about.

LD: Interesting. So you were in the morning meeting this morning.

Yeah.

LD: What were your pitches? During the morning meeting?

I pitched the missing student, which is a no brainer. It's the big mystery of the day.

LD: Yeah, very weird.

I pitched the story that I decided today would be a bad day to do, the closure of a speedway that does street legal drag racing once a week and that will kind of take away
alternatives for street racers and then we did a couple of re-pitches. They reopened a road to allow people to get a view, allow tourists to go up there, basically it's a relief valve for the residential neighbors where most people go to get pictures and so it helps, it helps the neighborhood but it's created a mess in the park

LD: And where did those ideas come from?

That idea came from name removed

LD: Your EP?

Yeah. Who saw it on one of the blogs last week. so we've been pitching that for a week now.

LD: The blog of another media outlet?

No, one of the aggregator blogs.

LD: And what about the student and the speedway?

The student has been out there all weekend since he disappeared. The speedway...it's been out there that the speedway is closing for about well it was sold a year ago they went to city council last week, but the angle I specifically proposed the angle of the street racing because I covered the street racing fatality last month at it just when I saw that they voted to build a shopping center it occurred to me ok that means they're losing a street racing venue, a drag racing venue.

LD: A follow up in a way? With a timely element to it?

A synthesis of two stories out there.

LD: Slight tangent - what sort of enterprise reporting do you do here?

Quite a bit. I mean, you're expected to come up with three story pitches every day

LD: For a daily shift?

Yeah, and hopefully not stuff that's appeared elsewhere. pause I would say pause well especially, my main beat has been the drought so I generate a lot of drought stories that nobody else has done. I have a bunch of contacts in the field there. And I talk to people and people suggest ideas.

LD: How often are you expected to do an enterprise or is it kind of whenever?
It's whether your pitches are better than going on that day, whether you get to do the enterprise story that day.

LD: You're kind of working on it? Kind of ready to go? It might be today it might be next wee.

We find out at the story meeting every day.

LD: Ok, and you said you have a lot of contacts. Are those people you talk to on social media, are they friends from other stories? Who are these people?

They're people in the water business. Water district. Environmental activist groups. NRDC. And no, I usually communicate by phone or email rather than on social media.

LD: Do you every have people pitching you stories over social media?

A couple of times I haven't seen it until I check it a week later and yeah... but no, for me I much prefer to communicate directly by phone or email.

LD: Any recent stories that stemmed from social media that you can think of?

No.

LD: Is there anything else you want to add about your use or your reporting style?

Yeah. The nexus between, actually do you have a question?

OTHER: I'll be in the lot. I've just got to run an errand.

All right. Thank you, Scottie. The nexus between social media and broadcast is really still kind of a morphis and developing. I'm not really sure where it's going. I know that people are seeing my tweets I don't know if that necessarily means they're going to watch my story later in the day, but its almost like your serving two different masters. I'm not sure where the train meets.

LD: Do you find it hard to juggle in your routine? I'm trying to do my story but I'm trying to tweet but I'm trying to go on Facebook. It's a lot of activities.

For breaking news, tweeting is very helpful in informing the newsroom what's going on. And so if I weren't tweeting I would be sending them email updates. I'd be one or the other so I hit a larger audience if I send it out via tweet.
LD: That's a good point.

It helps the web desk know what's going on so they have a rewrite if I'm sending in tweets. I think that's more effective than sending email in that case.

LD: So I guess the argument that I'm too busy, the I-am-too-busy-argument doesn't really work because you'd be doing it anyway. I hear that from a lot of reporters.

Yeah.

LD: I'm too busy to Tweet. I'm too busy. I'm too busy. But you're making the point that you have to get the information to them anyway.

Yeah.

LD: I'm going to make a note of that.

Well good. I'm glad I had one good point.

LD: No, I mean there's been lots of good stuff here! You think we're not really sure where its going at this point?

I don't know if, there are all these other variations on Twitter and Facebook that have come out and I don't know how many of them are going to stick.

LD: It's hard to know what's trendy and what's really going to change everything. It's hard to know

There's Yik Yak, which is highly localized and anonymous. I don't post on Yik Yak, but I do look at it when I'm in the neighborhood.

LD: IS there anything else you want to add?

I think that's pretty much it. I'll be inspired with ideas after you leave. You know that's always the way it is. But you're going to be around for a few days, right?

LD: I'll be here all day today and all day tomorrow. Thank you so much. If you think of anything else just let me know.

I shall.

LD: Thank you so much.
Reporter

People couldn't find my professional account. They were all coming on my personal one and asking, "can you friend me, can you friend me, can you friend me?" I got the point where I said, well I wasn't answering them. But then I kept thinking well now I've alienated them and they think that I'm not replying, that I don't want them to come to my page so I mentioned it to the web people. I said Am I being undercounted as part of this new initiative where we're getting these overnights as part of these social media rankings and so forth. I said I think I'm being cheated. All these people can't find me or I didn't friend in the past, and maybe that's the reason why I'm not getting the kind of traffic I should. What I started doing is stopping, well first of all I stopped friend-ing, giving permission, I didn't friend people. But I will send them a note and say will you please follow me on my station page? I put all the, you don't have to request permission you can just go there it's a public page, etc etc. All of a sudden - and then I went to my personal page and I said to all my, I forget what the number was, but it was like 11 hundred or 12 hundred followers or whatever it was. I said would you please go to my professional page, it was a please like me, like the page. All of a sudden I got like 100 more likes for the page. They all said sure we'll join you over there, no resistance. I mean, I don't know how frequently people visit. That's the question, how many more people will see it eventually. I probably should put occasionally put out a post on that page to say just to let you know you can find me here instead. I even created a graphic that said please follow me over at Facebook.com/reporter name removed, station name removed so that way they could find me they don't have to look for it. And that's made a difference. I guess the bottom line is I can't have a personal page anymore. If I really want to drive social media, if I want people to find me I just have to one page. And I have to be public about it, which means I have to pull back on personal stuff on it. That to me cheats me out of being Name of reporter the person versus Name of reporter the journalist. So my friends and I don't have a place where we can be. I can still follow them because we're friends on my personal page, but I just go there to read their postings, but I don't interact with them there because I want them to be interacting with me on my station page.

LD: So what is the difference in content that you would post on one or the other?

Oh, I probably would acknowledge more things about my personal life. Things that I'm doing, possibly things about my relationship to me friends, you know? I've got god kids, I've got old friends who I've known since childhood. Poking fun at them, things like that. Those are the kinds of engagements that I cannot do because other people are seeing it or I'm held back because you want to be professional, but then it's the personal stuff that people seem to like too. I have to draw that fine line. Where is that line where I can be myself, but not too much myself that it's going to, people are going scratch their heads and wonder you know what's the purpose of this page.
LD: How do you or actually let's rewind a little bit. Throughout the day I've seen a lot of how you use... What value do you think social media has for you in trying to build relationships with your viewers? Or is building relationships with your viewers important to you?

It very much is because as you, we all know as journalists that some of the best story ideas are from people who suggest things to you. They say oh this is happening or whatever. It could be anything from oh my kindergartener is having a school play would you come and cover it to something like we have, we're going to have a group of our students out in front of our school while the funeral procession for the police officer comes by our school because we're on the procession route. That came through on social media. It came through the station's website, but nevertheless that's a good example of how people reach out to us. It's a convenient way that people communicate. If they're online, if they're used to using social media they'll then content you via that whether it's a private message, a posting on your page. It's nice to hear from people. That's good. It's a two way street. The relationship has to be that way. On the other hand there are times when people use social media to write the longest, most involved, there's one without naming names or particularly details. There's somebody that's trying to pitch a book that she's written and I, I think I haven't seen any galley pages or how good her writing is and she wants me to do a story about it. So I had to be polite and I had to say, I don't think this is the kind of story that we want to do, but I will keep my mind open and I was just trying to open about it and polite, but then of course she's badgering me with a couple more emails or messages within Facebook. I don't know how long this is going to go on. Sometimes people won't accept no for an answer or don't read between the lines and understand you're basically saying no we're not interested, but don't want to hurt their feelings.

LD: Right.

That's where telephone calls or face to face or even email is easier to communicate than it is on social media. People tend to be very curt and to the point, on social media they don't tend to be more formal or more expansive or thoughtful.

LD: How reflective do you think your stories are of what people are actually talking about in the south bay? As like a collective...

What does that have to do with social media?

LD: I'm not quite there yet.

What I'm suggesting is I don't that think people look at social media... Yes there are stories that resonate with viewers on a local basis, but I think our pages are not siloes
saying this is a region name removed page therefore this is only where you can make suggestions or perhaps find local stories.

LD: I guess what I'm thinking is, sometimes it seems like the stories that stations not a particular station chose to cover are based on what they think people are talking about whereas out in the community they're talking about. I'm just wondering how reflective do you think your work tends to be of what's actually happening in the community.

Then you're really talking more or less the morning meeting and the decision making as to what stories are covered. I think that many journalists, I won't say all of us, that many journalists that live separated from their own world. You can see from the daily work flow that we're on such a treadmill that it's hard to make the calls sometimes to receive phone calls or just to call a contact and say what's new, what's happening. Beat calls have always been a part of journalism. I find myself getting busier and busier and less tie to think, think, think. Right now, this is the first time I've had a chance to think today. It's been very mission driven. Get the story covered, get the sound bites I need, let's get the video logged the interview bites pulled and get this thing on the air. I'm finding that there isn't that sense of breathing space during the course of the day to think about what did someone mention to me the other day, what story do I think we should be covering, who should I talk to when I have an idea for a story. I think that we're becoming a little pause isolated. Social media should be helping, could help us, but I do know how it really does because when I see things, postings from my friends it's things that are going on in their lives and they may live 1000, 2000 or 3000 miles away or on the other side of the world. It doesn't give me that localism that I really need. There needs to be something where you can find, connect with people locally as opposed to globally.

LD: That's a good point.

I'm sure there's a way to drill down. I'm just not really sure what that is.

LD: Where are some of the places you get some of our story ideas from?

To be honest, it comes from years of working in the field and knowing people. It comes from your, your litmus standard is of course check the morning paper and see what they've done, but try not to rip off what they've done. You try to do your own stuff, but it's so collaborative because you've got many other decision makers in the newsroom who sit there and they weigh in and you can only do, basically one or two stories a day so they have to decide. They're looking at the bigger picture and while we like to think of ourselves as being like newsrooms would like to be reporter driven and like to think that the reporters generate the stories and we're certainly invited to make story suggestions, but at the end of the day the decisions are made by the morning editorial meetings and that's pretty common in all stations.

That, we already have somebody doing that story or that was covered last week or oh
we're going to get to that we have someone thinking about that for next week. We don't have the big picture. We're operating in that silo as an individual reporter, we have to reply on them to understand or make that decision. Are we pursuing the right avenue? Then of course you get frustrated when your story doesn't get picked or when you think you have a better story that's just part of the business.

LD: It's a lot of moving parts.

A lot of moving parts. Well intended people, but sometimes pause you don't always agree with the decision made, but you've got to be a good solider and move on.

LD: Absolutely. You made references to this earlier, but what are your expectations from the station in terms of your social media use?

I'm not clear that they, I don't know. I don't, cant articulate a specific game plan other than be sure to get on social media every day. The subtle reminder when I get those emails, here are the rankings, your rankings on social media. They say they want us to do more of it, but trying to figure out what works and what doesn't work is pretty much just left in our lap. It's trial and error. And I wish there were a better handle on what we should be doing. Maybe they do but they haven't communicated it to us. I don't know.

LD: What are some of the things you find work really well on social media?

Very personal things. As I pointed out, things where I pull something out of my old file, my old photo files and I find something 10, 20, 30 years ago and I just speculate, where's that person now or here's what I did back then. People tend to enjoy that because it shows a different side of you then they see on a day-to-day basis. It's original content. It's something they can't find anywhere else. it's that uniqueness. We even strive to do in terms of our news coverage. Fortunately, like for today, we saw a competing station down here interviewing the person from the water district, but I don’t know what his story was. He doesn't serve the region name removed He's down here in city name removed. I didn't see anyone else down here today so hopefully we have a story that's different than what everybody else has today.

LD: Is there something that doesn't typically perform well but you have to kind of do anyway?

In terms of social media or stories?

LD: Social media.

In terms of social media, something that we don't do that we should do?
LD: Something that we do, but doesn't tend to see a lot of traction.

Promotion. Promotion. We've been encouraged to promote during the ratings periods special reports by other reporters and we post them and you don't see very many eyeballs go to those posts. You get absolutely no reaction like oh yeah, thank you for letting me know I'll watch it. I've seen no engagement whatsoever.

LD: When it's other people?

I think people recognize that we're trying to promote our brand and that's what the main page, the main station page is trying to do. It's a brand page. But pause when they come to our pages I think they want to engage with us as individuals as opposed to the station so it's got to be something that I've come up with the idea. If I want to promote it then that must be important to me. And then I would tweak it in such a way that I'll say here's why I'm interested in this or whatever. I think what I brought up, Fresh Off the Boat he first time the station was trying to promote it because there was a lot of stake and after Blackish turned out to be a hit and has done very well. Here we have an Asian American, predominately Asian, totally Asian American cast and non-Asian characters. That I'm curious about it only because our community was very much hoping that's what the reaction would be. It could have been 20 years since Margaret Cho, I don't think you'd even remember Margaret Cho.

LD: I do actually.

Ok. That show flopped.

LD: Yeah.

No one's been bold enough to say ok let's have another Asian American centric show in 20 years. We were all hoping, will it have traction? Will it work? Will it draw viewers and will it have staying power in the long term. Once, twice is curiosity, but if it's a hit or people are engaged by the acting and by the plots and by the humor or whatever hopefully it'll stay on and the show will continue to be renewed and stay on the air. I was sort of curious about that so I was asking people reaction to the show and don't forget the show airs tonight. I asked people what'd you think, what'd you think, what'd you think? I think, I got some reactions. People liked it, had things to say, but I think that's where I'm promoting something, but I'm also trying to gauge people's thinking about. Therefore I am seeking feedback. I think that's better than saying Reporter X is having a story on such and such be sure to watch it at 11 o'clock. I have no vested Internet in it and I don't expect them to come back to me with reaction to it. They should be engaging with him or her about that story and that special report not with me.
LD: Do you think it really, to me it seems you have to build a following at some point in order for those engagements, story ideas and sources to come in. It really started with building your brand.

It's building your brand, but also having exposure. [hold on in interview while reporter takes care of emails]. Number 10! On the leaderboard.

LD: You made the list today?

I made the list today! That is very good. Part of it might of been yesterday because of the funeral. I was tweeting pictures and videos and the fly over by the aircraft. That's good! It's sometimes because of what you're covering and if it's a big story, big event or something we've been promoting on the air saying we'll have live coverage starting at 10am then they realize we're also tweeting that kind of stuff.

LD: Do you find this helpful getting a daily check-in?

It's sort of nice, but I can only guess why. I don't have the interpretation as to what this really means. It's good! `I'm glad. It's the second time.

LD: Some incentive? Positive reinforcement?

But I don’t know how much of it is Facebook. How much of it is Twitter? Is it a combination of the two? So...Don't know.

LD: What advice do you have for young reporters who are trying to build a brand and get more followers so they can get some of those story ideas and sources.

I think they can pause don't get obsessed with social media. I think there's a point where you over do it. I think you are, you feel compelled to be on social media all the time and I think you have to value peoples’ time. We try to value peoples time with the broadcast that you don't sit there and do a 4 minute story just because you have a lot of material and you don't want to cut interviews out. You can bore people to death. 17:54 It's sort of like, you want to hit that sweet spot where it's "hey just tweeted" or "She just tweeted" it must be important because he doesn't tweet that often or he only tweets when it's important or significant or when I may be interested in it. I think you find that balance. I don't think most reporters overdo it, but I think some of them do do some of the anchors in particular because they're pushed so much to tweet, but then they show up 18:22 high in the ratings so. Obviously, there's a market for it, but I wonder if that's because, most of the people who are doing, who are scoring high are morning anchors. That's because people are still at home, not engaged in their workday yet. It's a good time for social media so my interpretation is people that still are not yet engaged in their work day so they
like seeing fun things in the morning. That's what I’m guessing. Can't swear to it, but that's my intuition speaking.

LD: Today you picked targeted times when you know people might want to be engaged. So you have to know your tool and your viewer.

And that's what I've got to do right now because it's 5 till.

LD: Great. Thank you so much.

[He tweets story teasing to newscast with exact time story will air, community hash tag, tags station account, adds popular hash tag relevant to story]

There we go. Now I've got to get ready for our live shot.
Reporter/Anchor

My technical title is tech, social media anchor/reporter.

LD: Ok. What does that mean?

It is self-defined. No. It's a couple of things. One, I was hired as a digital anchor for the digital channel ten years ago that lasted about six years. We were the first digital channel in the country that produced news. This is when, I don't know if you recall, when all of the stations went HD and they had these subset channels so we were .2 we did essentially a six hour show, news throughout the day. It was just live continuous news, but it was the first newscast that integrated social media into its content. This is also the onset of Facebook and Twitter for the most part, for the general masses. We were using it to not only engage, but also to kind of bring in viewers.

LD: What do you do now?

So now, I have a segment franchise. It was developed, it came out of a show that was developed for channel that ultimately that didn't take off. We developed it into a franchise. It was initially a morning franchise and a noon franchise but now it's just a noon franchise. It focuses on technology and social media, a little bit about security. It's the noon hour so it's a lot more consumer based. It's very quick news. It's almost like an update of stuff. It's not. It's not an in-depth franchise by any means. However, I do cover a lot of security and tech stories for the 5 and 6 o’clock news that sometimes could, often could go deeper into coverage.

LD: So you're an anchor/reporter. Definitely?

Yeah.

LD: So what social platforms are you using currently?

Currently. I mean, all the big ones, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat, those are probably all the ones that I use pretty much multiple times a day. I'm doing Periscope a little more lately. And in the afternoons I probably at like 3 or 4 days, doing regular news out in the field. So I'll do Periscope there because I think it's kind of fun. It's an interesting platform.

LD: Are you using a professional and a personal? Or a mix of both?
No. I mean, It's I don't really. I think it's too much work; I just keep it all pretty professional. I suppose I have some personal stuff on there, but it's very safe personal stuff if that makes sense like it's my dog or you know some food stuff.

LD: How is, you're a little bit different than the typical…

Probably.

LD: Reporter because of how much social you are using. How are you using it to find your content?

I think because I've put a stake in it pretty early on that content finds me pretty quickly.

LD: Mhm.

I have really strong sources that I derived from social because they were around social starting. I've strong lists on Twitter. Just really good contacts and expert basis on Facebook and so when there are stories that are popping up. I'll get direct message a messenger will pitch stories. Yeah, helps that most of my stories deal with people in technology and social media so it's easy for them to you know.

LD: It sort of matches your audience in way?

MM: Yeah seems skeptical I will say, I've broken some really good non-tech stories because of sources through Facebook and Twitter.

LD: Could you tell me about one specifically?

There was a mayor of city name removed I cant remember the city. A small city in name removed county was murdered, killed by his wife. And hey. And uhm, one of the wife's best friend contacted me on Facebook because I was good friends with the whole network of her friends. And so they wanted to get the story out of the wife who apparently had been beaten for 28 years by this, by her husband. and hadn't been out there but didn’t trust anyone but because I had this group of strong contacts with her friends and her network. They came to me and we broke that story.

LD: So she sent you a Facebook message with just like hey this is what's going on, will you call me. That sort of thing?

Pretty much. And then yeah. I contacted her and they got me in touch with the attorneys. I had pictures the interviews on the air the next day.

LD: Remind me how you knew her beforehand.
I didn't. She was friends with a network of people that I knew on Facebook.

LD: OK.

It turns out after that. Turns out that I knew a lot of people in that area that I didn't know because of you know it's southeast and you really don't think much about it until there's something happening there news wise.

LD: Your reporting routine. Where is social coming in throughout your day? When are using it? Why?

It's integrated. I start with social. I end my day on social. I feel like social for me is not a mechanism to draw audiences to my original platform essentially, it really is to consistent conversation throughout the day, a relationship. And so I'm updating, yes, what I'm working on, but I'm also engaging throughout the day with people DM-ing me or messaging me or giving me tips on stories and I just kind of file those away for next days or what have you

LD: What does the station expect of you on your accounts?

I mean I think the limited expectations are engagement with the content you're creating for the broadcast, right? Build your audience and then try and inform them on what you're working on. I think that's the lowest of the expectations of, but ideally they understand that most people, especially under 30, are probably consuming and engaging on content at rates are quadruple what they are on television. They understand that if you're not communicating with them there they will never come here to the main platform to watch.

LD: Is the idea then still to get them to watch the broadcast?

Today. Yes. I think they still make, I mean let's look at legacy news organization, they still leverage a lot of capital and a lot of value on their existing products which are broadcast or print or what have you. They are still trying to figure out a mechanism, i think that, still makes the money that they're used to making in TV, but somehow still lays the groundwork for it eventually to become a mobile and social kind of consumer base.

LD: What I've been hearing from a lot of people I've talked to so far, I'm still pretty early in the project, but they say "you know I don’t really have time to tweet or I don’t have time to do social. I'm trying to do this this and this, especially one man band type reporters" What's kind of your reaction to the i-dont-have-time comment?
I think it's short sided. I mean, I've learned to take notes about my story live on Twitter as I'm going as I'm doing interviews and I use it as notes. There are ways around it to fully, engage and kind of storytelling through process on what you're working on throughout the day. Does it, will it eventually result in a person actually turning on the TV? I think it's more than popping in a tweet at 12 o'clock in the afternoon saying "hey at 5 o'clock I'm working on this" I don't think that's really exciting, but if you're like, you've been working on this car chase throughout the day you're updating throughout the day what's happened and all the turns and twists and stuff, there's a bigger possibility they'll tune it at 5 o'clock to see how it all ends and comes together. That's the hope.

I would say that's the hope, but I think isn't the reality that we all know is where people are consuming content and like, you might be better off really learning how to become the next Tom Brokaw of mobile devices opposed to network TV. It wont go away in the next ten years, but it's already diminishing its power.

LD: For example, I'm a reporter I want to be better at finding story ideas and finding, really utilizing what the platform has to offer opposed to just teasing something. What kind of advice for people are trying to figure this out?

In terms of finding?

LD: Finding ideas and...

I think, I mean, I think when you look at social you've got to look at just any other beat you're covering. If you're a cop reporter, you're always going to hang around cops or cop shops. You're going to find those people to get those stories. When you're on social you're going to find those people on social and build lists, and build communities and dig for the sources through social in that way. It's a little harder sometimes because you have to take added steps to verify information and identifies opposed to being in front of somebody, but you can do a lot more while you're on your laptop than you can going from six different cop shops a day.

LD: How long have you worked in this market?

Ten years.

LD: Have you worked in other markets?


LD: You have been all over.
What is it? Seven cities, eight years. something like that.

LD: 7 cities in 8 years?

8 or 9 years.

LD: Wow.

So how well do you think you know what people are talking about in **?

Among reporters, journalists? In general?

LD: Everyday people.

It just depends I think know very well among people wanting to consume news and events in the city. News events, impactful events. It think I know that probably, I'm among some of the social influencers when it comes to that. But this city is so diverse and its conception of content. People just don't care about news or government or stuff you know that is really impactful o their lives. That's their choice. But this is an industry town and so people are very, very into not just the optics o the industry but also the deep down boiler rooms of what's happened in studios. I would say that I'm aware but I’m not incredibly versed. Like we broke the Sony hack story without really knowing how impactful the Sony Hack story really was because we knew it was a hack, we knew they were pulling computers out of plugs, but we didn't know that it was so deep and so widespread until weeks later. But, and that's because those people that are in that conversation are not in a what's happening with my mayor or my government or my money, taxes or you know, crime pocket they're kind of in their own little land. I'm tapped into it, I'm just not fully tapped into it. I think it's rare. I think there are probably only a few cities that have that. Probably, DC has that division between reality and government and maybe bits of New York.

LD: That's interesting

We're also a heavy brand town. Even non-people in the industry, especially young people, are so overwhelmed by brand, brands and how they, not only consume it, but also how they are perpetuating their own individual brands as if to become something of a social celebrity of sorts, which is. If you look at the makeup of social celebrities in the world I would argue that 80 percent of them live right here... or come here.

LD: I think you're right.

It's a different city when it comes to that kind of content. If I were in San Francisco, no not San Francisco, San Francisco probably has a high tech, but if I was looking at a
normal city say Sacramento I would probably be one of the most tapped in people when it comes to news content.

LD: How much do you think your city impacts what you're able to do on social?

What do you mean?

LD: Like, what you're able to accomplish is it because you live in city removed or is it because of the steps you're taking?

No, it's definitely the steps I am taking. We're a city of 17 million people. You know roughly 2 million watch local news every night at 11pm so 15 million people are not engaged on a TV platform. right? So where are they? A lot of them are on social and a lot of them are, because social is so easily divided like none of them are all talking about the same things. you can certainly go through the trends and see what's trending, but normally those are minimal conversations. they're not real topics of impact or change.

LD: Mhm.

You have to, I think, this is what I've done, I just built lists of communities of people

LD: Do you need to take that?

It's fine. I don’t know who it is. I don’t understand why I get unknowns. I've built in lists of communities of people that I know are impactful to certain things. I have strong lists of you know decision makers in politics, decision makers in government, and you know they're on social in ways that they've never been before and they're giving you information that you would normally have to go through nine people to get information. You're able to break stories there even though they're technically already broken because they're on social, but because their followings are so minimal no one really has paid attention to it becomes part of the noise of social.

LD: If you don't mind — if you don't feel comfortable that's fine too — Do you mind showing me your twitter and telling me kind of why, a couple of tweets back, what was your hope from that tweet? What was the purpose of that tweet.

Small section of interview removed from anonymity. Description would reveal identity of this reporter.

I was at a conference so all my last tweets are conference tweets.

LD: Ok.
Literally like hundreds of tweets of it. And then I spent a week in New York meeting with corporate sponsors so it's all...

LD: Do you use your Facebook as well?

Uhm, again all...

LD: It is a mix then personal and reporting?

I mean, kind of.

LD: Hybrid, I’d guess?

Well, I always feel like — it's very industry. While it's personal, this is a work event. I think in television you're mixing journalism with brand right, your own brand. You're mixing journalism with your own identify in the market. 17:02 so that's part of what you put out there as well. That's a little personal, but I wouldn’t put pictures of me and my family here I don't think. I don’t think I have any of those, but I have me at events for work or me at events for journalism things or if I speak at a thing for work I’ll do that. You know... I've got that there which is when I was in New York.

LD: What is your biggest hope then in the next couple of years for reporters using their social media? Like a GA reporter.

Right I don’t know if. What do you mean by hope? Like what I hope they accomplish with it?

LD: Yeah

I really think, I think it's silly for a journalist to not use social. But then I think it's beneficial to those who are just smart enough to know that it's an amazing platform and outlet and if you're not taking advantage of it you're going, there's going to be a reason why some younger person gets hired and you don’t. It's just a bad it's not long form thinking in terms of how do you want your career to, if you think you're getting to television to put on a six o’clock newscast or an 11 o’clock newscast for the next 20 you're sadly mistaken. We're in the most disruptive portion of television news right now all because of digital and social and so it's going to be a bumpy ride and if you're not you know at least up to date on how content is being pushed out there you're just going to be holding on the entire time. I don’t know anyone who wants to live their life like that so. I think it's important that they just understand how people are getting content opposed to Here's the weird thing - I think journalists spend way too much time, not way too much time I don’t want to say that, I think they're solely focused on how to be better
storytellers or better writers or better journalists when they forget sometimes how to be a better communicators. Right? Communicating is not just how to tell your story right, but it's also understanding the platform people are consuming your story on. Not being obsessed with being the lead of an 11 o’clock newscast that maybe 1/5 of the entire city watches but being obsessed with getting a million retweets on a story that you know that population never saw. I think that's much more, I would be impressed more with that than being the lead of the 5 o’clock news.

LD: For reporters, what kind of advice do you give them for starting out? It seems you have to get your following before you can really make some big strides. How do you get to that point?

I mean, there's, I think it's really changing. Six years ago I would have told you, we gave away cars so people could follow us on Facebook. We had the largest following of any TV station in the country on Facebook, but there's no value in those followers, its minimal if you're talking about demographics or DMA market size right. If you look at our following on Facebook, a good chunk of them don’t live city removed. And so what does that really do for the value? If you look at that number, if you look at my followers on Twitter I have about 51,000. I could have way more than that, but of these 51 followers, 98 percent of them are market based. They're in city name and that's not by mistake or coincidence. That's by working at engaging with people in different cities and really only making them part of my network. I want my followers to be more valuable than anyone in this city. I think I am the third, I think there are two other reporters who have more followers than I do on Twitter.

LD: Here or in city removed?

MM: In city removed, but I guarantee those followers are not city removed based. They're generally based. That's my broad assumption. IT just doesn’t happen. Usually if you're on Twitter no one really is that specific on who is following them. They're like, I'll take a follower. That's good for me. For me it wasn't. I knew that the value of a good follow would be a value, a city follower. For me that's a valued number is like a ten in currency opposed to like a one.

LD: Are you approving people to follow you then?

If I know they're from city removed

LD: You have to request then to follow you?

Let me show you my Facebook.

LD: So we're talking Facebook?
Both. I did it much more on Twitter. So it's much more apparent on Twitter. On Facebook I have something like 500 requests.

LD: Oh Jeez.

653 friend requests and so I'm really particular that I'm not just. There are some people who want to be friends with me who work in my industry which is fine, but I'm not, but I don’t use social for that. I use email or I’ll use Google or something.

LD: You're using a personal account; It's not a page. It's a personal. It's a friend me opposed to not a like me situation

We initially had pages, and then Facebook was testing out. They didn't call it follow they called it something else. I can't remember what it was…

LD: Was it subscribe?

Subscribers. Yes.

LD: That's what it was

They were testing it out. Me and two others stayed with profiles and everyone else stayed with their pages. So all of my followers or subscribers are now just followers. I set up a page. It was just too much to maintain so I kept it all together. I have about 80,000 followers on Facebook, my friends.

LD: Wow. So circling back, any advice for people who are starting out that are trying to engage

There are ways to get those numbers up, but I think be very strategic. I guess it depends on how long you want to be in that market. If you, it depends. Know what your goals are. If your goals are to be a national correspondent then I, I wouldn't care where your followers are from. But if your goals are to be the reporter that everyone counts on in that market Like i would say just focus on those people in that market and that's, those are good goals to have. When i set up my twitter lists for the cities. I am tired today. pause. These are different neighborhoods we just really looked at some of the bigger influencers in those neighborhoods and said ok I am going to find 10 people in city removed who I know have huge followings within their little cities, communities. I just constantly engage with those people. I didn’t really attempt to you know friend everyone that lives in city but I really try to look for people who I know are really talking about issues or things and really engage with them.
LD: But how do you identify those people?

You can do different ways. I just do a search for the zip code and I'll just flip through. I'll just search for city removed when there is a big story in city name removed or a big breaking news stories. I look at who is trending higher or who has some of the top tweets as I'm working that story as well. I'll make note and then come back and engage them.

LD: And do you do them, they're almost like your brand ambassadors.

A little bit, yeah.

LD: You're my community ambassador.

I don’t think we have a relationship where I’m like you trust me only, right? No, but we build a relationship I'm assuming that we’ve built his trust thing because we they exchange a lot of information and ideas with me or they tell me what's happening I don’t think they're doing that with everyone.

LD; would you just shoot them a tweet or a message and be like hey how are things in neighborhood

No, sometimes I'll be doing a little blip about city so I'll shoot them a tweet and just tag them in the tweet and they'll start tagging it with their friends.

LD: Ok is there anything else you want to add? You're ok. Thank you for doing this.

I mean I just really think that like any journalist really has to not be afraid of social, but also understand that it probably not be the end all of things. Social the entire industry is really the middle of this evolution. How it will be or how it will end in terms of you know what you're creating content for and how it's consumed I don’t think will be determined for probably 20 30 years. Even then, it might be stable for a little bit like TV and newspapers were but then it might evolve again. You've just got to be prepared for that.

LD: Any last advice?

Just adapt.

LD: Adapt.

You'll be fine if you adapt. How many times do we go on a breaking news stories and you're thinking its one thing and you end up with something else and you have to go on TV in 2 minutes and you just have to go so you just go and do it.
LD: Great. Thank you so much.
**Reporter/Anchor**

My name is *names removed for anonymity*. I am a weekend anchor and weekday reporter.

LD: Can you tell me which platforms you're currently using?

Instagram, Facebook, Twitter.

LD: Do you have a professional account or a personal account or both?

Both.

LD: For all 3?

No, I have personal and professional for Facebook and Instagram.

LD: Professional for Instagram?

Yeah. Professional Instagram. Yes.

LD: Can you tell me a little about why or how you use the professional versus the private differently?

It's just like what it sounds *laughs* You put news stories on my professional one and personal things on my private. They do overlap, but mostly they stay in those categories.

LD: How do you or what kind of interactions are you having with your viewers or your sources over social media?

I pick up a lot of story ideas because nowadays people put stories on Facebook even if they don't realize it even if they don’t realize it and I'll stumble across something and I’ll say that sounds like something we can develop into a story or I need to check on this so I find stories a lot, especially on Facebook. Twitter is a really handy tool especially in breaking news to go in and not to use as a source necessarily sometimes we do, sometimes we'll say people are weighing in on Twitter and make that a source of a story, but just to kind of find out what's going on here in town everyone is on it. If a chopper pilot is up from another station and puts it out there, that's fair game. Everybody can pick up on it. It's a really good tool.

LD: When viewers are giving you tips whether on purpose or not on purpose are they sending you a message? Commenting?
Both. I have people who private message me and will send a story idea or hey can you help or here's what's happened to me. I get a lot of consumer type stories that I'll turn over to the consumer investigative unit.

LD: Is there a certain kind of story that you think really benefits from like using tips from social? Is it more features?

I think it's everything. People will write in help me, this person is missing all the way to, I just saw one yesterday, someone passed away and they left a ranch with horses, dogs and emus ready to hatch.

LD: What?

We wouldn't necessarily do that story but that would be an interesting story. It runs the gamut. It’s everything.

LD: The station has set criteria of what they expect you to do on social media?

Not necessarily. We've tried over the years people have come in and they've said this is what we're going to do. We're really going to push Facebook hard. And we've pushed it to the point reading posts every day on the air to where we are now which is sort of they encourage it but there are no set guidelines.

LD: Do you think that's helpful?

I'm actually just getting ready to, when I can find the time and when I can catch someone, from our web department. I want to go in and talk to them about what our current policy is and how they can help me do it better. I'm actually at that point where I want to advance my usage.

LD: What do you think your biggest struggle is with it?

I don't think there's a set platform say for Facebook, let's just take that one, some people have an station name removed page some, people don't. Some people use their private page as their all access page and I’m not really sure what our policy is. And someone set up a Facebook for me through the company and we have photos that were really are outdated and I want to know can I go in and update that page or what are we doing. I don’t really know. But I haven’t had a chance with out busy schedules to sit down with someone.

LD: What is your biggest hope that you'll do with your social accounts over the next year or so?
I really want to start interacting with viewers. I've been sort of timid in the past because you do get the random crazy person who either starts stalking you or, I've interacted with people who might say 'oh great show today' whatever and I'll write back 'thank you' 'thanks for watching' and then pretty soon they're messaging you every single day, writing you every day and if you don't respond they get angry. I've had some bad experiences that have kept me from doing it. Also people can be mean. I have had good experiences, but I've been a little leery of stepping in sometimes.

LD: That makes sense. That would definitely make sense. Oh, what sort of strategies do you use for your enterprise reporting? Maybe a longer story or something that spans over a couple of days? Where do you come up with those ideas?

Everywhere. I start in the morning and get on, this is my one and only tool I don’t know how I lived without it.

LD: the iPad?

Yup. Log in and start going to all the newspapers, checking to see what’s going on. What other people have reported on. Checking Facebook, checking Twitter and then you just, you hear about stories or I'll go back and check sources. It's literally everywhere. You see something when you're doing or on the radio someone will mention something. It’s everywhere. That's basically how I do it.

LD: Have you ever or do you try and maintain your relationships with sources mostly over email or are you on social media?

Mostly over email.

LD: Email.

Almost everyone does it over email. It's just mainly keeping your eyes open and when I'm pitching stories I think what's going on right now. What's happened? Have we had a huge rain? Did we have a fire? If we had a fire what happens now? Is wildlife coming out? It's mainly thinking what's going to happen next?

LD: How long have you worked in this market?

This market, 20 years.

LD: 20 years. Do you feel you have a pretty good grasp of what people want to talk about? What they want to see on their newscast?
I think so. Yeah. I really do. People think city removed is one big sophisticated city, but it's really a lot of little communities. It's got more of a hometown feel than most people think it has.

LD: How do you try to bring that to your stories?

I really like to go out in the communities and see what they're all about. It's fun because we have so many different communities. I'll go out and see what are they doing. How are they different from another community? What's going on in theirs that is totally different from maybe a community that's right, right next door.

LD: Is there something specific you do to do that? Is it volunteering or is it just walking around?

It's just being a part, being engaged. Being a part of it. Being aware because you can kind of stumble around mindlessly and not think about the different communities but if you're just kind of aware and you keep your eyes open and you talk to people and you're out there when you're driving around when you're going to stories instead of, if you have a chance looking around ' oh look this is going on here, hey I didn’t know they were building that' and just sort of being aware.

LD: Is there anything else you can think of or any tips for maybe new reporters that are trying to build a social following? Trying to get more active?

I would just say don’t be discouraged like I was by the negative and just try to keep going and go forward. I just think it's such a platform for people to say whatever they want and I don’t know there just has to be a better way to police it or to I don’t know how you do that. I know there have been a lot of celebrities because they didn’t want to read that. I’m sure they’re just people in general who I don’t know how you get passed that, but somehow go forward and do what your ultimate mission is that is to inform people.

LD: Great. Anything else?

I think that's it
**Reporter/Anchor**

Sure, news anchor and reporter for *station name removed*

LD: And how long have you been in this market?

Uhm, let’s see, under a year. My one-year anniversary is July so I’ve kind of lost track, but a little under a year.

LD: Cool. What’s been your path to get here?

*Background removed for anonymity*

LD: Did do broadcast in school?

Yeah, I went to the University of Maryland. Majored in Journalism broadcast. Yeah so, right after school I went right to work, went to Bristol and yeah, that’s the path so far.

LD: So which social platforms are you using currently?

Uh, Twitter, Facebook and Instagram, and Periscope I need to do, but have yet to download the app but I’m sure I’ll get to it. And I have Vine on there, but I’ve just been, I think it’s faster to take photos so I’ve been on Instagram and tweeting and things like that.

LD: And do you personal accounts and professional accounts? A mix of both?

I do. And it’s I have a professional one but I have more followers on my private one, but it’s all, I don’t put anything, it’s all work related anyways a lot of it is. I still manage both accounts. Yeah.

LD: Your personal has kind of become a…

It turned into a work one. Yeah. Yeah. I just kind of accept everyone. It’s just, I guess when you’re bouncing around different markets and like you have to set up a different page for each station you work with.

LD: Mhm.

It’s nice to have the followers, you know, follow you along whereas when you start from scratch obviously it’s you know you kind of start from zero.

LD: Yeah. That’s a good, a good point and then what about Twitter?

Yeah, I do have a Twitter account. And that’s just kind of been the same one that I’ve used. I’m big on photos. Maybe just because, that’s why I’m in this field because I’m
visual and I lean to, toward things like that. As many photos as I can get out there, I usually do. And with Twitter, I’m usually, I go a little crazy during breaking news situations. I can definitely do better when it’s slow, like days that are slow, I could push things ahead. I tend to rely on it a lot more during breaking news. It’s kind of getting the info out because it’s the fastest way to do it sometimes rather than picking up the phone and relaying the info I can, I’m at the scene and quickly writing little notes and tweeting them out.

LD: And then is your Instagram, also, uh hybrid professional, private

It’s both, but like I said, I’m pretty, I don’t put anything crazy out there for the world to see. The internet is one of those things, it’s a blessing and a curse at the same time. Once it’s out there it is out there. I’ve read to many horror stories about putting thing that are inappropriate and it’s not like I would, but yeah. You always have to keep that in the back of your mind when you’re about to publish something.

LD: Right. And can you kind of walk me through when you’re out reporting, how do you start your day?

I get in around 2 ish and spend like a good hour or so skimming through all the local papers, blogs. Going through a lot of the emails that I get and also our planner and seeing what’s being done dayside or early morning so there’s no overlap or if there is there something I could forward the story on that I could just pick up evenings. Then around 3 o’clock is when we have our story meeting. We sit down and usually it’s myself and another reporter. The most we have right now is 3 reporters. We’re all kind of pitching our stories and put our heads together to figure out what we can lead with that night. What’s a good re-lead at 10:30. We have a 10 o’clock show and an 11 o’clock show and we’re looking for a leadable story for both news hours and sometimes the other reporter has a little more free rein. It doesn’t have to be pressing, day of. It might be a good evergreen, feel-good story we can use, but it’s highly promotable, it’s teasable. The other reporter again might be able to get that kind of story. We try to cover as much ground as we can when we have all the reporters in place. We cover cities removed and that’s a lot of ground to cover. It’s rare to not have a reporter in city in case something crazy happens. I think we have most of our viewers here in city so we always have someone here. A lot of times we cover out in city as well. City is a bit of a hike so under, if a story warrants it, it’s unique. It’s new for nightside, we’ll go, but city is about an hour and a half from here. Then out, usually out the door hopefully, so I’m making calls, we have our story meeting is half an hour to 45 minutes or so. The goal is be out the door by 4:30, before 5, because that’s the biggest challenge with nightside is your battling everyone else’s schedule who is off at 5 on a normal 9-5 schedule. So you’re feverishly making phone calls, making sure that people stick around, change in pitch but then you also have to factor in traffic and just getting there and you just kind of encourage whoever you’re interviewing that it’s only going to take 5 minutes I wont take too much of your time. It always ends up working out. And, that’s why we feel like we do a lot of crime related stories, which is fitting for nightside usually that’s when a lot of crimes happened. Maybe it’s a follow up from the night before, law enforcement are also on and odd schedule so
they’re a little more accessible to interview if need be. Yeah. Then we’re out the door so we just see how the day goes. Every day is different. Sometimes, so station name removed is really big on breaking news stories so if there’s something else that’s pressing that might be happening, a fire a shooting a stand off, we would just hold on to the elements that we’ve gathered for the day and then we’d go to the next assignment. Check it out. Usually they, I would say, 9 out of 10 the breaking news that they send us out on is legitimate and we usually stick to that story and that becomes our story for the night. With as much little time or whatever that we have we are able to crank something out whether it be a package or a just having that live presence at the top of the news hour is kind of what we strive to get. A typical day is everything works out in the story meeting, you have that one assignment and you vet the interviewees nail them down go interview them grab the b-roll and then crank everything out, and of course you have a photographer, it’s a team effort. Usually by, the very latest, is when I’m done with the script to give to the photographer an hour to edit everything together and then send it back to the station so that by 10 we’re live and ready to go.

LD: So how have you worked social into your routine throughout the day? I noticed you didn’t mention it yet.

Yeah. Well. I guess. It depends on the story. Like I said, there are days that are just super chaotic. And we’re just running around and that sometimes is in the back of my mind and I can’t do it because my priority is getting the stuff on the air. Sometimes social media, yeah it’s encouraged and when I have the time to do it, I do it, but when I am trying to make phone calls from left to right and we’re driving from here to here and I’m doing research. I’m kind of that person, I’d rather not jeopardize my story just because I need to tweet something out. It doesn’t take too much time, but sometimes I just like to focus on the story of the day. But when I do have the lag time in between stories when we’re driving to an assignment I’m like hey we interviewed someone pretty early, got a cool nugget of info, sort of as a teaser say hey, did you know water we’re wasting X amount of water? Find out more tonight at 10 on station name removed or whatever. When I have the time, especially on slower days, I mean I do make the effort to push it on social media. A lot of times you’re just tied, your hands are tied and you’re just really busy. You’re just making phone calls and researching, that’s a little bit of the challenge. Yeah.

LD: Do you think it was a pretty natural to integrate social media over the last couple of years? You've been in business awhile now.

Yeah. Yeah. I think so. I think when I was in college Facebook was really starting to pick up and I mean I do it for fun too. You know? Just to stay connected with everybody. It was a natural I guess progression to incorporate that into my career. But I think you also have to be careful too because it's another outlet for, you're representing your station too. You want to be accurate in what you're tweeting and with the information you're giving out. I mean, when it comes to that. I'm always kind of double-checking my info as well. Based on what you tweet out and the people who follow you, it's an extension of who you are as a reporter so you want to make sure the info is accurate. I'm always cautious too before I tweet anything and make sure that I fact check and make sure it's accurate before
it goes out there for the public to see.

LD: Does that station have a set expectation on social media?

I mean they definitely encourage it. Especially for breaking news. And that's when I think we all kind of step it up and for me, I know it sounds weird that I'm more active, but when you're at the scene sometimes it's like the easiest way to communicate because they're following your tweets so you don't have to pick up the phone and tell them.

LD: They as in the news managers?

They know that I'm covering this story. For example, there was a hostage, like a hostage situation not to long ago. They're like name removed I know you're going to be tied up so we'll just be following your tweets. We're going to do a live stream on our side of things so we'll be following your tweets. Tweet as much as you can. Tweet as many photos as you can and we'll go from there. In that respect it's super helpful for all parties because I don't have to pick up the phone and communicate to all these producers and be like this is what I have this is what's going on. They just have to look. Everyone at the same time can just watch my Twitter feed just blow up and just kind of see what's going on and what I have. What I am gathering. When I have a moment to breathe is when I'm able to pick up the phone and divulge the rest of my info.

LD: Do you feel you have a good sense of how they measure how you're doing on social media?

I think so. They're pretty good about — especially our web, social team. They're pretty good about picking up things. I think they follow all of our social media accounts. When they see something that we're tweeting or an interesting photo, they're good about retweeting it. I know they're kind of watching.

LD: So shifting gears a little bit - how do you typically find your sources for your stories?

Sources, I feel like it's always a work in progress. Me, I still consider myself relatively new I've been in the market a little under a year now; I think it's just covering a lot of the same stories and just being familiar with the same contacts. I think PIOs, every market is different, Public Information Officers depending on the market you're with, and they're good at tipping you off on certain things. Other times they're pretty cautious about working with the media. They're a little hesitant to give out too much. But I think it's just covering, because like I said, we cover a lot of crime. We talk to a lot of cops. Usually when a day is pretty slow I just shoot them a quick text like hey is there anything going on, let me know. A lot of times just station name removed having the reputation that it does and me being on the air, I get emails from people randomly for story ideas that might be worth pursing. And also just kind of, I get interesting stories just having conversations with people out and about on my days off type of things. When you're out in the community is when you get the real enterprise stuff. I think that's the best thing is building relationships outside of work and just seeing what's going on in the community.
Staying in touch with those folks and seeing what's happening in your neighborhood or what's bothering you, what's concerning you, what's, what can we do to kind of help if there's any information we should get out there. I think that's probably the best ways I've been able to make the contacts.

LD: Have you found social media helps that process?

Yeah, I think so. When we're, there's like a specific topic that we're looking to focus on and using hash tags you're able to narrow down specific people that are tweeting about a certain topic you just have to direct message or twee them. They're pretty good about responding. I personally haven't cultivated specific contacts like that as far as getting sources and things like that. I think it's more background for me if anything and then just kind of branching from there. I'm always a little cautious too. Yeah, they might be tweeting something out but I'd rather do my own homework and see if that's accurate.

LD: Do you find, would you say you use it more as newsgathering than news promotion? What do you think the ratio is?

I think it's both. I think it's half and half. Definitely. It's half and half. It's also depending on you know the story is. If a story is, just warrants it, just kind of speaks volumes and you know it's highly tease able. It kind of is case by case. Some stories is just, it's a slow news day and it just came together at the last second and it just is what it is.

LD: Can you think of a situation where social really helped you with your reporting that day?

Yeah. I guess I'll just go back to breaking news. Because the situation is always fluid when, you don't know what's going on. The reason why we're pulled off is kind of, we're like the first people on the scene aside from the first responders so I am usually relying on, aside from the information they give me at the station, which is limited because it's breaking news. I'm able to just kind of use Twitter or Facebook and just look through the hashtags and see what are the pictures that they're tweeting out, what's the location, what are they saying about this I am able to kind of draw a better picture it might not be the most accurate but at least I get a sense of what I'm getting myself into. This is like leading up to where the story is happening. I think it's super helpful in that regard when I'm trying to do my homework when there really isn't much out there, much info out there and nobody is really telling you anything because everyone is tied up at the scene. That's kind of my homework while we're driving from point A to point B. Once I'm there it's my turn to be the eyes and ears and then relay the info out here and to whoever the followers are. Usually like the public information officers they encourage us to tweet the info because they always want help too and just having that partnership has been valuable I guess in various situations.

LD: I think you're an interesting kind of case for this study because you are new to your market and in general starting in any market it's pretty difficult to get a sense of the community.
Yeah.

LD: I felt like that when I started at my station. I thought I don't know what anyone here is interested in. How do you just kind of start to pick up on the vibe here?

That's a good question. I think for me it's kind of picking the brains of these guys, my coworkers, they kind of give you a really good rundown of what it's like. But then it's also just being out in the field, on your own. I feel like especially at this point in your career when you've been doing it awhile, you're able to pick up on things quickly and read people. And just like little experiences, conversations you have with people. And sometimes it becomes repetitive and that's how you get a sense of the market. Just kind of the stuff that they're interested in. The conversations that they bring up, "oh remember that story that you covered, or this, or remembers that story that happened last week." There are things that peak their interest and kind of stick with me. They bring it up obviously they remember it.

LD: This is sources or coworkers?

Just out and about. Yeah. Coworkers they just kind of give you a quick rundown of what this market is about. It's vast. there's lots of breaking news. There's fires. We cover a lot of ground.

LD: Huge space.

It's a lot of driving around. it's unique because the climate, we have the drought but sometimes we go to the Sierra to cover the snow. It's a whole gamut of things. It's a unique news market in that sense. Coming from the east coast, I covered four seasons usually it's all rain or snow, here it's like a little bit of everything. I've never had to deal with draught. That's been very different. I've never covered wildfires. Like the minute I started here it was wildfires left and right. So yeah. I think it's just like when you're thrown into these situations very quickly, very early on. I don't know it's inevitable for you to just pick up on things. I think every news market, especially local news, news is news. I think people are interested in good storytelling, unique stories that not, that they might not have heard about. They might be living in city removed and it's a story out of city removed, but it, there's something compelling about whoever you're interviewing that kind of grabs anybody attention. Big personalities, things like that. Kind of appeal to everybody. Hopefully that answers your question.

LD: Do you have any advice for reporters who struggle to come up with story ideas?

I think it's always a challenge for anybody. You try to be different and try to not rely on the papers so much, but sometimes they, especially with papers, I have to give it to them. They are able to cultivate their sources better because they have more time I think on their hands. They also have daily turns, but I think it helps when you have a beat. We're like general assignment. We cover a gamut of things. People have their little niches.
Some people prefer covering politics. They like it so they tend to gravitate toward it, but across the board most people here are general assignment.

LD: So any tips?

Tips. Yeah, yeah yeah. On story ideas, right? I would say especially if your, blogs I think are so I think everyone is blogging about stuff these days. I've found that to be unique. Usually people who start these blogs are invested in a certain issue or topic so, like I said, you're always kind of cautious. You're a cautious journalist. you're a little skeptical about believing everything that's written on there. It's a good starting point for story ideas and then you can make the phone calls to see if it warrants the phone calls to dig a little bit deeper. And also just little, I remember when I first, in other markets, little events, little like community boards and things. They have like posts of whatever. I'm just like standing there looking at stuff. Sometimes you'd be surprised what people have written on there. I just like snap a photo or just kind of tuck it in my back pocket and just, sometimes I forget about it, but other times it might be worth vetting. What else. Yeah. I guess social media. There's this one, there's a few here in this market where it's like a community page where there's thousands of people either gripping about an issue, a lost dog or can be legitimate. I'm trying to think what happened. It was actually a cute story. There was one story that was posted on this Facebook page, for the community of city removed. So she got in a bad wreck with her whole family, her whole life was like literally turned upside down in a matter of minutes. A really bad wreck and she can't remember the people that helped save her. She just remembers everyone got out safely, but she thanks these good Samaritans who stopped in the middle of the road and got her out of the burning car. She had a little baby in the car and she was just super thankful and she wanted to say thank you for just kind of stopping, doing what you're doing that day and helping us. This was a post a woman put out there and so we were able to connect with her and did a profile on her and just kind of the series of events and then, as a follow up, people were just like that was me, that was me. It was interesting. I think being able to be the middleman in that regard. We're not always bad.

LD: Was that a story you did? Was she able to find out who helped her?

Yeah! So she posted the thing on her Facebook and everyone reached out to her.

LD: That's good!

It was a good feel good type story. Like I said, it was a prime example of just being on Facebook on that community Facebook page what have you.

LD: That's how you stumbled across it?

Right. Right. And then we went from there and were able to reach out from there. Sometimes it's amazing how quickly will respond to Facebook messages over phone calls these days. Everyone has a smart phone. Sometimes you can't track the phone that quickly, but you are able to find that Facebook profile and then you just message them
and they message within the next half hour, hour or so and you can go from there. It's pretty crazy how social media savvy we've become as a society. Everyone is doing it. No matter what generation. Young, old, it seems like everyone is doing it.

LD: Will you then friend them? Because in order to send the message?

I do. I do. I do. So I have a lot of random. A lot of random friends. I think that's why I keep. I think it's easier. I have two accounts. For some reason it's easier for me from a private account. I think that's why I still have it too. I can't remember why the page I mange.

LD: The page you manage they can like you but they can't message you. They're following you.

Right. Right. I feel like it's not as efficient in getting messages out there. I have - that's another reason why I prefer to have that private one because I'm able to quickly like somebody, send them a message and see what happens.

LD: I guess they kind of put a wall up on the page opposed to the account...

I think they're trying to eliminate crazy people and stalkers, but that's the other problem with social media and with being on air. I'm cautious about what I put out there. It's easy for people, if you post something that you're at a park one day. It's like who knows. If you put too much out there are strange things. There are strange people out there.

LD: Do you have any final thoughts on what you hope to see for your own social accounts?

I think I could always do more. Everyone can always do more, but I, I don't want to short change the end product. My goal is, my first and foremost my job is to be a solid reporter and get the facts right and get the story done on time and on the air at 10 or 11 o'clock. I think social media is a great tool to have and to work with I don't think it should be the sole driving force. I think it's kind of heading in that direction with periscope whites live, live, live. A lot of things are, it's, we're evolving the industry is changing. It's a lot though. It's a lot for us. Think about it. We have Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, Periscope and god knows what else is going to be popping up now. You can only do so much. You're already as a reporter you're already busy. And to be tide up in all these other things I think it kind of takes away from the, what it means to be a journalist sometimes. I think these are good tools to have under your belt and I think they're a great resource to turn to but I think we should always go back to the basics in my opinion.

LD: I don't think you're alone in that opinion. I've been hearing that from just about everybody.

Yeah. Yeah. It's like I said, its very helpful. It can be a great tool. But I think you have to be a little cautious about it when and how we use it sometime. With everything though.
LD: Is there anything else you want to add that I haven’t asked you about yet?

KP: I think that’s it.

LD: Thank you so much. I appreciate it.
Reporter

LD: What platforms are you on?

Twitter is the big one. Facebook, LinkedIn. I have all of those for my personal accounts. For station accounts, I do Twitter primarily. It's a good way to disseminate information quickly. I tweeted today from the Water Board, shot some pictures, sent out tweets with the new numbers that came in. They retweet those so that's good. Also, I check and monitor other reporters are doing.

LD: It sounds like your station is pretty Twitter heavy opposed to Facebook

Yeah.

LD: Do you find that in your reporting?

I think it is more concentrated on Twitter because they set up accounts for us and it's strongly encouraged, required to be on Twitter to make presence. A lot of it if for promotional purposes and teases and that sort of thing, but it's a good way to disseminate information quickly and often be the first on the scene reporting. Faster than you can put it on the air.

LD: Do you have a professional Facebook page?

Just a professional one. Some of the anchors have professional pages. I don't think most of the reporters do.

LD: What sort of expectations do they have of you in terms of using your social media?

They expect that we're on it all the time. Certainly tweeting out things, letting people know what stories are going to air, breaking news as fast as we can. Sometimes we use Facebook — and I'll work with the web team — to generate comments. We may be looking at water waste and we'll say, "Hey! Any examples of water waste out there? Let us know on our Facebook page." Sometimes people send you a tip or a link or a picture or something that can be used in that regard. It can help in terms of being a news gathering tool.

LD: Have you had any particular instances where it really helped you get a home run on a story?

Yeah. I know there have been examples. I'm trying to think of a specific. We have this thing called news station tips where people email us with comments, suggestions, story ideas, that sort of things. Sometimes they'll identify a problem and there will be pictures of it and then you have a visual on it so then you can assess how credible it is. Sometimes they'll make themselves available. "I saw this. I took this picture. I'll talk about it." I think a recent example was on water waste last year where somebody saw the sprinklers going
off in the middle of the day. You're not supposed to do that. She took pictures of it, was willing to talk about it, we met her and put it on the air. You can help. It helps as a news gathering tool.

LD: What sort of challenges do you run into trying to get all of your work done and do your social and your web. It seems like a lot of stuff.

They demand it all. And you know, it's not humanely possible to all that. You know, often times we miss lunch. We get called in early. I've been on the clock since 8:45 this morning and it's probably going to be a late day. This is a business where it's 24/7. We've got a lot of holes to fill and that means being available days, nights, holidays and weekends. It's a lot of sacrifice.

LD: What sort of advice do you have for people that are struggling to get everything done in one shift?

That's a good question. I guess the best advice would be to prioritize. The top priority is — we are a television station — so the top priority is it's got to be on the air. That might not the answer that the web team tells you, but from a reporting perspective, if you have a black hole when your story is supposed to come up that's not a good thing.

Photographer: Plus the fact is if he neglects the broadcast side that effects me because I'm the one that has to put it together. If he neglects the broadcast side and gets the script to me late, that puts the story in jeopardy of not getting on the air. We have to cut the story.

LD: Right.

Photographer: We kind of always feel like the broadcast is the priority when we're close to deadline. The web is just 24. It's just whenever. We do have also deadlines for five o'clock. The deadline isn't five o'clock, it's three o'clock. Three o'clock to write the story, get it to me an hour before air, to be one the safe side. If we're at a location where I'm running the truck it'll be even longer. You've got back all that up. People always have a focus on a five o'clock deadline, but no it's not. It's far earlier for his work. Obviously for me, we have a policy that stories are supposed to be in house 20 minutes before air. Five o'clock is actually 4:20 or 4:40 rather.

_Name removed_ is right. For this five o'clock package we're responsible for I have to have the scripts submitted by three o'clock for a review by the managing editor. That gives us half an hour or 45 minutes to edit it. The next one, the next deadline is four o'clock for that script to be submitted at ready for review for the six o'clock newscast.

LD: How rigid are your routines going through the day?

Rigid?

LD: Do most days tend, do you tend to day the same thing in the same order?
You've got to be flexible because there's always breaking news and sometimes you want to get extra elements. I would say a good guideline for reporters is time management. You've really got to development your time management skills. How long will it take me to get from A to B? When are you going to get there? Is it worth it? What kind of visuals are we going to get? Can I get that information over the phone instead? Can I do a graphic? What are the visual elements going to be for my story? You have to absolutely be rigid in your time management and organized in order to get it all done in time. But every day is different, but still the constraints about how to manage and organize your time that's paramount.

LD: Shifting a little bit - what strategies do you use for coming up with enterprise story ideas?

I try to come to the morning meeting every day with two or three good story ideas that I could put on the air that day. My beat — we don't really have beats anymore, but my particular interest and area of expertise is politics and government — Covering the capital and governor. I rigorously watch what's going on there and try and come up with stories that I can turn that day on timely topical issues whether it's education, transportation, housing, crime public safety, whatever the issue may be. I try to pick something that would be a good day turn. Sometimes they go for it, sometimes they have something else they want you to do. You've got to roll with it.

LD: Your news director talked about trying to get away from using official sources and spokespersons. Do you find you're using a lot of them in your stories?

I think it depends on the story. I mean a story like today where you're getting the numbers from water experts — why would you ignore them? Those are the people who are the most knowledgeable. It depends on the story.
Reporter/Anchor

I'm name removed. I'm a weekend morning anchor as well as a reporter during the weekend. Also on the weekends, which are where the social media comes in and why you'd want to interview me, is I do social media for the weekend mornings in addition to anchoring.

LD: Can you tell me a little about, just walk through a normal reporting shift

As a reporting shift, I’m really unusual. Wednesdays is the only days I’m a dedicated reporter. So 9:30 come in with pitches, hopefully, get assigned a story and turn it in for 5 or 6 o’clock news and then or thought out the day or whatever it may be. Then on Thursdays and Fridays I anchor the noon show and then turn a package for the 5 or 6 and then Saturdays and Sundays I anchor the morning show and do social media and the assignment desk.

LD: So you do all the different shows?

Yeah, I do a wide variety.

LD: So when you are saying you do social media, what do you mean by that? 1:23

I mean I am the only person who is logged onto the station name removed Twitter and Facebook page so I’m trying to post anytime anything happens, as well as just conversation starters or show teases that kind of thing.

LD: So can you tell me a little about the difference between what you do on your own name removed account versus when you are the station name removed account?

Well I first just had a reporter name removed page that was actually where you friend-ed it. Do you know what I’m talking about? Like an actual person. So I had that reporter name station name and I got to 5,000 so I had to switch over to the Page and I hate that now. So when I was reporter name removed, where you could friend me, I had people messaging me all the time, like writing all my stuff a lot and now it's like I’m not there anymore, I’ve sort of like capped out. When I do post I’ll get several hundred likes if it's something like a picture of me, which sounds horrible, but if it’s a picture of a little boy I’m doing a story on and I write a blurb about the story then I’ll get like 20 likes. So I’ve been very frustrated with that. So I have been trying to experiment and post all different kind of things on my name removed station name removed. As far as the station name goes, I do all and anything that will make people click, as well as anything I think is really information they need to know. You know, the things that they need to know on Saturdays, which is always, we have tons of stuff going on so we will try to give good information, but also things I know they will click on. Sounds kinda bad now that I look at it that way, like business, but you know, but we want people to be on our website. Looking at our website. So I try to do a combination of fun interesting things, as well as information that they need to know.
LD: And so what kind of training do you have on and how to do this coming into the job?

I didn’t have any I mean name removed, she is so interesting as far as she knows so much and I feel like she studied a lot so I’ll occasionally ask her so I’ll say, "I noticed these types of posts aren’t doing well." Like anytime I do anything about real news, it just doesn’t do well. If I do things about fun news it does and as a journalist I have some issue with that and it’s kinda like what I was talking about the reporter name removed page, I’m not going to sit here and post selfies all day even though I know that's going to be a thousand likes, like you know I’m not going to do that. I just try to think of ways to make people care I guess. We will talk about that and we'll talk about video and pictures. She does a lot of unique ways like she will capitalize things certain words and I just try to leave it as a cliffhanger so that way I know you'll really go read.

LD: So are you trying to drive people to the web story or to the actual T.V story then?

The web, yea. Cause the way Facebook is, I tease more on Twitter because Facebook it could come up on your feed at any time and you already missed the show. So it's so weird, you know. Its one of those things I love your about your thesis on it because its like it’s the weirdest thing. I also another reason that I use it a lot is because I contact people for stories and when I had my page, I was my own friend, it was so easy. I could message them and now I cannot message anyone that's not a page. So now I cant message a random, if I wanted to message you about a story I couldn’t do that.

LD: So what do you use, do you have your own personal account?

Yeah I do, I have done that for the very rare, just because I don’t…

LD: That’s opening a door you don’t want to open

I don't use my last name so my last name is on that page, you know my family 5:40 I just don’t even want to go there.

LD: So you keep your private and your professional social presence pretty different?

Yeah, separate.

LD: So in situations when you need to get a like I noticed a lot during the morning meeting, its like peoples stories peoples stories, how do you find these people to be in your peoples stories?

Yeah, they, nowadays, because I do anchor a little bit more it hasn’t quite really been an issue I guess just in the past since I started anchoring more, but umm they mostly just contact me and if they contact me I can interact really well, but if they, I cant reach out to them like I used to be able to and now I have to go through more Nexus Lexis like that
kind of avenue. Or I think I can, I forget what I did last time, maybe I wrote on their wall or something like hey can you message me? I hate that, but...

LD: Do you ever try Twitter?

Yes, people here do not like Twitter as much as Facebook, you’ll find that. It’s a different viewer. I feel like every time I do anything on Twitter, it’s only news people responding or interacting and Facebook they’re actually homegrown our viewers.

LD: So how well do you understand your people, who live here in the community?

I feel like I understand them because I grew up near here in Alabama and so I see actual friends and I see and then I see viewers. And they always identify themselves as viewers, you know what I mean, they'll say, "hey I watch you at noon." Hey I watch you on the weekends or I saw this story you did or I know you do franchise removed. So that’s how I know I can distinguish if they are actual viewers or just those robots or whatever because we will have on Twitter we will have a lot of people from outside the viewing area who are I guess obsessed with news people so there is those people that I can genially tell they are not interested and I can tell what my people are actually interested in or what they need to know and they love Facebook. They love to just sit on it and just comment laughs on any or anything that is happening in their lives

LD: How have any of those comments led you to stories 8:17 or if you could tell me an instance you really liked or really didn’t like happened?

That’s hard, umm the best way I've found is to keep up with people so I cant really think of an example of where, I mean its definitely happened, but I cant right off the top of my head of an example. But I will friend them after I did a story and that would be my way to keep up with them. I could see how the story progressed. If someone, if the story took a turn. One example I can think of, we had a little kid who had a terrible disease and we did a story about him and his service dog and then his air conditioner units got stolen and his van got stolen and all this stuff he needed for his illness and so that turned into a story and then we did this whole, I think I found that on Facebook, and then we did this whole thing to get all his stuff back and the community responded and I feel like it was very Facebook-y, you know, it all happened because of that, it was interesting

LD: yeah that’s a very interesting story

Yeah its umm name removed is his name and his dog was named name removed I remember that, yes name removed and so that was really nice. I was able to ok I did a story about you going on this trip and then one year later they will say something like because of the trip we went on and we were like oh that’s a great follow up, so that’s usually really helpful and that’s not something they even reached out to me about, I just saw it and sometimes they will remember to reach out to me.

LD: When you’re out reporting specifically when in your day do you start posting?
Reporting. I am not as good about it.

LD: It's more anchoring?

Yeah because I have more time. On the weekends I have time because I put a lot of effort into it. On Facebook so what I sort of do on Facebook is I do everything sort of after the fact and on Twitter I sort of do as its happening. So if I'm on a scene of something I'll tweet constantly as soon as something happens but like a day like today where it's very sort of I’m not really even sure what I'm doing yet. I’m not going to post anything right now. I have this thing about, I know our competition is looking at it and I’m not just always going to post everything every single thing they want to see because as soon as you out that angle on up there, they do it, they literally do everything we do.

LD: I reported Monday and I found a local lady running in the Boston Marathon and I was so proud I found her myself but I was like I don’t want to put any of this on social media because they are just going to reach out and do it too and its so frustrating trying to find that balance like...

You just don’t want to give it all away and I have the debate where is it something people need to know right now and I’m not going to worry about the competition because I do not care but if it is something kinda enterprisey or like you said Boston Marathon that day you know maybe they haven’t thought about yet and I don’t want to help them think of it.

LD: Absolutely.

But yes I definitely post more of web articles on Facebook, things that have already happened so less as it's happening, just because I’ve seen how Facebook is and I'll post and it'll pop up three days later and it wouldn’t even be relevant if it was something on the scene or something.

LD: Yeah especially with them changing algorithms you never really know when it's going to pop up. Well there’s all the official questions I have for you, is there anything else you can think of um actually one question, can you think of what’s your favorite story you’ve done in the last like couple months?

Couples months, let's see. I do so many stories, let me just think. So I do franchise removed. I like that one a lot. We’ll just go with this one. So did this story about a dog who lives in a nursing home and who has become literally a member of their family. He just loves on them and they look forward to him everyday and you know sometimes with elderly people, they really treat him like he is a human. It turns out he is dying of cancer. So they've all raised, they were all raising money. They did like a little bake sale and like all this stuff to make sure that they saved the dog. He's getting treatment. I don't actually know how he's doing right this second. At the time, it was just so neat to see that interaction.
LD: Is franchise name removed a franchise? Can you tell me about that?

So biweekly or so in the months of February, May, July and November every week. It is a segment that I do where I focus on volunteers in the community. Just people helping people. In this case it was a dog helping. It's very fluid. And yeah, it's pretty cool. It's just all different ways, just because here, this place as you an tell branding removed. We do just a lot of those community type stories and those are the kind, honestly, that people here want to see. That's kind of what they want.

LD: Is that something that attracted you - how long have you been here?

Four years. Definitely. Yes. Definitely. That's just me. I feel like, if I'm going to have a better day if I get to do a story like that versus if I get to do a story. I don't mind doing hard news or whatever or the legislative session, like I'm doing that, but it's just not, I'd much rather do the fun storytelling stories.

LD: Where did you come from before this?

I spent two years in Panama City, Florida.

LD: Then you came here?

Yup.

LD: Is there anything else you can think of in terms of your social media?

Social media. It's a beast that has now become such a major part of our job and I don't know if it's for the better.

LD: It's hard to tell sometimes.

It's hard to tell. At the same time I can't imagine not having it. It's a mixed emotion about it for sure.

LD: You're not alone.

It created her job. If you think about it like that, it's a great thing and the fact that people are, feel comfortable reaching out to us in that way. People who would never call us would write us and so I like that, but I also don't like the pressure of oh you have to post every hour or you have to do it. news director name removed doesn't do that. Nobody does that here. I still feel it because I hear about it. I know that I need to have more posts and I need to be more engaged.

LD: Great. That's all I have for you.
Reporter

It's name removed. I'm a multimedia journalist here at station name removed and basically just a reporter who shoots his own stuff, does all his own everything.

LD: And how long have you been in this market?

About a year and half now.

LD: Is this your first or second job out of school?

It's my second job out of school.

LD: Where were you before?

Quincy, Illinois. It's right where Illinois meets Missouri meets Iowa.

LD: Right. Right. Which social platforms are you using?

Oh gosh, in college they trained us to use every single platform we could from Gravator to Twitter. Mainly for this job probably Facebook and Twitter and sometimes Instagram. But Instagram is kind of — not as used. Not as easy to get stories or reach out to people as much. But Twitter is a big one. Tweeting back and forth with the station. Tweeting with people who are watching. A lot of people have questions for us and they'll tweet at us. "What's this little edition to the story?" You can either go to the website to find out or I can tweet the information back to them.

LD: Are you saying that people will tweet you questions?

Yeah.

LD: To you specifically?

Yeah. All of our Twitter handles have station name removed in them. It makes it easier. I think for people. It makes it easier I think then. It's just kind of a company thing. Basically, people can, if they see us out live at a scene, they have questions like "Oh my gosh, is this road blocked up?" or anything like that. They could tweet at us and be like, "well what do you think? Do you think this road is blocked up?" I could say, "you can find a map of road closures on our website" or I can just tell them straight up, "this is what the scene looks like." And it's just a good way to keep in touch with people beyond just what we're saying on air.

LD: How often does that happen?

It happens a lot more on live broadcasts or if it's something breaking. We'll get a lot of that especially if it's something the whole community is really getting involved in. I can't
put a number to the amount of times it happens. Sometimes it's really slow and there will be a month when I don't have anyone tweeting at me and other times it's very, very good way to get in touch with people.

LD: What are some of the ways you come up with the story ideas you pitch for the newscast?

A lot of it is being out and about and I'll hear different story ideas like just yesterday or two days ago, I was doing one story and I ran into these two people who were running along the side of the river. One was in a wheelchair and the other was pushing her. I asked what they were doing and they'd run half marathons worth of miles just by the riverbed. "Were just, we do this for handicap people. We do this in honor of people." So it's like I just run into a story like that opposed to waiting for someone to come tell me. Getting out there helps a lot. There's also people Facebook message, some of us have a professional Facebook page. People can send messages directly so we don't have to look in our other inbox that a normal Facebook page would have. That's also just keeping an eye on other out, different newspapers and stations around just to see if we missed anything. Sometimes you can see something from a local paper that nobody really knows about and you could turn it into something bigger just because TV is a whole different outlet than newspapers and it can be more visual.

LD: Do you have your Facebook page pulled up?

I can. It's kind of slower on Facebook than on Twitter. Like today, I tweeted out just a picture of some of the horses that...

LD: OK. You were on the horse story...

The rescue removed getting in 55 horses and basically taking 22 of them here to region removed. And, so yeah, getting pictures out there is an important thing. On our Facebook page it's the station's Facebook page we posted about six different screen captures from it. It shows something that people wouldn't normally see just from imaging it? Just from us saying this is an issue. We can actually show them. This is what, you can see these horses ribcages. You can tell they're in horrible conditions. This is what's being done to fix it so that people kind of react more to that and get involved. It's all about involvement is what it seems like. But yeah, this is, I have it linked up to my Instagram and my Twitter and Facebook page so a lot of times I don't have to keep reposting. I can post on one thing.

LD: It'll cut down on the work?

Not that it's too much work, but yeah, it's easier to kind of reach people quicker.

LD: Do you mind scrolling through your Twitter?

Yeah.
LD: Thanks.

My Twitter page: I still struggle trying to figure out who are the best people to follow because there's something new that pops up everyday and I just get addicted to the "who to follow" section. It's really a good sense of news, just following. Recent times, a lot of police departments and sheriff's offices around here have jumped on Twitter and it's a great place for them to post interesting video or crazy things going on if they want support to come here. It's just evolving everything for us. It's ever evolving; the internet changes it I guess. Let's see if there's anything interesting on here. There's a lot of good things for sports. *Local university name removed* - you can keep track of the *university removed* pretty well. Weather. Whether it's our weather, we post the radar on there. It's very easy for people to scroll through and see it.

LD: What do they expect you to do throughout your shift in terms of social media?

This station - they don't have too much on the expectations of like they don't say, "you have to tweet this many times." "You have to do this." When you do that, it's not as natural. It ends up just being oh I'm just tweeting out this detail just to be done for the day. This is like we can tweet out something interesting that we think people would want to see as opposed to...

LD: Like a quality of quantity kind of thing?

Our regular station twitter is very much on top of it. We post a lot, but we post things that everyone gets involved in. I can tell, just as a reporter out on the scene. I'll see things. I'll be sitting out there waiting for an interview and I'll go through our Twitter and be like, "oh that's interesting to know. That bill passed." It's such a quick way to get all our information. Today I posted the horse picture. *station name* reposted it. I got three followers just from the quick post about a picture of a horse; a number of retweets and favorites. Sometimes it's more, sometimes it's not that much. Like today, it's just a few, but if I'm out on a fire people, we'll tweet out, *station removed* will tweet out follow *name removed* for, if you want to learn more about this as it goes. We're expected to tweet out updates throughout the whole thing.

LD: How difficult do you find it is as an MMJ specially to incorporate all of this into the everyday flow?

There are some days where I don't even want to deal with it, but there are, I know it's an important thing. When it's something like breaking news, we'll make sure to use, but as an MMJ, like you said, we're running around, using the camera, worrying about when we're going to get back and edit. We have to drive around ourselves. It's not a whole lot of time in the day to think, to do something like that. Sometimes you can just make it work. Like I said, having in mind if you think it's something other people will be interested in makes it easier to do it as opposed to feeling like "ah, I need to tweet. It's already 3 o'clock." It makes it easier to go ahead and find something to talk about.
LD: Makes sense. Do you find or can you tell me about when I time when you were just like, "I just can't. I can't do it right now." 8:34

There's a lot of days where I'm just crunched for time. I'm trying to think - yesterday I was waiting on an interview from the school system, the local school system. They didn't get back to me. They weren't able to do it until 4 o'clock so a lot of the day was waiting. I don't even know what my information is going to be until 4 o'clock in the afternoon and I have to turn it for the 5 and 6. It's more just scurrying sometimes then being able to, you want to move fast to get the product on air to look as best as it could as opposed to worrying about other things. Not to say that Internet is less important, but sometimes it'll come second fiddle to whatever is going to be going on air. Just so I make sure I get something on there.

LD: Shifting gears a little bit — how do you typically maintain your relationships with your sources?

I just try and keep in touch with them every once and awhile.

LD: Just like shoot them an email or how do you?

I can shoot them a text even. People are very good about texting. That's something that surprised me in this market. And we have a work phone so we don't have to give out our real numbers in case, I don't know, in case someone doesn't like you anymore after you do a story that makes them go story.

LD: What do you say?

You can just say, "Hey, I'm just checking in to see if there's anything interesting going on in your neck of the woods. Hope all is well." Anything like that. Sometimes you can call. Sometimes you can email. A lot of the times they'll just come to you they know you're their source and they'll just keep calling you and let you know things that you think will be interesting. They don't necessarily want to go on air, but they just say, "Hey, you should check this out."

LD: What's your biggest goal for the next couple of months in terms of your growth on social media?

I still feel like I have a lot to learn about social media. Just a way to really capture interest from people is - I really did a fundraiser and sometimes you feel like you can put it out on Twitter and a lot of people will bite into it, but there's more to it. I want to kind of master a way to capture more interest on Twitter besides just throwing out interesting facts from the day. It's just a lot of communication and doing that, like you said, as an MMJ can get — sometimes you forget. You don't even think about it.

LD: Essentially you want to communicate more? You want to do more of the conversation not just one way?
I want some more reciprocation from the other side. And like I said, sometimes it comes in big time with breaking news, but it'd be kind of cool but it'd be kind of cool to have people wondering about a story I think is really interesting I'll go out there and say, "this is something cool I learned about today. What do you think?" Sometimes people will like it or they'll say, "Oh that awesome." But it doesn't happen as often as we'd all hope. So just capturing interest I guess.

LD: Is there anything else you want to add?

I think that's it for me.