



# NEWS \$ VALUE

ADVERTISING AND SUBSCRIPTIONS HAVE PAID FOR NEWSPAPERS IN THE PAST, BUT WITH THAT MODEL ON THE WANE, WHAT WILL FUND JOURNALISM IN THE FUTURE?

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**IN THE DIGITAL AGE**, carving slogans — even seemingly timeless ones — on the wall might come back to bite you. Case in point: Inside the rotunda of the School of Journalism’s Lee Hills Hall is the statement that “Advertising is the fuel of free enterprise and a free press.” Although the 1995 building is still new by institutional standards, the advertising-as-fuel analogy is starting to look old-fashioned when it comes to the press. Advertising in newspapers is down, many papers have closed, and remaining news staffs are shrinking. The U.S. press, while still free, is much diminished in its ability to protect citizens’ freedoms, says Charles Davis, associate professor of journalism and winner of a 2010 John Aubuchon Freedom of the Press Award.

Part of the problem is what Davis describes as a historically lucrative but structurally unsustainable relationship between newspapers and advertisers. “For the past century, the costs of producing journalism largely have been borne by advertisers, not consumers of news.” Subscriptions and single-copy sales pay just 10 percent to 20 percent of the tab for a news operation. “Advertisers don’t have a dog in the fight, but they paid for journalism because they wanted to reach the audience.” Other industries don’t work that way, Davis says: If Levi’s wants to market jeans, the company doesn’t sell advertising to somebody else to subsidize the enterprise.

Advertisers need newspapers less and less because they have other more precise ways of reaching consumers, says Mike Jenner, Houston Harte Chair in Journalism. Online ads for news sites pay less than print ads partly because advertisers think they are less effective and because they know it costs less to deliver news online. To compound the problem, he says, subscribing to a newspaper is no longer a standard feature of family life, and many people get all the news they want for free online.

Perhaps the carving in Lee Hills Hall will need revision at some point. Although advertising still largely supports the

remaining newspapers, the fuel supply is dwindling. Nobody is sure how journalism will be funded in the future, but some faculty members at the J-School and fellows at the Reynolds Journalism Institute seem to agree that people who want news will have to pay for it.

Here’s a look at a few ideas for funding journalism.



### SO WHAT?

**BUT FIRST A WORD** — commercial message of sorts — on behalf of journalism itself. Davis says the profession needs to answer a key question: Why should anyone care if journalism is on the economic rocks? “No business does a poorer job defining, explaining and promoting itself than journalism,” he says. Yet the profession serves critical functions.

For instance: Stories by the *Los Angeles Times* helped lead to charges being filed in September 2010 against eight city officials in Bell, Calif., who allegedly misappropriated \$5.5 million from the working-class suburb. “The officials were paying themselves enormous amounts of money through fraudulent means and were doing so in a matter-of-fact way because nobody had been paying attention,” Davis says. It costs money to have a seasoned professional looking in on institutions of government, and it costs lots of money to produce investigative reports, Davis says. “The Bell scenario occurred because not even a beginning reporter could be spared to drop in on city council meetings on a regular basis.”

This story is just one example of journalism’s value. Traditionally, editors have decided where to send reporters and which stories reach the public. Although journalists have always relied on tips from citizens, they spend much of their time looking out for the public good according to their own guidelines. For instance, many journalists believe their profession should be a watchdog on government, Davis says. “The three branches of government were set up to carry out their own functions, not to keep

an eye on each other. The press is set up for that — hence the fourth estate, the eyes and ears making sure government is functioning properly and raising Cain if not.”



### STRENGTH IN NUMBERS

**THE JOURNALISM** school’s *Columbia Missourian* newspaper is known as a hands-on lab in which student journalists gain experience, but it’s also a testing ground for journalistic innovations, such as using crowd funding as a way to pay for news. One such idea is called Kachingle, which eventually could offer the masses a way to make small donations to news sites. Participants can visit sites they want to support and click on a Kachingle button, which triggers a donation to that site. Paypal gets 7 percent of the transaction, Kachingle gets 8 percent, and the favored sites split the rest. “You might think of it as the tip jar at your local coffee shop,” writes *Missourian* Executive Editor Tom Warhover. For the time being, Warhover has modest expectations for the brand-new Kachingle. “The Kachingle member sites aren’t exactly rolling in dough. Think tens of dollars in contributions, not hundreds or thousands.”

Spot.us is another crowd funding idea — further along in its development — that could help pay for certain kinds of journalistic projects. Founder David Cohn, an RJI fellow and former technology reporter for *Wired*, borrowed an approach from humanitarian groups such as kiva.org that let donors specify the recipients of their money. For instance, a kiva.org lender could send \$25 to a particular aspiring entrepreneur in, say, an African village. At spot.us, writers, photographers and organizations post proposed projects and budgets on the site. Visitors read the “pitches” and can donate money to particular projects. Once donations cover the budget, the project gets under way.

The site launched late in 2008 with a \$300,000 grant from the Knight Foundation. Since then, donors have funded 165 projects with about \$250,000 in gifts. Project budgets





## iSOCIAL STUDIES

On your daily travels through office halls, grocery aisles or traffic jams, you might interpret thousands of facial expressions. But how would you react if a passerby suddenly seemed angry or hostile? Although children with autism sometimes struggle to discern mood from facial expression, a new virtual learning environment is helping.

Developed by Janine Stichter, professor of education, and Jim Laffey, professor of information science and learning technologies, iSocial is a 3-D virtual world that allows students who may not have access to traditional face-to-face social competence instruction to experience learning with others online.

“A lot of our individuals [with autism], despite having normal or above-normal IQs, tend to only recognize facial expressions or emotions that represent angry or happy — a pretty stark continuum,” Stichter says. “If you give them an inquisitive look, they may misperceive it as angry.”

Recognizing facial expressions is just one unit of the program’s curriculum designed to increase social competency. Others include sharing ideas, conversation pragmatics and problem solving. It’s based on Stichter’s face-to-face curriculum, which has demonstrated significant improvement for students across multiple measures based on parent and teacher review.

Graphically, the 3-D learning environment has been compared to popular games such as *Second Life* and *The Sims*. It’s a hit with research participants, and iSocial will debut in Columbia’s middle schools and junior highs in fall 2011.

“Oftentimes school districts with limited resources, including more rural communities, don’t have access to face-to-face programming in group formats,” Stichter says. “iSocial provides this opportunity.” ■

## IMAGINE DEMOCRACY

Political debate, central to any healthy democracy, is alive and well in this country. But to many Americans, today’s media pundits from the left and right are acerbic, having lost any semblance of civility. The rhetoric seems increasingly polarizing, which can be paralyzing.

“People seem to be at each other’s throats,” says Randall Smith, professor and Donald W. Reynolds endowed chair of business journalism. “We’re trying to encourage civil conversations through a number of different communication methods.”

Enter the DemocracyChannel, a multi-platform media project and Mizzou Advantage grant-winner headed by Smith.

A two-pronged approach, the DemocracyChannel project will begin with a documentary by filmmakers Harry Wiland and Dale Bell, co-CEOs of the Media Policy Center in Santa Monica, Calif. Film crews will retrace and build upon Alexis de Tocqueville’s 19th-century journeys across America in search of democracy — from a 2011 perspective.

The project also seeks to become a confluence of “digital tributaries” available online and to cable providers worldwide, while offering a learning environment for Mizzou journalism and business students on the production side.

Programming ideas include civic education shows for young people, a program focusing on the Constitution’s upcoming 225th birthday and other C-SPAN-meets-The-History-Channel type shows.

“We want to do this during a presidential election year [2012], hoping that we can play a role in beginning to turn the conversation in the U.S. to a more civil one,” Smith says. “It’s a big dream.” ■



## READING WITH YOUR EARS

Podcast fans enjoy the medium’s ability to provide fresh information that is easily consumed during a

morning workout or daily commute — like an aural sports drink or espresso. Elizabeth Baker, associate professor in the College of Education, hosts *Voice of Literacy*, which covers new

literacy education research. Posted the first and third Monday of every month from September to April, the podcasts feature Baker interviewing researchers from around the country to update

educators and graduate students, and she does it all with a refreshing sense of humor. It is available via iTunes, Facebook, Twitter and at [voiceofliteracy.org](http://voiceofliteracy.org), the podcast website.

“We are trying to keep not only graduate students updated but also literacy researchers, teachers, parents, principals, policymakers and journalists,” Baker says. ■

## HAPPY TO BE APPY

Tyten Teegarden has plenty of corner-office light to keep his Appy Award glistening for a while. He earned the engraved crystal block — which honors talented mobile device application developers — for his work on newsy.com's iPad app. It's a virtual outpost for topical news video segments, and now it's up for a Webby Award, too.

"The Webbys are basically the Academy Awards for the Internet," says Teegarden, BS '10.

The computer engineer honed his collaborative tech skills in the College of Engineering's app development class.

"It focused on developing software from

scratch for a real-world client," Teegarden says. "In other courses, I had been presented with case scenarios but never the opportunity to see through a product from start to finish."

The course blends responsibilities between journalism students, who lead the marketing and communication aspects of the project, and computer science students, who handle most of the programming. Ultimately, however, everyone participates in all phases.

"The J-School students I was paired with did a really good job working with the client, brainstorming and developing graphical resources," Teegarden says.

Teegarden's team created the official iPhone app for the 2010 True/False Film Fest,

which featured documentary summaries and corresponding map points for theater locations on the festival's timeline. T/F loved the product, so they hired him to update it in 2011.

Other class projects have included applications for Columbia Regional Economic Development Inc. (REDI), everythingmidmo.com, the Missouri Department of Transportation, a North Dakota TV station and MU School of Journalism alumni — all coming soon. |||

# NEWSY

The News With More Views





Photo by Nicholas Benner

## NEWS BY THE BLOCK

Adrian Holovaty, BJ '01, has found perhaps the smallest way to slice up the news pie.

While several media organizations have experimented with hyper-local neighborhood coverage, Holovaty's innovation offers news by the city block. The website [everyblock.com](http://everyblock.com), which he launched in 2008 and sold to [msnbc.com](http://msnbc.com) in 2009, keeps residents informed of crime, real estate listings, business permits, media coverage, photos and blogs specific to their geographic location. The site serves every block in 16 major cities, adding up to more than a million different news feeds.

"Most people who use our service sign up to get our daily email early in the morning that has everything we've found around their block the previous day," says Holovaty, who uses the site to keep informed about his own Chicago block. "I like keeping track of what homes have gone on the market and new meetings happening in the neighborhood. I find out about new restaurants and learned of a building permit for a new health club—all stuff that shows up on [everyblock.com](http://everyblock.com) before it

gets mainstream media coverage."

When Holovaty started looking at data through a geographic lens, it was a mere hobby. He was working as a Web developer for the *Lawrence (Kan.) Journal World* but living in Chicago, where he realized there was no easy way to see neighborhood crime rates. Just for fun on evenings and weekends, he built [chicagocrime.org](http://chicagocrime.org), which plotted police reports on a Google Map.

"I found that the Chicago Police Department's website had a bunch of crime data, but it wasn't represented in a very easy-to-read way," he says. "I wrote a couple programs that grabbed the data from that website automatically. At the time, there wasn't an official way of putting Google Maps on your own website. It took some reverse engineering and hacking Google Maps to make it work. Initially, I didn't even put my name on the site because I was a little scared I'd get in trouble with Google."

A couple months later, however, Google released legitimate software to give other programmers the ability to mesh data with maps. Holovaty was hailed as creating one of the Web's first "mashups" and won the 2005 Batten Award for Innovations in Journalism for [chicagocrime.org](http://chicagocrime.org).

At age 24, Holovaty became

the editor of editorial innovations at *The Washington Post*. Then, wanting to expand [chicagocrime.org](http://chicagocrime.org), he won a \$1.1 million grant from the Knight Foundation to start what would become [everyblock.com](http://everyblock.com). The funding allowed him to work on the project full time.

The site started as an aggregator that relied on government agency data, such as building permits and restaurant inspections. The six-employee staff also crawled the Web for local news stories, Flickr photos, Craigslist lost-and-found postings and business reviews. In March 2011, [everyblock.com](http://everyblock.com) adopted a new design that promotes discussion among neighbors. Its aim is to create a network for people who live near one another but might not have met. The site's new mission is to help people make their blocks better places to live.

"The redesign changed the focus of the site to be less about one-way flow of information and more about tools that help you post and contribute information to your neighbors," Holovaty explains.

But critics have asked: Should a compilation of data be considered journalism? On May 21, 2009, Holovaty posted his stance on his blog:

**From the North Center neighborhood of Chicago, Adrian Holovaty runs [everyblock.com](http://everyblock.com), which offers news by the city block in 16 cities.**

"Is data journalism? Is it journalism to publish a raw database? Here, at last, is the definitive, two-part answer: 1. Who cares? 2. I hope my competitors waste their time arguing about this as long as possible."

In the past two years, Holovaty thinks database journalism has become more accepted. The problem is that few journalists have the programming know-how to mine large sets of data and display them graphically.

However, Holovaty, a first-generation American and gypsy jazz guitarist, was drawn to computer science long before he became interested in journalism.

"I've always been into geeky stuff since I was a little kid," he says. "I always liked information, storing it and reading it. I think journalism is an appropriate field for me because I love getting, collecting and organizing information, which also goes along with being a computer geek. There's more to journalism than writing articles. [Everyblock.com](http://everyblock.com) is providing an information service, which is just as useful." ■

# PAPER PRESERVERS

**I**n the 1960s, Philip Graham described journalism as “the first draft of history.” Although the famous phrase by the former co-owner of *The Washington Post* alludes to the importance of preserving news, current archival methods provide little assurance — if any — that modern journalism will be accessible to citizens, researchers, historians and genealogists in the future.

“The scary part is that many little communities rely on those archives; it’s their culture,” says Dorothy Carner, head of MU Journalism Libraries. She and a team of MU faculty won a Mizzou Advantage grant that brought together various stakeholders to discuss preservation challenges and potential solutions. MU Libraries and the Reynolds Journalism Institute provided additional funding for the April 2011 conference, which attracted newspaper representatives, copyright experts, scholars who rely on newspaper research, commercial vendors, and stewardship organizations such as libraries and museums.

A major concern has been what happens to the archives of newspapers that go out of business. In the past three years, more than 160 newspapers either closed or stopped publishing print issues, and many of their archives are now untouchable. E.W. Scripps, for example, gave the *Rocky Mountain News*’ archives to the Denver Public Library, but until issues regard-

ing intellectual property rights are sorted out, the files remain inaccessible.

Carner says the solution could be something as simple as a metaphorical will outlining exactly what happens to a newspaper’s archives if the outlet ceases publication.

The other challenge is how to preserve digital content, including Web-only articles

and multimedia.

“Many think that if it’s on a computer, it’s digitally archived,” Carner says. “But in five years, we won’t have the same hardware or software, and much of that content may not be readable.”

Because of copyrights, newspaper companies are largely against having an institution such as the Library of Congress use software to capture their website content. Therefore, part of the conference focused on

incentives for commercial entities to invest in their own archival preservation.

Carner hopes this will just be the first of several meetings to help hash out these issues.

“By bringing everyone together, we hope to build trust, let everyone express their reservations and fears, and come up with some common ground,” Carner says. “I think the Missouri School of Journalism should be the hub for conversations like this.” ■



Illustration by Blake Dinsdale