

Let's Collab: Exploring What Makes Collaborations in Public Media Newsrooms
Succeed (or Fail)

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Table of Contents

| | |
|---|----|
| Acknowledgements | ii |
| Chapter 1: Introduction | 1 |
| Chapter 2: Literature Review | 3 |
| Chapter 3: Professional Analysis | 11 |
| Appendix I: Weekly Field Notes | 17 |
| Appendix II: Story clips, scripts, records requests | 32 |
| Appendix III: Self-evaluation | 49 |
| Appendix IV: Original Proposal | 51 |

Introduction

Collaboration is more important than ever in journalism. More than 1,300 U.S. communities have totally lost news coverage in their area, according to a 2018 study done at the University of North Carolina. Many have closed their doors as they struggle adapt to a new business model. Others have dramatically reduced staff and have scaled back local coverage as a result. Innovative collaborations across every journalistic medium have sprouted to attempt to increase coverage in a specific area or hone in on a topic. As Marina Walker Guevera, the executive of the Pulitzer Center told me during my investigative journalism class last spring, collaboration is the future of journalism.

Working on collaborative projects and partnerships throughout my time at Mizzou made me realize their capacity to shine a brighter light on important topics and utilize different newsrooms' resources to create efficiencies. Working at newspapers and a public radio station made it easier to navigate organizational differences. But still, there were challenges. While managing the KOMU-Missourian sports collaboration, there were often difficulties in navigating schedules between reporters in both newsrooms. The KOMU reporters had different class requirements than the Missourian reporters, who were solely dedicated to working on the project. Plus, it was difficult to create content that was original and meshed well between mediums.

Forming a new partnership and navigating different reporter routines was a headache — but when it worked, it felt like something new and innovative. Surely the organizational and logistical challenges I faced when leading the KOMU-Missourian partnership has been faced by many other outlets. It sparked my curiosity about how

newsrooms navigate those challenges, and what heightens a collaboration to be considered a success, and what challenges ultimately inhibited newsrooms from innovation. The more I paid attention to the public media landscape, the work of public radio collaborations.

My research aims to ask a simple question: What elements make a sustainable and successful collaboration? My hope for the project is to provide insight from editors to anyone who might want to start their own collaborative project in public media or another area in journalism.

Literature Review

Collaboration is the future of journalism. More and more, newsrooms are turning to collaborations to create efficiencies in news coverage and tell better stories. The San Francisco Chronicle coordinated with 80 news outlets in 2016 to publish stories focused on homelessness. For an entire week, outlets in the area produced around 300 videos, articles, radio shows and TV reports about the subject (Cooper 2016). The goal, it seemed, was to shine a bright light on one topic in order to explore a complex and widespread issue.

Collaborations at this scale are becoming more common. Take ProPublica's collaborative efforts, for example. Of note is Electionland, which provides newsrooms resources like data in order to help them cover issues of voting access and cybersecurity for the midterm elections. ProPublica is also doing a collaborative project called Documenting Hate, which is collecting and verifying reports of hate crimes and bias and giving them to journalists, researchers and civil rights organizations to use. The potential impact collaborative journalism can have is why researching the topic is important.

Collaborative efforts between newsrooms are also significant because they seem to have caught the attention of many newsrooms, investors, journalists and researchers. This is especially true for public media. The Corporation for Public Broadcasting, for example, has dedicated \$32 million in funding to 29 newsroom partnerships as of 2017 (Stonbely 2017). KCUR, a public radio station in Kansas City, recently received a \$1.9 million grant to lead a nationwide collaborative engagement project focusing on the U.S. 2020 presidential election (Vestal 2019). Journalists in more than 15 cities and researchers from three continents reached out to journalist Jean Friedman Rudovsky

about the model of her newsroom collaboration, “Broke in Philly,” which is a collaboration between 22 news outlets focusing on poverty in Philadelphia (Rudovsky, 2018).

The reason why newsroom collaborations are effective, Rudovsky’s argument is simple: newsrooms made of different perspectives and thoughts are more likely to produce journalism that is more reflective of their own communities, and it’s likely to reach more people because it creates a wider influence when reporting as a team rather than individually (Rudovsky). This reasoning seems to oppose a long-standing philosophy that news outlets are supposed to be the first one to the story and get scoops on stories other outlets don’t have. It also opposes the view that other outlets are competitors vying for reader’s/viewer’s/listener’s attention. Instead, collaboration takes a more utilitarian approach: vying for the greatest amount of an audience’s attention on an issue or topic.

The Hierarchy of Influences model is a commonly used theory for analyzing how newsrooms function and what influences news production in the proper context and has been previously applied to studies centered around fully converged newsrooms. However, there seems to be limited studies applied to collaborations specifically related to radio newsrooms, and the different levels of collaborations, which will be touched upon later in the literature review.

Using levels of analysis through Hierarchy of Influences theory will provide aid in order to understand how exactly newsroom collaborations work, and what influences ultimately drive how they work. As collaborative journalism begins to grow larger in the industry, it is important to understand the factors and influences that make them

successful. Using the Hierarchy of Influences theory and past studies of collaborations may help take steps forward in answering the following question:

RQ: What factors lead to success or failure for a public media newsroom collaboration?

Examining what elements create the most efficient and successful collaborations can give valuable insight to future newsroom leaders in creating future partnerships and in-depth journalism projects that incorporate some level of cross-newsroom work.

Hierarchy of Influences

Shoemaker and Reese came up with the theoretical framework of Hierarchy of Influences in 1996, and it's a way to analyze media based on "levels of influence" (Reese, 2001). According to Reese, the theoretical framework is designed to "help classify influences both separately and in conjunction with each other." The Hierarchy of Influences looks at media through five levels, from large to small: social systems, social institutions, media organizations, routine practices and individuals (Shoemaker and Reese, 2014). Here are the following levels and what they mean, from lowest to highest (Shoemaker and Reese 2014; Reese 2001; Ferrucci et. al. 2017):

- **Individual:** characteristics of the communicator such as attitudes and background.
- **Routines:** consistent everyday practices of communicator.
- **Organization:** how an organization like a news organization or entity influences the communicator, considers goals, policies and how power is enacted.
- **Social Institution:** organizations that influence outside of communicator organization like government.
- **Social System:** The larger cultural, ideological system that journalists work inside.

Reese says the hierarchy plays an important role in research that draws comparisons because "it can place the phenomena of interest within a structural

constraint” (Reese 2001). Hierarchy of Influences can examine, for example, different collaborations through the level of routine practices and individuals, and account for other forces in the hierarchy like media organization. As Shoemaker and Reese phrase it, the levels help analyze by keeping “different expressions of power into account: from the momentary and institutional to the systematic and societal” (Shoemaker and Reese.) Basically, the framework recognizes that there are more forces that influence a newsroom than the individuals and newsroom processes. While there certainly can be analysis primarily through certain levels, Shoemaker and Reese suggest that the hierarchy is more so “interconnected forces” rather than separate levels. Therefore, one must account for all levels of analysis when analyzing media, even if concentrating on a particular level for research.

Using the Hierarchy of Influences model will allow a researcher to analyze how these newly formed newsroom processes work — while acknowledging that there is more than one force that influences the production of the news. When conducting and analyzing interviews with the performance of a collaboration, a researcher can organize what they say into the hierarchy and then draw a well-rounded examination. The theoretical model has been applied to subjects such as converged newsrooms and TV partnerships (Ferrucci et al. 2017; Silcock and Keith 2006). While this theory hasn’t been used for collaborations often, it is a theoretical model often used to study newsrooms.

Studying collaborations & models

The Center for Cooperative Media has been studying this trend and has broken the kinds of news collaborations into six categories, which the headline indicates as a “revolution in media”: temporary and separate, temporary and co-creating, temporary and

integrated, ongoing and separate, ongoing and co-creating and ongoing and integrated (Murray, 2017). The taxonomy of the collaborations is based on two factors, according to the full report: the duration of the collaboration and the level of integration in the newsroom (Stonbely, 2017).

Most researchers seem to refer to collaborations as a “convergence.” Dailey et al. (2005) created, similar to Murray, a way to define a collaboration. For Dailey et al., it is defined by the level of involvement: from mere cross-promotion and cloning of a partner’s work to a fully converged newsroom where employees from different newsrooms are utilized based on strength of medium to tell a multimedia story (Dailey et al.). This study will approach the phrase “convergence” as a scale to study collaboration.

The larger impact of collaborations might be glimpsed through recent investigative collaborations like the Panama Papers and may hold implications for the industry as collaborative efforts increase. Singer (2018) identified a change in investigative journalism: a shift away from competitive newsrooms, to investigations done across several. The study concludes that the benefit of collaboration is a way to navigate “economic conditions” of newsrooms, with the ability to share costs, increase reach, an increased ability to set the news agenda and to tackle complex topics like the Panama Papers (Singer).

Collaborations may be a way to work on investigations in an age of declining newsrooms, and with news deserts. While the author acknowledges some potential consequences of investigative collaborations downsides like a “diversity in story targets,” the study ultimately recognizes the positive potential of collaborative investigative work may be ways for newsrooms to navigate organizational difficulties (Singer).

Collaborations and challenges

Ferrucci et al. (2017) studied the changes of roles journalists at St. Louis Public Radio and St. Louis Beacon had when the two newsrooms merged into one, and it mainly focuses on routine level of communication in the newsroom. The Beacon was a nonprofit digital newsroom primarily full of former newspaper reporters, and it paired with a newsroom that mostly produced news to air on the radio (Ferrucci et al.). One of the disadvantages of the merger, journalists said, was that it created an overall larger organization with a hierarchy of power, which overall changed the communication in the newsroom between staff (Ferrucci et al).

What journalists found as a disadvantage of the merger was rooted within the organizational level of influence. The study also said the organizational structure ultimately changed the routines of the journalists, because they had to communicate differently and learn different skills based on the mediums of the two newsrooms (Ferrucci et al). Ferrucci et al. cites a study by Lowrey (2011) that asserts newsrooms struggle with innovation because of a “failure to adjust to changes” (p. 65).

The Ferrucci et al. study can be applied to any public media collaboration — and based on the struggles those journalists went through in a fully-converged collaboration, one might ask questions about organizational challenges and limitations in currently existing collaborations. While the collaborations in the literature review might not match the same kind of collaboration for public radio, surely the journalists have similar struggles in organizational or routine change. A collaboration with multiple stations participating, for example, might shift organization in the sense of power hierarchy, which would ultimately affect the journalist’s routines.

Silcock and Keith (2006) studied how newsrooms that implement convergence face challenges. They studied a collaboration with Tampa Tribune and WFLA-TV and the Arizona Republic with KPNX-TV, adopting the hierarchy of influences theory as a basis for research. One of the issues, similar to the Ferrucci et al. study, is a struggle of adapting to the different organizational differences of the newsroom. For example, there was a “language gap” between the two newsrooms on certain terms like “package” (Silcock and Keith). Even beyond a “language barrier” between the newsrooms, were culture clashes from differing routines and organizational pressures, such as the newspapers not trusting TV station routines, resulting in a partnership that “devolved” (Silcock and Keith).

Organizational and cultural challenges could be an underlying reason why at one point, newspaper and TV cross-promotional partnerships were a major roadblock, with one survey saying while 35 % of partnerships had been formed with TV stations, 13% ended the partnership (Dailey et al. 2009). The issues in TV and newspaper collaboration perhaps reinforces that collaborations may be particularly difficult with traditional newsrooms because of an established, organizational value of competition rather than cooperation, which in turn limits innovation (Paulussen 2011). Paulussen states that innovation might also be hindered by reluctant individuals who do not want to adopt new practices, perhaps sticking with previous organizational values and routines.

It’s important to keep in mind that this study was done in 2006, when newspaper and TV collaborations most commonly were cross-promotional (Dailey et al. 2005; Lowrey 2005). In a survey, more 200 newspapers responded and said cross-promotion was the most common form of collaboration (Lowrey). And while things might have

changed with what kinds of collaborations are most often occurring today, one can conclude that even at the most basic level of collaboration (cross-promotion), newsrooms can still have trouble navigating cultural and organizational differences. As collaborations between different types of news organizations continue to happen at varying levels or types, questions of navigating the cultural and organizational differences of the newsrooms will still be relevant.

While there are plenty of examples of TV-newspaper collaborations, there seems to be significant gaps in public radio collaborations, with exception of the Ferrucci et al. study. After reviewing the literature though, it is worth exploring how organizational and cultural challenges hinder innovation in collaborations.

Let's Collab: Exploring What Makes Collaborations in Public Media Newsrooms Succeed (or Fail)

More and more, newsrooms are choosing to collaborate to focus and expand coverage. These partnerships are becoming important with the decline of local news, which is leaving areas of the U.S. without a news source.

Public media is investing in collaborative efforts. The Corporation for Public Broadcasting has dedicated \$32 million in funding to 29 newsroom partnerships as of 2017, according to its website. The objective, it says, is to “fill the void in local ‘news deserts’ left by newspapers and other commercial media cutbacks” across the country. CPB continues to fund collaboration. Most recently, CPB funded a more than \$1 million regional collaboration between stations in Alabama, Louisiana and Mississippi. KCUR, a public radio station in Kansas City, received a \$1.9 million grant to lead a nationwide collaborative engagement project focusing on the U.S. 2020 presidential election.

The collaborative funding began in 2009, with a call for grant proposals to fund “local journalism centers” for two years to create multiplatform coverage of a specific topic like health or agriculture. Some LJsCs have lasted after the grant money ran out, like Harvest Public Media, based at the Kansas City station, KCUR. Others discontinued after the two-year CPB grant funding ran out.

Implementing an effective collaboration can prove difficult. It takes trust between station managers and reporters, good communication and a clear vision for the project. Eight current and former editors provided insights into what they see as the important elements of implementing and sustaining a collaboration.

The benefits of collaboration

Some of the most common examples of what has worked well about a collaboration was that it provided training for journalists and comprehensive coverage of a given topic across a large area. Jeff Young, the managing editor at the Ohio Valley ReSource collaborative, which reports on economic and social change across Kentucky, Ohio and West Virginia, said one success and innovation of the collaborative is that their reporting about the coal industry is getting published as a book, which will be released in 2020.

Holly Edgell, editor of the Sharing America collaborative based at St. Louis Public Radio, said a major strength was supporting local journalism in many different areas, as well as working on major projects that were national in scope.

Jeremy Bernfeld, the lead editor at the Guns & America collaboration based at WAMU in Washington DC, said a benefit of the collaboration is having a team that is laser focused on gun issues, which he says are incredibly complex and divisive. It also provides a support network to ask questions, and to contribute and build upon the work of others.

“We're able to do not just more work on gun issues, but better journalism on gun issues,” Bernfeld said.

The project, for example, made a project called “Shattered” which documented the lives of people after they were shot. The multimedia story has a web page designed through the online platform, Atavist.

Matthew Leonard, former editor of the collaboration Innovation Trail, which reported on the economy and technology in upstate New York, said the collaboration ended up training a lot of emerging journalists.

Communication

Communication is a key element of collaboration between newsrooms, because unlike a traditional working newsroom, collaborators aren't all sitting in the same room. Many are spread across several states. Side Effects Public Media, for example, is spread across six states.

Rachel Osier Lindley is the statewide senior editor for the Texas Hub at KERA in Dallas, a regional collaboration that links stations together and acts as a prototype for the effort to create a national virtual public radio newsroom. She said it's important to come up with a consistent and clear method of communication for how the team will communicate. Most editors said they communicated by regularly scheduled calls, and through the messaging app Slack.

“If you try to serve everyone's personal communication preference style, you will fail, because people will just be overwhelmed by all sorts of ... different little communication pokes throughout the day,” Osier Lindley said.

Donna Vestal, director of collaborations for the America Amplified collaboration based at KCUR and former executive editor of Harvest Public Media, agreed that it's important not to make communication overwhelming. She said they've always had a weekly call that news directors are invited to and aren't made to feel guilty if left unattended — but she said they're always clear about what was discussed and what decisions were made so editors have incentive to attend.

Your stations are your clients

Editors said there must be established expectations at the beginning of the formation of the partnership.

If expectations about outcomes and the finished products aren't discussed, each station might have differing ideas about what they want, resulting in lost time and effort, Osier Lindley said. Alisa Barba, former executive editor at the LJC Inside Energy, which reported on energy in Colorado, Wyoming and North Dakota, and now working at the America Amplified collaboration, said collaborators should be thought of as clients. "You have to make sure that the content that you're producing is what they are looking for," Barba said. "You have to be very, very clear about that, so that everybody has to be on the same page in terms of what that content is going to be."

Young said if stations aren't recognizing the benefit of the collaboration, or it becomes perceived as not worth the occasional hassle, it won't be sustainable in the long term. Bernfeld said if everyone can agree on a mission, how to do it and when to do it, the collaboration is more likely to succeed.

"If the partners are expecting one thing and delivered another, they're going to be disappointed," Bernfeld said. "If ... the collaboration is expecting one thing and the partners do another thing, they're going to be disappointed. So, everything works much better when you say this is what we expect to do. This is how we expect to do it. This is when we expect to do it."

Building trust is worth it

When a collaboration starts, relationships have to be built with not only the reporters, but also the other news directors and station leadership. The relationship has to be very honest, and face-to-face time is really important, Vestal said.

"And if you cannot get an honest answer to a question, like, 'What's not working for you?' If you can't get that answer ... it's never going to work," she said.

Dave Rosenthal, the editor at Side Effects Public Media, said there are scheduled meet-ups during the year to talk about the work everyone is doing, or at an annual health journalism conference.

Osier Lindley said their team does the same — at least once a year for reporters and quarterly for editors. and it has made a difference in coverage of breaking news. Osier Lindley said they have “summer camps” with trainings and classes, a cocktail hour the night before, so people can get to know each other. She said when the team was covering the Sutherland Springs church shooting in 2017, reporters were willing to jump in and help the overwhelmed station in San Antonio. She said it was a significant difference from how the team covered Hurricane Harvey and said meeting in person made a difference.

“You know, when breaking news events happen ... people are much more inclined to, you know, stick their neck out and jump in and help people when they feel like they have a personal relationship with them,” Osier Lindley said.

Have a plan once the money runs out

The money CPB gives out for collaboration grants only last for a limited amount of time. Several editors said there needs to be investment in the collaboration and planning for how it will continue after the funding ends. Barba said it’s critical to get the development teams at all the stations together, so they understand that it is something they need to raise money for moving forward. Leonard of Innovation Trail said getting marketing and social media engaged right away is also important. The business model should be thought about early, even before thinking about how many reporters the team

needs, he said. Innovation Trail went on after the CPB funding for five or six years, but said that was as long as it was able to be sustained.

Edgell said it's important to start this process early, and to have a plan for when the grant funding ends. "I kind of figured that out as I was sort of in the middle of year two. I was like, 'Oh, we don't really have a plan to continue what was some really good work,'" Edgell said.

Edgell said they plan to keep the brand of Sharing America and act as a consultant to other stations that want to continue or improve their coverage of race identity and culture.

Conclusion

There are clear benefits of collaborations, like pulling newsroom resources to dedicate coverage of a subject more extensively across the country or providing training for future journalists. However, it takes investment on all levels of the organization, planning for the future and good communication for the collaborations to continue when CPB grant funding runs out.

Appendix I: Weekly Field Notes

Week 1

Hello everyone,

I started working on my master's project this week, and will be sending a memo of my progress every Sunday. This week was shorter, mostly due to snow and having Monday off. However, I did make some good progress and I am excited to continue working.

Professional work

My first shift at the capitol went well. We started off with a tour of the statehouse, although I anticipate I will still get lost in those halls for at least a month. Then I covered two hearings, both focused on reducing gun violence. I wrote scripts for the news service, and an article for the Missouriian. My Wednesday shift, which is an all-day shift, was cancelled due to the weather. The first planning meeting for the mental health collaboration project was on Friday, over the phone (again, because of the pesky weather). I am excited to start working on it. While it's still unclear what exact story I will be pursuing, we agreed that have a Story Corps-style conversation series with students about mental health would be part of it.

Research

I made good progress on my research this week, and conducted interviews with two people: Donna Vestal of KCUR and Holly Edgell of St. Louis Public Radio/Sharing America. They both gave good insight. Donna in particular was really insightful, and said she would send me some additional documents/research about previous collaborative projects. She said some interesting things about navigating organizational differences and what makes a collaboration successful. I scheduled an interview with Jeremy Bernfeld of WAMU/Guns & America. I am looking forward to that conversation.

Difficulties/need help with

Still figuring out a way to record in the capitol, without echoes or other sound interference. Mark said he is investing in some more equipment, so I'm sure this issue will be solved soon.

While the meeting for mental health was exciting, I had difficulty hearing the teleconference. Still need to be shared on the document of the story ideas on google drive to determine how I might be able to contribute to the stories we are pursuing.

Let me know if anyone comes to mind who is involved in public media collaborations that might be good to speak to for my research. Ryan gave me some good suggestions during an impromptu meeting last week.

This week

I will attend a beat meeting for state government, and hopefully get some ideas for enterprise stories to pursue. I will work daily shifts on Tuesday and Wednesday (if weather doesn't get in the way again). I am going to schedule meetings with Becky Smith and Sebastian Martinez Valdivia to talk about mental health reporting and brainstorm ideas. I am also going to research to see if I can find any students who are telling stories/complaining about problems with mental health treatment by MU (or any university). Looking specifically for people who the system failed, either because of long wait times, cutting services, professors who failed to give accommodations, etc. Will also look for forums/avenues to distribute the mental health survey. Will do some transcribing on interviews for research, and have my interview with Jeremy on Thursday, 9 a.m. Will send emails to a few others to schedule research interviews. Also, I'm going to a luncheon at the governor's mansion on Thursday. That should be exciting.

That's all for now.

Thanks,

Seth Bodine

Week 2

Professional work

I attended the first government beat meeting, and I met with Mark about the enterprise stories I'm interested in covering. I'm now doing preliminary reporting on how people with misdemeanor domestic abuse charges can still obtain guns in Missouri, and how lawmakers have been bringing it up each year but haven't been able to pass it. My goal is to finish reporting for that in the next two weeks. I did daily reporting on Tuesday and Wednesday (although some snow got in the way in the morning). Daily reporting at the capitol is already starting to become easier. I'm still working on writing scripts faster and on deadline, but that will probably change in the next few weeks.

For the mental health project, I've been doing preliminary research to see if there are complaints about the mental health system at Mizzou, and at other universities. I found that the most common story is about waitlists, which is what I expected. Waitlists pose a problem for students who need immediate care, or who are facing suicide or self-harm ideation. Mark directed me to try to reach out to some of the people who I found complaining. The team as a whole is still in the preliminary reporting phase, but I'm sure it will pick up soon.

Research

I had two interviews this week. One with Jeremy Bernfeld of Guns & America and Dave Rosenthal, managing editor of Side Effects Public Media. Both were informative, and gave me some ideas on who else to reach out. I now have 4 interviews completed, which means I'm about half way done!

This week

Need to schedule meetings with Becky and Sebastian about mental health reporting to brainstorm ideas and make sure I'm not stepping on their toes in any way. I am also going to try to reach out to people who responded to a reddit thread about mental health to see if I could interview them. Not sure how that will go, but I figured it's worth a try.

I'm researching for the enterprise story on Monday and going to try to start reporting Tuesday morning. Daily coverage this week, hopefully for KMOX. Also hoping I can start voicing stories this week.

Reaching out to more people for research interviews. Transcribing.

Week 3

Professional work

I was scheduled to cover a hearing that was supposed to have a family member that was effected by the Duck Boat incident a couple years ago, but plans quickly changed when we found out there might be a vote concerning revising Clean Missouri. We decided to cover Clean Missouri because it was the most important news at the time. I think I handled the change pretty well, and reporting on it despite having to do some quick preliminary research to catch myself up on the topic before interviewing. I also voiced my first wrap at the capitol, which is exciting. Previously, we were having troubles with the

A lesson I learned is to always double check I have all the equipment I needed. I could've saved time if I wrote notes on my computer (which I didn't have with me) instead of just time stamps on my phone. Lawmakers were also on their way out and I didn't have a chord with me, so I had to run down to the basement to grab it and chase down the lawmakers before they left to escape the incoming winter weather. Everything worked out, but I'll be better prepared next time. I also did some preliminary research on the enterprise story I'm working on about guns. I just need to do a little bit more before I start scheduling interviews. There was no shifts on Wednesday due to winter weather.

For the mental health project, I had meetings with Becky and Sebastian at KBIA. Sebastian suggested I look at research and try to talk to researchers, find advocates and then possibly get them to connect me with people who have struggled with mental health or encountered problems with getting care. Becky suggested I start doing research through groups on campus, and then they could possibly connect me to people. Someone responded to a reddit thread about mental health obstacles at Mizzou, and she responded

for a little bit, but then stopped. I'll try following up again, and trying posting in different subreddits to see if I get different responses. After talking to Mark, we agreed that I should formulate five subjects that could serve as a themes for the conversations to run by the other professors.

Research

I conducted two interviews. They were with Matthew Leonard, a former managing editor of a collaboration called Innovation Trail. It was interesting to hear about a collaboration that has ended, and the lessons learned from it. I'm going to try to reach out to more people who were former editors of collaborations that have ended, because I think it will provide more interesting insights. I also had a good conversation with Rachel Lindley, who is the senior editor at KERA for the Texas Hub. It was interesting listening to how they establish trust between stations, which is something I never thought about before but is what she said was an important factor to ensuring the collaboration's success.

This week

I already had a research interview with Jeff Young, who is the managing editor of the Ohio Valley ReSource. That was an interesting conversation. Also working on scheduling interviews of Adriene Hill, who was a former managing editor of a collaboration called California Dream project, and Joy Lin, who is the VP of journalism at CPB. Going to reach out to maybe one or to more former editors of collaborations and then I think I will have enough to actually start transcribing and doing a write up.

On Tuesday I'm going to spend my morning finishing up research on my gun story and try to start scheduling interviews. I'll have a hearing coverage in the afternoon, and hearing coverage all day on Wednesday (if weather doesn't interrupt, I see it might snow once again).

I'm going to reach out to a few researchers in mental health for background interviews, who may help me connect with other people. I'll post a few more topics on reddit just to see if I get any more responses. I need to formulate the subject areas for conversations by Friday to pass by the other people involved in the collaboration. I already have some ideas.

Week 4

Professional work

Here's what I did for the mental health project:

- I contacted three universities for mental health data. Sent a records request for Oregon State, called Utah and they said would work on it, and emailed OU with my data request to see if I could get it without sending a request. Hopefully, I'll hear from them in about a week.
- I've been in touch with the former student about her difficulties getting counseling. I've just been chatting with her over reddit right now, but she said not getting aid effected her quite a bit. She missed classes, and her GPA fell "considerably," and only passed classes because she talked to professors. I could try to interview her over the phone, but she did say she is still in Missouri (but not Columbia).
- Still thinking through how the conversation series will be done. I think this could be a great opportunity to cover topics that we aren't covering in our stories (although, we could also use sources from our stories too). Here are some of the topics or themes I was thinking about:
 1. Mental health without proper access to mental health care (the effect on school, how they cope, anecdotes)
 2. Mental health informed by trauma
 3. Mental health for certain groups of people or identities (black community, lgbt community)
 4. The pressures of specific degree programs like law, veterinary or med students on mental health (veterinary students — Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has found that suicide rates for U.S. veterinarians are much higher than those of the general population. What about the students who are about to enter the field?)
 5. Mental health for international students
 6. Alternative ways to cope with mental health

Here's what I did at the statehouse:

- I covered a hearing about requiring DNA testing for all felony arrests on Tuesday.
- Wednesday was cut a bit short (again, because of snow), but I wrote about feral hogs in Missouri for KMOX, the news service and Missourian.
- I tried to talk to a lawmaker Thursday for my enterprise piece about gun legislation that I scheduled, but she left early. Lesson learned: just pull lawmakers off the floor to interview.

Challenges

- Are my dayturns running on KBIA? I've covered multiple events in which other reporter's stories have been posted instead of mine, and I haven't seen any of my reporting on the daily newscasts. Happy to make any changes necessary so they

can air.

Research

- I had a research interview with Jeff Young, who is the managing editor of the Ohio Valley ReSource. That was an interesting conversation. Followed up with a few more people, but haven't heard back. I started transcribing, and after a few more interviews I should have that finished.

This week

- I'm still in the process of scheduling a time to call Joy Lin, who is the VP of journalism at CPB. Also need to follow up with Adriene Hill.
- Transcribing research interviews (at least 1 or 2)
- I'm making a proposal for the conversations series with a "How To" guide of facilitating them for partner universities along with the goal of the series, and potential topics that could be covered. This will be about 2-3 pages. Mark and I decided that would be the best to get out of the way early since it takes some time for partners to look it over and provide feedback. Might reach out to Janet and Becky for feedback since they have both are involved with similar kinds of projects.
- Enterprise story interviews. They are happening this week. It will be done -- I'm determined. I'm also looking into a story about boat accidents and legislation that increases boat safety measures. I already have data analyzed for this, so I would just have to interview a few lawmakers and potentially some coast guard officials.

Week 5

Professional work

On Tuesday, I interviewed Kathryn Swan, a lawmaker that I needed to talk to for my enterprise story about the domestic violence loophole passed in 2016. That interview went ok, but I will have to do a follow up this week. I also covered a Moms Demand Action anti-gun rally for KMOX, because the former St. Louis police chief gave a speech calling to close the loophole that allows people with a domestic violence misdemeanor to obtain a gun. I don't think I'll actually use the interviews I got from that for the enterprise story, but it could be good ambi for the story. I covered the senate that day to make sure

nothing important was brought up. Nothing happened, so I went home while the sun was still up.

Wednesday was pretty busy. I helped make a radio version of a hearing in the morning about a bill that had a lot of opposition that would make students only able to join the team that matches the sex on their birth certificate for sports separated by sex. I did not actually attend this meeting, so I had to work with another reporter to talk through what happened and what quotes might be good for radio. I also covered a hearing about the medical marijuana licensing process, which has turned controversial and found out the department of health and senior services is expecting about 600 lawsuits because of allegations of unfairness in the process. That meeting was five hours, so I didn't get out of the capitol until about 8:30 p.m. when all was said and done. It was important to cover though, because the committee might eventually launch an investigation in the licensing process. They are supposed to have another meeting this Wednesday. We will see what happens with that.

For the mental health project, I made a proposal for the university partners for a conversation series. That should be sent out to the other university editors soon and I might get feedback on it. The plan is to do a combination of audio testimonials/conversations. The conversations would fit to cover the wider scope of mental health, and how it affects certain communities and identities. The testimonial/audio diary format would work best with specific stories — like students telling stories of getting healthcare or what it was like not getting the proper care during a semester. I heard back from University of Oklahoma and University of Oregon for my records requests, just acknowledging that they have received it and will get back to me. Oregon will get back to me by March 6. Oklahoma didn't specify a timeline. Haven't heard from Utah.

Research

I transcribed an interview, and scheduled another with Joy Linn, the VP of journalism at CPB. She is still awaiting approval from management, but we are going to talk on background this Friday. Almost done with interviews, I maybe need to do one or two more and then I feel like I will have all I need to do analysis.

This week

I am going to arrive early on Tuesday to work on the enterprise story. My goal is to get this done soon, and I will be more aggressive about getting interviews. On Monday I will do a little bit more research in preparation for the interviews to get the most out of each interview. I want to talk to Nick Schroer and Tracy McCreery. I need to do a follow up with Kathryn Swan and an advocate to talk about the issue. Finding an advocate shouldn't be difficult.

I'm going to send a records request for University of Utah. I'm also reaching out to several people on reddit to possibly schedule interviews, since there were new reddit posts of the Maneater article column critiquing the counseling center at MU.

Interviewing for research on Friday. Sending out some more calls for interviews. Transcribing (at least one or two interviews).

Week 6

Professional project

Mental health project:

- I sent records requests to University of Alabama, University of Iowa, Purdue and University of Utah. I received information from the communications person from Utah. When I was on the phone, I must have forgotten to mention that I wanted it for multiple years. I have a records request in still, so I should get that information soon.
- I've reached out to several people on reddit who have commented on the Maneater article. I worked with another student helping with the conversation series, and we reached out to different people. I got one response, and the other student got two responses (one reached out through email).
- I've reached out to an expert who conducts a survey about counseling centers at universities across the country to see what trends he has seen in employment/wait times. Turns out the guy is retired, but he pointed me to another person who I've reached out to. There was also this webinar held by the National Institute for Health Care Management about teen mental health and while I didn't get a chance to watch the webinar, I'm going to reach out to some of the experts to get some background interviews that could be useful for solutions-based stories.
- I've added another example from CPR to the conversation series document, who has done a series about what has been causing teens to be stressed in schools, as an interesting example of how we could use an audio diary. It weaves traditional narrated audio storytelling with the diaries, and the result is pretty compelling. Here's the link to that: <https://www.cpr.org/2019/12/02/teen-diary-amelia-tells-us-how-academic-stress-led-her-to-a-breakdown/>
- I did one research interview, and have two others on Monday. I also reached out to several people to help spread the word about the project to see if anyone might be willing to speak to me about mental health on their campus. We'll see how it goes.

Jefferson City reporting:

- I did a follow up interview with Kathryn Swan about the domestic violence loophole. Turns out, even though she know about the problem, it doesn't seem

like she cares. She said she's not sure people are aware of the issue (even though there were hundreds of people and a former St. Louis Police chief calling for the loophole's closure a week ago), and that she hasn't tried writing a bill because it's not "in her area of expertise." I tried pulling a few other representatives off the floor on Wednesday, but no luck. Also tried finding former Rep. Donna Lichtenegger online, but have been having a hard time finding contact info.

- I did a few wraps for KMOX this week. One was a conference House Democrats held opposing anti-LGBT bills proposed by Republicans. The other was about education funding -- the house decided to fund a program that aims to get teachers to teach at the high school in their hometown.

Research

- I had an interview with the VP of journalism at CPB. It was on background, and it gave me a little bit of context around the evolution of collaboration funding over the years.

This week

- Going to try my best to get more sources for my loophole story and start working on a draft. I need to get this done -- hopefully this will happen this week.
- Need to reach out to a few more people for research interviews.
- Need to nail down a project defense date and time.
- Setting up interviews for mental health. Awaiting assignments for what stories I'm working on, but I also am doing survey interviews too.
- Daily stories at capitol
- Research interview transcribing

Week 7

Professional project

State government: I made significant reporting progress with my story about why lawmakers haven't fixed the loophole that allows those with domestic violence misdemeanors obtain guns. I had several interviews with lawmakers, both Democrats and Republicans, that gave good insight. I feel I can start crafting a script, once I get comment from Elijah Haahr, who I've heard secondhand that the issue won't even be on the table this legislative session. I want to know why. I had a few daily stories, one for KMOX that continues to follow the Marijuana licensing testimonies, and one daily about a gun bill that would increase penalties for celebratory gunfire. Tuesday was dedicated solely to enterprise, which worked out perfectly for me.

Mental health: I had a lot of survey interviews, and managed to get 25 people to sign an contact form for future survey/background interviews. Some of them might be helpful,

some them not. A lot of the contacts were referred from a friend in Nebraska. I'm still figuring out how I can spread the word further. I posted it on Twitter, but it doesn't seem to get a lot of engagement.

Heard back from two records requests. Will need to follow up, because they want to charge money, and some didn't give all the information I wanted.

I'm having a hard time finding people who would be willing to talk for the mental health conversation series I'm hoping to put together. I had three Mizzou students on reddit who were saying they'd talk to me, and they all backed out on the same week. So, not much luck on that front.

Reaching out to professionals who might have further connections to students or advocates might be a good option, which I am exploring currently. I am in the process with scheduling a background interview with Gena Terlizzi, who is the director of the National Alliance for Mental Health - Missouri. Hopefully she will give me good info, and possibly some connections.

I also emailed Dave Rosenthal from Side Effects to schedule a time to discuss a potential partnership with Side Effects for the conversation series. That way, I could focus on Missouri, and other reporters could help produce conversations in other states. I think the more help we can get on this project on the audio side, the better. Haven't heard a response yet, but I'll follow up if I don't hear back by this Tuesday.

Research

Not much progress. I emailed the NPR media relations contact to see if I could schedule something with Bruce Auster, who is the director of collaboration there. Haven't heard back, but again, I'll try to follow up. Sent a few more follow ups, but haven't heard back.

My defense date is scheduled for April 27, at 3:30 p.m. (although need to double check with everyone). Exciting, but also, yikes!

This week

Hopefully, more survey interviews and background interviews for the mental health project. Trying to find people for the conversation series as soon as possible.

Writing a script and hopefully getting an edit by the end of the week for the government story. Attending a flooding meeting for potentially another enterprise story.

Reaching out to more collaboration editors to schedule times for an interview.
Transcribing!

Week 8

Professional

State Government:

- I finished all of my reporting for the domestic loophole story (finally). I tried all week to get a comment from Elijah Haahr on the subject, and had a meeting scheduled with him this Tuesday, but he cancelled to focus on the budget. So I'll just go with a "no comment" at this point. I went to a hearing aimed at protecting the second amendment, and that gave me a broader picture of why closing this loophole is off the table in the first place. Three bills known as "anti-commandeering" laws would render federal laws related to guns null in Missouri. It has a quite a bit of support for gun owners and Republicans. So it would make sense why a bill that would update Missouri's law to be at federal law would be opposed (even if it would protect those facing domestic violence)
- I covered a last-minute press briefing at the capitol on Friday, as the governor announced a state of emergency to address COVID-19. I anticipate this might change coverage for the rest of the semester as the virus becomes more relevant and government attempts to make decisions related to the virus. The senate canceled their hearings this week, but the House is still meeting. As weeks go on, though, it could change.
- I covered a hearing that would audit the auditor, Nicole Galloway. It was interesting because she is running for governor this November. Also covered the Senate, which passed a bill that would allow text-to-donate programs to combat homelessness in Kansas City and St. Louis.

Mental Health project:

- I got records back from the University of Utah (yay!) but I have to search through each annual report to get the data I want (boooo).
- Did a few more survey interviews.
- Had an informational interview with the director of the National Alliance on Mental Health - Missouri. She gave some good background information, and said she knows some college-aged people who might be good to connect with for the conversation series. That's the biggest lead I have on the conversation series so far. The other people I was talking to on reddit all canceled on me last week. I've tried scheduling a few more interviews with mental health-related groups on campus like the well being mentor group and the Mizzou Student Suicide

Prevention Coalition. I emailed both on Tuesday, never heard back. I'm guessing COVID-19 might affect getting ahold of student groups. So, still struggling, but getting a little further than I was last week.

Research:

- Reached out to a few more people for interviews, including: Alisa Barba, America Amplified, Inside Energy, Fronteras, KJZZ, and Kevin McCorry, Keystone Crossroads Editor and reporter. I haven't heard back from any of them. Will follow up on Monday, though, and continue reaching out to people.

This week:

- Finish scripts and text story by Monday. Schedule edit sessions and have everything ready for publishing by end of week (hopefully).
- Work on Clean Missouri project. I'm thinking this could be turned into a story once we have quotes from everyone.
- Continue doing survey calls. Possibly more brainstorming with more editors about how to find students for the conversation series. Write memo to Mark by Thursday with everything I have so far.
- Continue to email people for research interviews. Just need one or two more before analysis.
- Transcribing!

Week 9

Hello everyone,

First week working mostly remotely due to COVID-19. It's been challenging, but I managed to get a few things done. I'm still working through questions about workflow for radio recording, since equipment is at the capitol building and the KBIA Newsroom is closed. Ryan or Janet, could we schedule a zoom meeting to check in?

State Government

- Hearings were cancelled this week, but I did help write an explainer looking into how other states are handling the COVID-19 crisis through policy in comparison to Missouri Gov. Mike Parson. I'm also working with Sebastian from KBIA to make a radio version of the story, which I think will be finished and air Monday.

- I have a first draft of my enterprise! Now I have to rewrite, and implement archival tape, which I just got from the senate press contact. I'm thinking this should be done by the end of Spring Break or the beginning of the week after.

Mental health project

- been doing a lot of survey interviews lately, and found some people who might be interested in the conversation series. The problem is, getting three people while self-isolating during a global pandemic might be difficult. In fact, a lot of stations are closed. I know KBIA is running in limited operations. This wouldn't limit me from setting up a marantz with two microphones in a quiet place, it's just a matter of convincing people to do it -- I'm not sure if people would be willing to, or if it'd be wise to do so. Many students are now out of town because campus closed. So, I'm thinking we might have to think about alternative. Here's some thoughts on alternatives:
 - Maybe conversations over zoom. I think there's even a "record" feature that could work. We could test it out. Sometimes the sound quality is pretty good if we troubleshoot it. A downside would be that it's highly dependent on an internet connection. What if a Canadian and a U.S. student interviewed each other? That might be interesting, but we'd have to find the right people to make the conversation work.
 - An audio diary. People might be able to record with their phone. This might be interesting with a piece about self-isolation and mental health during COVID-19. CPR did something similar to this for a story about teen mental health. We'd have to be careful, but they approached it by partially narrating over it. After talking with Mark and the team, this seems to be the best approach for COVID-related coverage we can do now. Here's that: <https://www.cpr.org/2019/12/02/teen-diary-amelia-tells-us-how-academic-stress-led-her-to-a-breakdown/>

Any thoughts or ideas about this are welcome.

Research

I interviewed Alissa Barba, who is a senior editor for America Amplified and has worked on several other collaborations. This was my eighth interview. I might reach out to one more person, but I should be good for analysis now.

This week

It's Spring Break, but I am working on finishing that COVID-19 feature with Sebastian, which will be finished today. I might have the opportunity to interview Mike Parson on Thursday or Friday? We'll see. Listening to archival tape for the enterprise. Doing a little bit of transcribing. Making a little "how to do an audio diary" instruction sheet for people who may want to participate for the mental health project. That's about it.

Week 10

Hi everyone,

I took a much-needed break this week, besides the one transcription I completed on Saturday.

Here's are my goals for this week:

- 1.) Create a how-to guide on audio diaries for mental health project. Continue to schedule interviews.
- 2.) Check in with Ryan and Janet to see how I can help with COVID coverage at the station.
- 3.) Complete all research transcriptions by Thursday. Begin analysis. Retrieve audio from KBIA.
- 4.) Finish second draft of enterprise story

Week 11

Here's what I've been up to.

Mental health

- I've been coordinating with two other reporters on the audio dispatches project. We found three sources who agreed to do little 1-2 minute dispatches for five days. We created an instruction manual for them to follow with a few helpful tips. I'm hoping people start on Monday and sending them to me. That's the most significant development for this project, and I feel that it might just work out. Plus, I'm working with Mark to get students from other universities to give some feedback on potential sources that have powerful stories and might be willing to participate in something like this. At the very least, I hope we have 3 audio dispatches by the end of next week.
- Had a meeting with Kris Husted about working together on his project related to audio dispatches as well. If anything, I'll help out with his project, and maybe find some students along the way who might want to participate in the mental health project.

- Had a meeting with Dave from Side Effects Public Media. Basically, he seemed interested, but will follow up with him when I have a more tangible product.

Government reporting

- I suggested that we start covering Gov. Parson's daily press conferences for the Missouri News Service, and Mark said that was a good idea. I did three wraps this week from the conference. It's certainly nice to get back into the swing of things with reporting. I'm looking forward to continuing.
- I made two wraps for KBIA and a centerpiece for Missourian about the potential impacts of COVID-19 on local food markets. This was a story that evolved from a quick day-turn. I just stumbled upon an economic report that happened to have a webinar the same week to make it more timely. I'm happy the way it turned out, and I'm hoping I can get a wrap with a digital story on it out soon on KBIA's website too. This piece took up most of my week.

Research

- I made good progress on transcribing, and I'm set to turn in my analysis draft by Thursday this week

This week

- Day-turns on some of Parson's meetings. Probably some legislative stories too, since they are starting up again this week.
- Working on a story for mental health project on the effects of isolation on mental health.
- Post a web story of my ag econ story on KBIA
- Monitoring the audio dispatches
- Finishing my research component by Thursday!!

Appendix II: Story clips

Local farms and markets adapt to pandemic's impact

By Seth Bodine

Walker Claridge is trying his best to supply local ranchers, farmers and vegetable growers with an income during a global pandemic.

As the owner of the farm-to-table restaurant Broadway Brewery, he typically buys products from local farmers. But stay-at-home orders and increasing social distancing policies due to COVID-19 have changed Claridge's business. As a farmer himself, he's also navigating how to sell 60 to 80 pounds of vegetables and greens a week to his regular buyers.

"People are freaked out, and understandably so," Claridge said. "And they're looking for different ways to access the products that they need, and we're trying to meet that demand, help them through this time and continue to be able to operate as a business."

As channels to sell products — like farmers markets — close, local and regional food markets could see up to a \$688.7 million decline in sales and up to a \$1.32 billion overall economic loss, according to an analysis by the National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition.

The analysis warns that if no action is taken, the country may lose many "small, socially disadvantaged and beginning farms and the important markets they serve." The federal government has recently enacted some relief programs, but it's unclear how much that will help at the local level.

The report identifies three key local markets that could be affected: farmers markets, farm-to-school programs and food hubs serving institutions like university dining halls and restaurants.

Sarah Low, an associate professor of agricultural and applied economics at MU and a contributor to the report, said the estimated losses are only through May. But if social distancing measures continue past that time frame, losses would grow accordingly.

For example, farm-to-school markets, which typically pick up in the fall, could also take a beating: Low said if schools don't open back up in August when there's a lot of produce available and opportunities for agricultural education, farm-to-school programs will suffer greatly.

Farmers markets are one of the biggest potential targets of the local and regional food scene, Low said. Approximately 3,600 Missouri farms sell their products through such

direct channels, Low said. A drop in sales could lead to farmers markets closing and also influence decisions on the farm.

“It’s also possible that some producers may say, ‘Well, if the market isn’t going to be open’ or if there’s a lot of unknowns, they may not even plant,” Low said. “So, we could be looking at markets and vendors closing for the season, or potentially even permanently.”

Ultimately, a lot is up in the air, as farmers markets are trying to be nimble and respond to a changing situation. Low said the analysis estimated a 10% to 25% loss, but there have been many variants.

Since the release of the report, she said she’s seen an increase of farmers markets moving to a drive-thru or online marketing format.

She said social media is a great way to get the word out about changes like drive-thru pickup. Missouri and other states have also designated farmers markets as essential businesses.

MU Extension is working with a couple different markets that are trying to come up with an online platform, Low said. Some markets may be affected less than those without broadband in rural areas.

Corrina Smith, executive director of the Columbia Farmers Market, said while the market saw a decrease in attendance at its spring kickoff, it is adapting to the changes caused by COVID-19. Now, the market is providing curbside pickup and a pre-ordering system. About 25 to 30 vendors sold products last week, Smith said.

“The few that used it last weekend, it was very easy, at least on our end,” Smith said. “You know, we met customers on the curb. We have their products, and they pop their trunk and off they went.”

There are still obstacles, she said, from getting vendors online and getting inventory product and pricing lists to creating an online purchasing platform because some vendors don’t take credit cards. Smith said staff have been regulating crowds and have put safety measures in place, and she encourages people to buy from the market if they feel comfortable at a grocery store.

“We are an outlet for local producers to sell their food to our community,” Smith said. “And we feel that is such an essential part of our local food system and our local economy. And, you know, just having reliable access to food is ... so critical right now.”

Farmers like Claridge are also adapting to the changes. Instead of selling his greens to restaurants, he's bagging them up and selling them directly out of the brewery when customers pick up their food. Claridge also plans to apply for aid through the U.S. Small Business Administration.

"I think access — ability to access the products — is going to be the real struggle for everybody here in the next few days as this whole COVID-thing heads down the pipeline, and it could get worse before it gets better," Claridge said. "So we really need to be thoughtful and start thinking through how we're going to be able to deliver these products and these services directly to the consumer in a safe way."

Since the economic analysis was released March 21, the federal government has stepped in. As part of the \$2 trillion Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security Act, \$9.5 billion went to the Department of Agriculture to financially help farmers growing specialty crops, producers who supply local food systems like farmers markets, restaurants and school. It also specifically allocates money for livestock producers and dairy farmers. An additional \$14 billion has been directed to the Commodity Credit Corporation, a funding mechanism for agricultural programs like price loss and dairy margin coverage.

Spencer Tuma, director of national legislative programs for the Missouri Farm Bureau, said the USDA has not written guidelines about how the money is going to be sent out but anticipates that the majority of farms in Missouri would be able to take advantage of the funds when available.

Tuma said this financial help is important because of the state of the agricultural economy.

"A lot of farmers are operating on thin margins," Tuma said. "In the short term, we have people who, of course, have their taxes coming due, maybe they have operating loans coming due as well. So we hope that that cash will help them in the short term be able to continue their operation while we hopefully look for a rebound down the road."

Tim Gibbons, spokesperson for the Missouri Rural Crisis Center and Patchwork Family Farms, said family farmers in rural America are always operating on thin margins. And because of COVID-19, things are even worse.

Gibbons said he thinks farmers who sell into the commodity and local markets need support. He said U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Sonny Perdue has a "moral imperative" to give the aid money to family farms instead of large agricultural corporations.

"We're seeing local markets right now disintegrating because of restaurants closing down, lack of access for people to get family farm meat," Gibbons said. "So I think there are two different things that we need to think of, not only like the general marketplace

that farmers sell into, but also the local marketplace. And farmers on both angles are struggling.”

Resisting Calls for Stay-at-Home Order, Governor Pushes ‘Personal Responsibility’

By SEBASTIÁN MARTINEZ VALDIVIA & SETH BODINE

On a sunny Tuesday afternoon, the Broadway Diner was empty. The ‘50s-style greasy spoon has been a fixture of downtown Columbia for decades. But owner Dave Johnson said he’d never seen anything like this. “I was here when the planes crashed into the World Trade Center, and I thought that was horrible, but it’s nothing like this,” Johnson said.

The diner closed its dine-in space three days ago, following an order from the city government. A few days earlier, Johnson announced the diner would feed any students and community members, after local colleges and the public school system closed.

Just half an hour away and a county over, the dining room of the Palace Restaurant in Boonville was still open. Owner George Xifridis bought the restaurant 35 years ago after emigrating from Greece. He said the staff sanitizes everything in the restaurant, from doors handles to tables, and disinfecting surfaces with bleach. Still, business had already slowed a week ago and is now down to a trickle.

“I think they are scared,” Xifridis said. “They will call maybe for to-go or curbside pick-up, but I imagine they’re afraid to come in.”

He understands why people are scared, and said he has concerns about the virus himself, but that if he closes, he doesn’t know if he’ll be able to reopen.

Xifridis can still offer dine-in eating because, while individual cities have issued orders closing restaurants and bars - the only state-wide orders to that effect instruct Missourians to “avoid” eating at them; not mandating they close.

Throughout his briefings on the COVID-19 pandemic, Missouri Governor Mike Parson has repeatedly come back to two words: personal responsibility. “At the end of the day, it is going to be personal responsibility that’s going to be a part of the future of what we’re doing to fight the coronavirus,” Parson said.

With the number of COVID-19 cases in the Midwest growing, an increasing number of states have turned to stay-at-home orders to stem the spread. But in Missouri, the state government has shied away from such policies.

Instead, Parson has said decisions, about closing schools, restricting bars and restaurants, and other actions have to happen on the local level. He has emphasized the differences between rural and urban Missouri, and one of his big sticking points has been businesses. He recently directed the Department of Health and Senior Services to mandate social distancing policies, like limiting public gathering to 10 or fewer people. He also suspended regulations on restaurants serving unprepared foods, to allow eateries to ease the demand on grocery stores.

Brian Houston, the chair of the Communication Department at the University of Missouri, whose research focuses on disasters, said Parson's instructions are not very clear and have many exceptions. Houston said leaders should aim for simple and specific instruction. Leaders have to toe the line between calming the public's fears about the pandemic, but at the same time, make it clear they should take the danger seriously, he said.

"It really is a tough situation from a communication perspective, but that is one of the reasons why we need the simplest, clearest communication and policies possible," Houston said.

Houston said the orders Parson has issued ultimately leave more decisions in the hands of the public. Other states surrounding Missouri have taken a different course of action.

In Kansas, Democratic Governor Laura Kelly declared a state of emergency a week after the first COVID-19-related death on March 7. A week after that, she closed K-12 schools for the rest of the school year under an Executive Order.

"The reality of this pandemic is that it cannot be controlled statewide if school buildings return to normal operation or if they respond inconsistently within our local communities," Kelly said in a press conference.

Republican governors have taken similar preventative actions. Arkansas Governor Asa Hutchinson made decisions based on evidence of increasing community spread last week — extending school closure for two more weeks and banning all sit-down restaurant services. Iowa Governor Kim Reynolds ordered mandatory closure for all bars and restaurants with the exception of take out or drive-thrus, and closing schools. Reynolds said she thinks it will make a difference.

"That's why these are some of the tough calls we've had to make, but we believe by making these tough calls on the front end we will significantly impact the health and safety of Iowans in the state," Reynolds said during a press conference.

Now, some governors at bordering states are starting to issue stay-at-home orders. Illinois' governor, J.B. Pritzker was the first of Missouri's neighboring states to issue a shelter-in-place by an Executive Order to prevent community spread. Indiana's Republican Governor, Eric Holcomb, also recently announced a stay-at-home order. But Parson said each state has to make its own decisions.

"The effects that'll have on everyday people are dramatic," Parson said. "That means businesses will close, people will lose their jobs, the economy will be in worse shape than ever."

While the Missouri State Medical Association called for stay-at-home orders to reduce the spread of the virus, Parson has argued such an order would hit rural areas harder than

urban areas. An estimated 30% of the state's population lives in a rural area, according to the Missouri Census Data Center.

In lieu of state-wide orders, cities and counties have issued their own directives. Columbia, and both the St. Louis and Kansas City metro areas are under stay-at-home orders, issued by their municipal governments. Business leaders, doctors and — recently — mayors have called for uniform rules for the state. As the number of cases in the state continues to grow, so too does pressure on the governor to take action.

Expert Warns of Feral Hog ‘Explosion’ in Missouri

By Seth Bodine

JEFFERSON CITY — Michael Bodenchuk believes Missouri should be bracing for a “pig bomb.”

Bodenchuk, director of Texas Wildlife Services, has seen how a feral hog population can expand. In Texas, the population started growing slowly. Then, from 2006 to 2010, it exploded — with a growth rate of 21% per year, nearly doubling over the five-year period.

The consequence of what he refers to as a “pig bomb,” even with hog removal programs in place, resulted in \$89 million of crop damage. The hogs are known to eat row crops, damage local ecosystems and feed on calves, lambs and goats, according to [Missouri Extension](#).

Bodenchuk told Missouri lawmakers Wednesday that he thinks Missouri is in the same place that Texas was about 35 years ago.

“And without some purposeful management and movement towards eradication, you could be in the same place we are now, which is not a good place to be,” Bodenchuk said.

Feral hogs cause around \$2-2.5 billion in damages per year nationally, and the animals have spread to 40 states.

Dale Nolte, program manager for the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s national feral swine program, said part of the problem is that the hogs breed rapidly and can adjust to almost any habitat. He speculates that the spread of the feral swine population is partially caused by people introducing them into the wild for hunting.

Nolte’s outlook for Missouri was less dire than Bodenchuk’s view.

Missouri is on track to eventually remove the invasive species from the state, Nolte said. In 2014, Congress gave the USDA funding to establish a national feral swine program. That program gives about \$750,000 to support Missouri’s removal efforts. According to [state statistics](#), through a trapping program, 9,365 feral hogs were removed from the landscape in 2018.

“From what we’ve seen, Missouri’s doing an excellent job at moving towards what their task force decided it was a goal of eventually eradicating feral swine in the states,” Nolte said. “We believe they’re taking the proper steps to achieve that goal.”

JEFFERSON CITY — Efforts to reduce gun violence in Missouri were on the minds of both Senate Republicans and House Democrats on Tuesday.

Three Republican senators proposed bills that aim to modify or increase penalties for crimes related to gun use during a Senate judiciary committee hearing. On the same day, House Democrats highlighted several bills to address firearm violence.

Senate bills 562 and 601 aim to increase or modify punishments for armed criminal actions. Senate Bill 538 modifies penalties related to unlawful possession of a firearm.

Among the Republican bills, Senate Bill 601 would increase minimum sentences with crimes committed with a deadly weapon, among other measures. Sen. Tony Luetkemeyer, R-Parkville, said the bill is aimed at reducing the release of violent offenders on parole.

“We must acknowledge that the proper place for violent criminals is in prison — not on probation,” Luetkemeyer said. “Just like mass incarceration for minor crime is misguided, so too is mass release for violent crime.”

Several of those who testified supported the bill, including Brad Thielemier of the Missouri State Troopers Association and Darrell Moore, executive director of Missouri Association of Prosecuting Attorneys.

American Civil Liberties Union of Missouri legislative and policy director Sara Baker opposed the bill. She said she is sympathetic to what Luetkemeyer is trying to do — her parents were robbed at gunpoint in St. Louis. But she doesn’t think enhancing penalties for armed criminal action is going to lead to the future they are hoping for and doesn’t see how it would further decrease crime.

“I think we need to focus on the things that have a proven record of decreasing crimes so we can make all of our communities safer,” Baker said.

Some of the legislation Democrats discussed include House Bill 1260, which would prohibit certain people like those convicted of misdemeanor domestic violence from possessing a gun and would bring Missouri law into conformity with federal law. House Bill 1829 would prohibit anyone from possessing a firearm after a judge determined that they are a risk to themselves or others.

House Minority Leader Rep. Crystal Quade, D-Springfield, said the legislative package is supposed strike a balance between respecting constitutional rights and protecting people from gun violence.

“We believe in protections for law-abiding gun owners and we count many gun owners among our caucus,” Quade said. “But we also believe that strong gun rights for those who act responsibly can and must coexist with common sense laws to keep guns out of the hands who don’t.”

Quade didn’t comment on the specific Senate bills, but said tougher criminal penalties is not something they would support.

ANCHOR INTRO: Missouri Governor Mike Parson says passing the budget should be the priority for the Missouri Legislative session. Seth Bodine has more.

Governor Parson says the most important issue for legislators having the budget approved by June 30, but passing that budget will be no easy task, he says. Right now, while there are a lot of unknowns, they are looking at about a \$1 billion deficit. He says there's still a lot of unknowns, like how much more federal stimulus money will come from the government.

TRT: 13

OC: "budget together"

I know this much. I've never seen a deficit like that. And it's going to take some time to figure out how we go through that, and how we put a budget together. And the legislature's uh, you know it's going to take some work.

Parson says he is looking into all the resources to fill the gap in the budget. Parson says he is unsure what other issues legislators will pick up. In order to tap into the state's rainy day fund, it takes Parson and two thirds of the House and Senate approval. Parson says they put in a \$100 million in that fund last year. The Missouri General Assembly is scheduled to reconvene on April 27.

I'm Seth Bodine.

ANCHOR INTRO: Governor Mike Parson has declared a state of emergency at the capitol Friday evening in response to COVID-19. Missouri News Network’s Seth Bodine has more.

03132020COVIDWRAPA TRT: OC: “I’m Seth Bodine”

Governor Mike Parson signed an executive order and allow access to \$7 million dollars of state funds toward addressing COVID-19. Missouri will also get \$13 million from federal funding.

Parson says he is using the declaration to assign more funding toward addressing the issue, not to close schools. He says schools should seek the guidance of local health officials when thinking about closing their schools.

03132020COVIDA TRT: 14 OC: “a local decision”

I think the school issue is a local issue. I think for what we know about status-wise our younger adults are less likely to be affected by the coronavirus as to older people. So, I think one, that’s a local decision.

Parson also says that local government should decide whether to suspend public gatherings of a certain amount of people. Two more people have been tested as presumptive positive for the virus in Missouri. So far, 94 Missourians have tested for COVID-19. Three have been tested presumptive positive, and one confirmed positive. Missouri joins at least 30 other states that have declared an emergency, along with a federal declaration of emergency.

From Jefferson City, I’m Seth Bodine

ANCHOR INTRO: Missouri lawmakers questioned top officials from state officials today about the licensing for medical marijuana facilities – with concerns about fairness in the process. Seth Bodine has more.

03042020LICENSE

More than 800 appeals have been filed about the licensing process for medical marijuana facilities in Missouri. Lawmakers continued to question officials and express concerns about the process during a hearing with a top official from the state Office of Administration.

Representative Maria Chapelle-Nadal expressed concern about diversity in the licensing process.

032020LICENSEA **TRT: 8** **OC: “participation in this”**

“There are people that have contacted me both white and black who don’t understand why we don’t have minority participation in this.”

Other Representatives like Jon Carpenter say Missourians he’s heard from have called this process a disaster. Health and Senior Services officials expect to pay millions in litigation over the process, according to a testimony in a previous hearing. Lawmakers are expected to continue questioning Health and Senior Services Director Randall Williams on Wednesday evening.

From Jefferson City, I’m Seth Bodine

Open Records Office
University of Oklahoma
Whitehand Hall
339 W. Boyd St.
Norman, OK 73069

February 14, 2020

Dear OU Open Records Staff,

Under the Oklahoma Open Records Act (Title 51 O.S. Sections 24A.1 – 24A30), I am requesting the following data regarding mental health for **each** fiscal year between 2014-2015 to 2018-2019:

- Number of counselors (or clinical professionals) on payroll or contract with the university for mental health services, full time and FTEs.
- The number of students per month and annual total students served by the university's mental health services.
- The length of time between a student's request for an appointment and the first appointment. In addition, the average length of time between the first triage (or intake) appointment and provider appointment. Both monthly and annually.
- The total budget allocated for student mental health services on campus.
- The number of students who receive accommodations for mental health as well as the total number of students who receive accommodations for any reason.

Under the Oklahoma Open Records Act (Title 51 O.S. Sections 24A.1 – 24A30), I am also requesting the following documents:

- The intake form for students seeking mental health services. This is a blank form.
- Any documents – intended for student use – that explain student access to mental health services and students' financial obligations.

I understand that student privacy is important. I am asking for anonymized or summary data to which FERPA and HIPAA do not apply. As a working journalist, I request that fees be waived. If this is not possible, please contact me so that we can discuss options. If you deny this request, please state the specific state exemption.

If the data is available electronically, please send it in that format. I can be reached at sdbq7c@mail.missouri.edu or (806) 363-0633.

I look forward to hearing from you in five business days as the Oregon state law allows. I would be happy to answer any questions or clarify this request.

Thank you for your prompt attention.

Best,

Seth Bodine
The Columbia Missourian
Lee Hills Hall, 221 S. Eighth St.
Columbia, MO 65201

Ann Frances V Goff, UI Transparency Officer,
351 Plaza Centre One,
Iowa City, IA 52242.

February 24, 2020

Dear Ms. Goff,

Under the Iowa Open Records Law § 22.1 et seq., I am requesting the following data regarding mental health for **each** fiscal year between 2014-2015 to 2018-2019:

- Number of counselors (or clinical professionals) on payroll or contract with the university for mental health services, full time and FTEs.
- The number of students per month and annual total students served by the university's mental health services.
- The length of time between a student's request for an appointment and the first appointment. In addition, the average length of time between the first triage (or intake) appointment and provider appointment. Both monthly and annually.
- The total budget allocated for student mental health services on campus.
- The number of students who receive accommodations for mental health as well as the total number of students who receive accommodations for any reason.

Under the Iowa Open Records Law § 22.1 et seq., I am also requesting the following documents:

- The intake form for students seeking mental health services. This is a blank form.
- Any documents – intended for student use – that explain student access to mental health services and students' financial obligations.

I understand that student privacy is important. I am asking for anonymized or summary data to which FERPA and HIPAA do not apply. As a working journalist, I request that fees be waived. If this is not possible, please contact me so that we can discuss options. If you deny this request, please state the specific state exemption.

If the data is available electronically, please send it in that format. I can be reached at sdbq7c@mail.missouri.edu or (806) 363-0633.

I look forward to hearing from you in 10-20 business days as the Iowa state law allows. If you deny any or all of this request, please cite each specific exemption you feel justifies the refusal to release the information and notify me of the appeal procedures available to me under the law.

I would be happy to answer any questions or clarify this request.

Thank you for your prompt attention.

Best,

Seth Bodine
The Columbia Missourian
Lee Hills Hall, 221 S. Eighth St.
Columbia, MO 65201

Appendix III: Self-Evaluation

Sometimes in life, unexpected events happen. A global pandemic hit and disrupted everything in society, work and life. But for what it's worth, I did my absolute best throughout this semester.

I was most nervous about how I would do reporting on state government, a beat I had never covered before. I hardly knew the difference between the Senate and the House and how the legislative process worked. But I learned quickly, even if I occasionally got lost while walking in the halls of the Capitol. Over time, I developed a better understanding of how to cover state government and how to interview lawmakers.

My biggest challenge, for the majority of the beginning of the semester, was getting access to interviews for lawmakers. The more time that went on, the better I became at being more aggressive at tracking down people, breaking news and keeping ahead of schedule. Another big challenge was balancing enterprise with daily hearing coverage. It was very difficult to find time to report on the domestic violence enterprise story while covering daily hearings. Eventually things worked out and I was able to find the right people to talk to. Luckily, I got all the in-person interviews I needed before COVID-19 hit Missouri and closed down the Capitol along with everything else. I haven't always been the fastest writer. But I think doing constant day-turns definitely made me faster. I could still work on interviewing, but I learned how to be more prepared for interviews and to ask follow up questions.

Overall, I think I did the best I could to keep motivated once the pandemic hit. I developed ideas of covering the daily press conferences, and also developed my own story ideas that I could do remotely. I volunteered every chance I could. I helped KBIA with

extra content they could use for COVID-19 related content. Of course, some days were more productive than others. It's sometimes hard to stay motivated while staying inside all the time.

Right when I felt like I was starting to get somewhere with the StoryCorp-style conversation series for the international mental health project, COVID-19 hit and everything was disrupted. Obviously, I couldn't have gotten students in a space without risk. So, I had to pivot to a series of audio dispatches instead. I'm excited that it's actually coming together — patience and adaptability will always go far as a journalist.

I've also gained a familiarity with public records requests and public records law, as I sent information to universities requesting information about counselling centers. I got about three documents back, some without pieces of info missing. It was too late to ask for the missing info by the time COVID-19 came and disrupted everything.

Overall, I learned a lot from my work this semester, and I'm proud of the work I did given the circumstances.

Appendix IV: Original Proposal

Introduction

Last spring, Marina Walker Guevara, director of strategic initiatives at the International Consortium of Investigative Journalists, spoke to our investigative class. She shared two pieces of insight that stuck with me. First, she shared a piece of advice that she received when she was a master's student formulating her own master's project: do something that will lead you to your dream job. Secondly, she made me realize the incredible power of collaboration while talking about her work on the Panama Papers report.

Somehow, I was in the seemingly perfect place to listen to Guevara speak to our class. I was still unsure of what I would do for my master's project. At the same time, I was tasked with managing a new collaborative sports project between KOMU and the Columbia Missourian. Working through the organizational and logistical challenges of making innovative content was difficult, to say the least. More and more, I sought out collaborative work. In the investigative class, I coordinated publication of my team's investigation with KBIA, Columbia Missourian and Midwest Center for Investigative Reporting. During the summer, I created a partnership with Missouri Business Alert and KBIA by hosting a weekly business show. And this semester, I'm working with investigative teams to create audio stories for three investigative projects.

Working on collaborative projects and partnerships made me realize their capacity to shine a brighter light on important topics and utilize different newsrooms' resources to create efficiencies. Working at newspapers and a public radio station made it easier to navigate organizational differences. But still, there were challenges. While managing the

KOMU-Missourian sports collaboration, there were often difficulties in navigating schedules between reporters in both newsrooms. The KOMU reporters had different class requirements than the Missourian reporters, who were solely dedicated to working on the project. Plus, it was difficult to create content that was original and meshed well between mediums. Forming a new partnership and navigating different reporter routines was a headache — but when it worked, it felt like something new and innovative. Working in a team felt natural to me. I enjoyed working with people to solve problems, to brainstorm new ideas and compromising to make things work. Work I've done in teams during my time at Mizzou has been the most exciting and rewarding — and going into the next semester, I hope to continue working on collaborations.

Surely the organizational and logistical challenges I faced when leading the KOMU-Missourian partnership has been faced by many other outlets. It sparked my curiosity about how newsrooms navigate those challenges, and what heightens a collaboration to be considered a success, and what challenges ultimately inhibited newsrooms from innovation.

There are lots of exciting collaborations happening in Missouri public radio stations. Recently, KCUR received \$1.9 million to lead a nationwide collaborative engagement project focusing on the U.S. 2020 presidential election. There are lots of other interesting collaborations that focus on reporting on a specific topic like health (Side Effects Public Media), agriculture (Harvest Public Media), guns (Guns & America) and race (Sharing America). Coming to Mizzou made me realize my dream is to be a public radio producer and reporter —and to work and eventually organize a collaboration within a public radio newsroom.

Ultimately, this project will continue to build the skills I gained during my time taking classes at Mizzou, and learning in the KBIA, Missourian and Missouri Business Alert newsroom. With this project, I hope it will prepare me to enter a public radio newsroom and work in collaborative efforts. But no matter, where I go, the ability to collaborate will make me an asset in the newsroom. If anything, collaboration teaches me how to be a “team player.” It takes a lot of patience, hard work and generosity for everyone involved.

Professional Skills Component

For my professional component of my project, I plan to work primarily as an audio journalist for KBIA. I will spend 15 hours a week working for the Missouri News Service, which provides news to the Missouri Broadcast Association at the capital in Jefferson City, covering the legislature. My daily reporting will likely be used for newscasts at public radio stations like KBIA, and I will aim to do some enterprise stories. This will give me first-hand experience of working within a radio partnership. I have never worked on the government beat before, but I am excited to dive in and think it will be a new challenge. I might attend the lecture for the state government class to help me as I go along as well. Alongside daily reporting, I hope to report at least one or two enterprise stories. I am working with Mark Horvit to determine the deliverables.

The other 15 hours will be spent on a project focusing on youth mental health in Missouri. This is part of an international journalism school collaboration, with journalism schools from Missouri to Canada participating. I will be in charge of the audio elements of the project, which will be shared in a google drive to distribute to other universities

collaborating. I will also help interview for other universities too. My work schedule will be Monday-Thursday. Friday will be reserved for doing my research component.

Research component

Collaborations aren't easy. If newsrooms do not prepare, the organizational and routine-based obstacles could interrupt and eventually dismantle them. Yet more and more, newsrooms are choosing to collaborate. TV stations are partnering with newspapers. Radio stations are doing collective projects focusing on a particular topic. At this point, there are plenty of ongoing public radio station collaborations. But the question becomes: what factors go into creating a successful collaboration?

Answering this question would help the industry by providing insights from newsroom leaders about what worked in a collaboration or partnership, and what the biggest obstacles were. By having a frame of reference, newsroom leaders can better implement structured collaborations that are more likely to be sustainable and successful. Through interviews with newsroom leaders who are coordinating different types of collaborations, it will provide different insights and provide ideas for newsrooms that want to do collaborative work but are not sure what type will work.

The theory Hierarchy of Influences will aid in exploring how successful collaborations work. The multifaceted approach to analysis will break down the different influences that ultimately contribute to the performance of a newsroom function. As part of my research component, I will be doing in-depth interviews with newsroom leaders in public radio stations who have organized or directed collaborations.

Literature Review

Collaboration is the future of journalism. More and more, newsrooms are turning to collaborations to create efficiencies in news coverage and tell better stories. The San Francisco Chronicle coordinated with 80 news outlets in 2016 to publish stories focused on homelessness. For an entire week, outlets in the area produced around 300 videos, articles, radio shows and TV reports about the subject (Cooper 2016). The goal, it seemed, was to shine a bright light on one topic in order to explore a complex and widespread issue.

Collaborations at this scale are becoming more common. Take ProPublica's collaborative efforts, for example. Of note is Electionland, which provides newsrooms resources like data in order to help them cover issues of voting access and cybersecurity for the midterm elections. ProPublica is also doing a collaborative project called Documenting Hate, which is collecting and verifying reports of hate crimes and bias and giving them to journalists, researchers and civil rights organizations to use. The potential impact collaborative journalism can have is why researching the topic is important.

Collaborative efforts between newsrooms are also significant because they seem to have caught the attention of many newsrooms, investors, journalists and researchers. This is especially true for public media. The Corporation for Public Broadcasting, for example, funded \$32 million in 29 newsroom partnerships as of 2017 (Stonbely 2017). KCUR, a public radio station in Kansas City, recently received a \$1.9 million grant to lead a nationwide collaborative engagement project focusing on the U.S. 2020 presidential election (Vestal 2019). Journalists in more than 15 cities and researchers from three continents reached out to journalist Jean Friedman Rudovsky about the model

of her newsroom collaboration, “Broke in Philly,” which is a collaboration between 22 news outlets focusing on poverty in Philadelphia (Rudovsky, 2018).

The reason why newsroom collaborations are effective, Rudovsky argues it is simple: newsrooms made of different perspectives and thoughts are more likely to produce journalism that is more reflective of their own communities, and it’s likely to reach more people because it creates a wider influence when reporting as a team rather than individually (Rudovsky). This reasoning seems to oppose a long-standing philosophy that news outlets are supposed to be the first one to the story and get scoops on stories other outlets don’t have. It also opposes the view that other outlets are competitors vying for reader’s/viewer’s/listener’s attention. Instead, collaboration takes a more utilitarian approach: vying for the greatest amount of an audience’s attention on an issue or topic.

The Hierarchy of Influences model is a commonly used theory for analyzing how newsrooms function and what influences news production in the proper context and has been previously applied to studies centered around fully converged newsrooms. However, there seems to be limited studies applied to collaborations specifically related to radio newsrooms, and the different levels of collaborations, which will be touched upon later in the literature review.

Using levels of analysis through Hierarchy of Influences theory will provide aid in order to understand how exactly newsroom collaborations work, and what influences ultimately drive how they work. As collaborative journalism begins to grow larger in the industry, it is important to understand the factors and influences that make them

successful. Using the Hierarchy of Influences theory and past studies of collaborations may help take steps forward in answering the following question:

RQ: What factors lead to success or failure for a public media newsroom collaboration?

Examining what elements create the most efficient and successful collaborations can give valuable insight to future newsroom leaders in creating future partnerships and in-depth journalist projects that incorporate some level of cross-newsroom work.

Hierarchy of Influences

Shoemaker and Reese came up with the theoretical framework of Hierarchy of Influences in 1996, and it's a way to analyze media based on "levels of influence" (Reese, 2001). According to Reese, the theoretical framework is designed to "help classify influences both separately and in conjunction with each other." The Hierarchy of Influences looks at media through five levels, from large to small: social systems, social institutions, media organizations, routine practices and individuals (Shoemaker and Reese, 2014). Here are the following levels and what they mean, from lowest to highest (Shoemaker and Reese 2014; Reese 2001; Ferrucci et. al. 2017):

- **Individual:** characteristics of the communicator such as attitudes and background.
- **Routines:** consistent everyday practices of communicator.
- **Organization:** how an organization like a news organization or entity influences the communicator, considers goals, policies and how power is enacted.
- **Social Institution:** organizations that influence outside of communicator organization like government.
- **Social System:** The larger cultural, ideological system that journalists work inside.

Reese says the hierarchy plays an important role in research that draws comparisons because "it can place the phenomena of interest within a structural

constraint” (Reese 2001). Hierarchy of Influences can examine, for example, different collaborations through the level of routine practices and individuals, and account for other forces in the hierarchy like media organization. As Shoemaker and Reese phrase it, the levels help analyze by keeping “different expressions of power into account: from the momentary and institutional to the systematic and societal” (Shoemaker and Reese. Basically, the framework recognizes that there are more forces that influence a newsroom than the individuals and newsroom processes. While there certainly can be analysis primarily through certain levels, Shoemaker and Reese suggest that the hierarchy is more so “interconnected forces” rather than separate levels. Therefore, one must account for all levels of analysis when analyzing media, even if concentrating on a particular level for research.

Using Hierarchy of Influences model will allow a researcher to analyze how these newly formed newsroom processes work — while acknowledging that there is more than one force that influences the production of the news. When conducting and analyzing interviews with the performance of a collaboration, a researcher can organize what they say into the hierarchy and then draw a well-rounded examination. The theoretical model has been applied to subjects such as converged newsrooms and TV partnerships (Ferrucci et al. 2017; Silcock and Keith 2006). While this theory hasn’t been used for collaborations often, it is a theoretical model often used to study newsrooms.

Studying collaborations & models

The Center for Cooperative Media has been studying this trend and has broken the kinds of news collaborations into six categories, which the headline indicates as a “revolution in media”: temporary and separate, temporary and co-creating, temporary and

integrated, ongoing and separate, ongoing and co-creating and ongoing and integrated (Murray, 2017). The taxonomy of the collaborations is based on two factors, according to the full report: the duration of the collaboration and the level of integration in the newsroom (Stonbely, 2017).

Most researchers seem to refer to collaborations as a “convergence.” Dailey et al. (2005) created, similar to Murray, a way to define a collaboration. For Dailey et al., it is defined by the level of involvement: from mere cross-promotion and cloning of a partner’s work to a fully converged newsroom where employees from different newsrooms are utilized based on strength of medium to tell a multimedia story (Dailey et al.). This study will approach the phrase “convergence” as a scale to study collaboration.

The larger impact of collaborations might be glimpsed through recent investigative collaborations like the Panama Papers and may hold implications for the industry as collaborative efforts increase. Singer (2018) identified a change in investigative journalism: a shift away from competitive newsrooms, to investigations done across several. The study concludes that the benefit of collaboration is a way to navigate “economic conditions” of newsrooms, with the ability to share costs, increase reach, an increased ability to set the news agenda and to tackle complex topics like the Panama Papers (Singer).

Collaborations may be a way to work on investigations in an age of declining newsrooms, and with news deserts. While the author acknowledges some potential consequences of investigative collaborations downsides like a “diversity in story targets,” the study ultimately recognizes the positive potential of collaborative investigative work may be ways for newsrooms to navigate organizational difficulties (Singer).

Collaborations and challenges

Ferrucci et al. (2017) studied the changes of roles journalists at St. Louis Public Radio and St. Louis Beacon had when the two newsrooms merged into one, and it mainly focuses on routine level of communication in the newsroom. The Beacon was a nonprofit digital newsroom primarily full of former newspaper reporters, and it paired with a newsroom that mostly produced news to air on the radio (Ferrucci et al.). One of the disadvantages of the merger, journalists said, was that it created an overall larger organization with a hierarchy of power, which overall changed the communication in the newsroom between staff (Ferrucci et al).

What journalists found as a disadvantage of the merger was rooted within the organizational level of influence. The study also said the organizational structure ultimately changed the routines of the journalists, because they had to communicate differently and learn different skills based on the mediums of the two newsrooms (Ferrucci et al). Ferrucci et al. cites a study by Lowrey (2011) that asserts newsrooms struggle with innovation because of a “failure to adjust to changes” (p. 65).

The Ferrucci et al. study can be applied to any public media collaboration — and based on the struggles those journalists went through in a fully-converged collaboration, one might ask questions about organizational challenges and limitations in currently existing collaborations. While the collaborations in the literature review might not match the same kind of collaboration for public radio, surely the journalists have similar struggles in organizational or routine change. A collaboration with multiple stations participating, for example, might shift organization in the sense of power hierarchy, which would ultimately affect the journalist’s routines.

Silcock and Keith (2006) studied how newsrooms that implement convergence face challenges. They studied a collaboration with Tampa Tribune and WFLA-TV and the Arizona Republic with KPNX-TV, adopting the hierarchy of influences theory as a basis for research. One of the issues, similar to the Ferrucci et al. study, is a struggle of adapting to the different organizational differences of the newsroom. For example, there was a “language gap” between the two newsrooms on certain terms like “package” (Silcock and Keith). Even beyond a “language barrier” between the newsrooms, were culture clashes from differing routines and organizational pressures, such as the newspapers not trusting TV station routines, resulting in a partnership that “devolved” (Silcock and Keith).

Organizational and cultural challenges could be an underlying reason why at one point, newspaper and TV cross-promotional partnerships were a major roadblock, with one survey saying while 35 % of partnerships had been formed with TV stations, 13% ended the partnership (Dailey et al. 2009). The issues in TV and newspaper collaboration perhaps reinforces that collaborations may be particularly difficult with traditional newsrooms because of an established, organizational value of competition rather than cooperation, which in turn limits innovation (Paulussen 2011). Paulussen states that innovation might also be hindered by reluctant individuals who do not want to adopt new practices, perhaps sticking with previous organizational values and routines.

It’s important to keep in mind that this study was done in 2006, when newspaper and TV collaborations most commonly were cross-promotional (Dailey et al. 2005; Lowrey 2005). In a survey, more 200 newspapers responded and said cross-promotion was the most common form of collaboration (Lowrey). And while things might have

changed with what kinds of collaborations are most often occurring today, one can conclude that even at the most basic level of collaboration (cross-promotion), newsrooms can still have trouble navigating cultural and organizational differences. As collaborations between different types of news organizations continue to happen at varying levels or types, questions of navigating the cultural and organizational differences of the newsrooms will still be relevant.

While there are plenty of examples of TV-newspaper collaborations, there seems to be significant gaps in public radio collaborations, with exception of the Ferrucci et al. study. After reviewing the literature though, it is worth exploring how organizational and cultural challenges hinder innovation in collaborations.

Method

The study will primarily use semi-structured, in-depth interviews. Interviewing, in its simplest terms is “conversation with a purpose” (Lindof and Taylor p. 171). Part of its appeal is that while the researcher can control the questions, it provides a first-person account of someone’s “experience and perspective through stories, accounts and explanations” (Lindof and Taylor). So, in-depth interviewing would allow personal perspectives and reasoning to why and how newsrooms choose to collaborate, and what they believe is the intended goal of the collaboration. Because newsroom leaders are often the decisionmakers of these collaborations, in-depth interviewing on both sides of the collaboration would be required in order to gain a full understanding of what makes a good collaboration, and why and how they decided to have one. That is, except the collaboration is part of a wide network, like Electionland.

The Malterud et al. (2016) article on Information Power provides guidelines on sample size for in-depth interviews based on the scope of the research question. The concept of “information power” means that the more information a sample holds, the lower number of participants is needed (Malterud et al.). If the study aim is narrow, it will need the least number of participants, while a broader study will need more participants in order to study the “broadest variations of the phenomena studied” (Malterud et al.). Other considerations the authors bring up to consider with sample size is study aim, sample specificity, quality of dialogue and use of established theory (Malterud et al.). Considering the research questions proposed are wider, it might be better to have a wider survey of interview subjects.

One can appreciate Ryfe’s (2018) argument that the “motivation of news production lies beyond their ability to articulate,” and that researchers often leave out the “inexpressible culture that motivates the production of news” (Ryfe). However, in order for news leaders to incorporate decisions about newsroom collaborations, they must have some sort of formal logic that informs their decision. And what forms those decisions, is most likely a sense of what the newsroom needs and an ideal or effective idea of what a collaboration would look like.

There’s no doubt in Ryfe’s argument that researchers rely too much on in-depth interviews, but interviewing allows an opportunity to view the formal logic that goes into newsroom innovations. It’s still important to document and research that formal logic in itself.

Review of Existing Methodologies

While there aren't a lot of studies that use in-depth interviews to analyze newsroom collaborations, there are studies with models that could be adapted. Specifically, there are studies that look at converged newsrooms by interviewing journalists. Those studies could be a model for studying newsroom collaborations through in-depth interviews.

The Meaning and Influence of Convergence: A Qualitative Case Studies of Newsroom Work at the Tampa News Center

The study looks into the effects of a converged newsroom in Florida — three years after a TV, online and newspaper was all put under one roof. The researchers use the definition of case study as “an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its modern context” and is “best used to study complex social and organizational structures” (Dailey & Garrison 2006 p. 243). They use a combination of documents and in-depth interviews to illustrate what it means to be in a converged newsroom, which was considered an innovation. Because it's studying the implementation of a new innovation, this study's model could be applicable to studying emerging newsroom collaborations. One thing that stood out in this study is that the researchers did a “pilot field study” before visiting the newsrooms and identified employees viable for interviews and a questionnaire to determine the interviewing schedule (Dailey & Garrison).

While studying a converged newsroom is not the exact same as a newsroom collaboration, the methods of studying journalist's ideas about a newsroom innovation remains similar. Based on the research questions about newsroom collaborations, it might

be best to interview people in multiple newsrooms in order to receive a wider survey of perspectives in order to create broader themes.

Times are Changin': How a Merger Affects the Construction of the News Processes

This study analyzes the changes of roles that journalists at St. Louis Public Radio and the St. Louis Beacon had when the two newsrooms merged. The study is similar in the sense that it's studying two newsrooms joining together, and it uses semi-structured interviews as part of its methods. It has implications for collaboration studies because it explores how merging of newsrooms can change routines. This study also takes a similar approach as the convergence study in that it uses the merger as a case study. The difference in this one is that it uses the mixed method of ethnography (observing news meetings) and semi-structured in-depth interviews before and after the merger (Ferrucci 2017). This study could be used as a model for a project with a work placement. If a work placement does occur for the collaboration study, spending time in news meetings and conducting interviews could be beneficial. However, the timeline for the collaboration study would be much shorter.

What both of these studies have in common is mixed methods: a component of observation and a component of interviewing.

How Podcasting is Changing the Audio Storytelling Genre

Again, while this research does not directly apply to collaboration study, the method is one that could be applied to studying collaborative efforts. The article uses in-depth interviews to analyze how podcasting is changing the audio storytelling genre and focuses on five industry leaders' perspectives from the U.S., Australia, United Kingdom

and Germany (McHugh 2016). It's interesting that the researchers chose to interview industry leaders from around the world, it seems to broaden the perspective. The reasoning for why they were selected was because they "play a significant role in the podcast/broadcast ecology" because they serve on the board for a journal that provides analysis of audio feature storytelling (McHugh). This informs my methodology because it might be good to select leaders who are prominent in forging collaborative efforts.

While the studies featured here provide ideas about how to structure the methods of the study, there is still missing literature with in-depth interviews about newsroom collaborations. There are only studies about how to study collaborations, and how well they work. However, the models of collaboration outlined in the introduction point to different types of collaboration to look at when searching for interviewing subjects.

Study Design

The study will interview eight newsroom leaders coordinating collaborations. If a newsroom is one that works with another newsroom directly, it will require interviews from both newsrooms involved. I plan to examine different models of collaborations. Cases could be from newsrooms that have participated in different models of collaboration, based on the models provided by the Center for Collaborative Media, outlined by Murray (2017):

- Temporary and separate — projects that all individually work on one project.
- Temporary and co-creating — one-time projects that require newsrooms to work together for a larger project.
- Ongoing and separate — partners create content separately but share it.

- Ongoing and co-creating — collaborations that work together to create a product on a consistent basis.

Interviews would be with newsroom leaders or collaboration coordinators in order to seek reasoning behind the models chosen, what the needs of the newsroom were and what made it successful. The study will seek a variety of different collaborations across different mediums like broadcast, print, online and radio. I have spoken to Matt Janssen, the digital editor at Current, and he said he would be interested in publishing the interviews as a series of Q&A articles or a longer article about collaboration.

Logistics

The study would require reaching out to newsrooms, inquiring about their interest in the study. Selection of interviews would not be limited to geography.

Below are a few people who I could possibly interview, along with bios:

- 1.) **Jeremy Burnfeld** — According to his Guns and America bio page, “Jeremy Bernfeld is the lead editor of Guns & America and the director of collaborative reporting at WAMU. Before moving to D.C., Bernfeld was the editor of Harvest Public Media, a public media collaboration reporting from the Midwest on our food system. Prior to that, he worked at WBUR in Boston.”
- 2.) **Donna Vestal** — According to her KCUR bio, Vestal “is a print refugee; she spent 18 years as a business editor at The Kansas City Star before coming to KCUR in 2010 to take the helm at Harvest Public Media. Donna is the author of a history of TWA flight attendants. And she's won numerous journalism awards, mostly as part of behind-the-scenes work with reporters.”
- 3.) **Holly Edgell** — According to her St. Louis Public Radio bio, “Holly Edgell is the Editor of a four-station collaborative coverage initiative on race, identity and culture. Based at St. Louis Public Radio, she leads a team of four reporters in St. Louis, Hartford, Kansas City and Portland, Ore. Holly comes to St. Louis Public Radio as a journalist with more than 20 years of experience. In addition to working as a television news producer in several cities, in 2010 she launched 12 St. Louis-area websites for Patch.com, the hyperlocal news initiative introduced

by AOL. Also in St. Louis, she took on a wide range freelance reporting assignments for news organizations such as The National Catholic Reporter and the New York Daily News. In 2012, she was part of the leadership team that launched WCPO Insider (WCPO.com), the first local television news initiative to introduce an a la carte subscription model for exclusive, in-depth content that audiences could not find elsewhere. She later served as Director of Digital media for KSHB-TV in Kansas City and WEWS-TV in Cleveland. In addition to newsroom experience, Holly taught journalism at the University of Missouri and Florida A&M University. She was also a member of the first cohort of Google News Lab trainers. She is a member of the National Association of Black Journalists and the Society of Professional Journalists. Holly holds a bachelor's degree in journalism from Michigan State University and a master's degree in media management from Kent State University.”

- 4.) **Cleveland Dietz**, project manager, Side Effects Public Media — According to his bio on Side Effects Public Media, “Cleveland was previously general manager for WFHB Community Radio in Bloomington, Indiana. He has also served as a staff writer at a weekly newspaper in Ellettsville, Indiana and as senior copy editor for a software reviews website based in Hamburg, Germany. He has a bachelor's degree in journalism from IUPUI in Indianapolis.”
- 5.) **Bruce Auster**, senior director, collaborative journalism network — According to his NPR bio page, “Bruce Auster is NPR's Senior Director for the Collaborative Journalism Network. He is at the center of an effort to transform the public radio system and establish a new way for NPR and the newsrooms of hundreds of NPR Member Stations to work together. Before taking on this effort, Bruce led NPR's National Security unit from 2008 to 2015. In that role, he directed NPR's coverage of international security issues from Washington—including stories involving the U.S. military and the intelligence community.”
- 6.) **Rachel Osier Lindley**, statewide coordinating editor — According to the KERA bio, “Lindley is the Statewide Coordinating Editor for the Texas Station Collaborative. In this role, she connects with newsrooms across Texas to plan and produce collaborative news coverage and projects, daily statewide newscasts, content for the public radio newsmagazine Texas Standard and national coverage for NPR and other outlets.”
- 7.) **Kevin Sullivan**, executive producer of Reveal. According to his bio on the Reveal website, “Kevin Sullivan is the executive producer of Reveal's public radio show and podcast. He joined Reveal from the daily news magazine show “Here & Now,” where he was senior managing editor. There, he helped lead the expansion of the show as part of a unique partnership between NPR and WBUR. Prior to radio, Sullivan worked as a documentary film producer. That work took him around the world, with stories ranging from reconciliation in Northern Ireland to the refugee crisis during the war in Kosovo.”

- 8.) **Kate Concannon**, managing editor of the Mountain West News Bureau. According to the Boise State Public Radio bio page, “Kate Concannon is Managing Editor of the Mountain West News Bureau. She's an award-winning journalist who has covered the West for more than two-and-a-half decades as a reporter, show producer, researcher and editor. She perfected her editing chops as the Western Bureau Chief for NPR for twelve years where she managed reporters across thirteen Western States.”
- 9.) **Patricia Cahill**, Vice Chair of the CPB Board of Directors. According to her bio page, “Patricia Cahill was reappointed to the CPB Board of Directors by President Barack Obama and confirmed by the Senate in May 2015. She was appointed for her first term in 2009. She previously served as board chair from 2012 to 2014. She was elected vice chair in October 2018, a position she also held from 2011 to 2012. Ms. Cahill has worked in public radio for more than 40 years. In 2012, she retired as general manager of KCUR-FM, the public radio station at the University of Missouri-Kansas City.

Prior to her 25 years of service at KCUR, Ms. Cahill worked as a reporter, producer, program director, news director, and general manager of KMUW-FM at Wichita State University, where she was also an instructor in speech communications and journalism.

Ms. Cahill has served on the board of directors for NPR and as the chair of the Distribution/Interconnection Committee, the Membership Committee, and the Development Committee. She was also the president of Public Radio in Mid America, a public radio membership organization, and vice president of Kansas Public Radio Association.”

Here are some sample questions I could ask:

- 1.) What are some of the biggest challenges the newsroom faced when starting the collaboration, and how did you solve them?
- 2.) What kind of organizational adjustments had to be made between different newsrooms for the collaboration to work?
- 3.) How does communication between newsrooms work? How often are newsrooms communicating between each other?
- 4.) What ideas, if any, were attempted and didn't work? (If applicable, why?)
- 5.) What was the goal of the collaboration?
- 6.) What was the planning process for implementing the collaboration? How many people were involved, and how long did it take?
- 7.) What would you change in the planning phase of the collaboration to make things smoother?
- 8.) As an editor, what is the most difficult part working in the collaboration?
- 9.) What is the biggest factor that drives the success of the collaboration?

- 10.) What did you change during the collaboration, if anything, that made the collaboration more efficient?
- 11.) What worked well in the collaboration, and why?
- 12.) How did you ensure and facilitate good communication within the collaboration?

Limitations

A possible obstacle to this study may be getting access to newsroom leaders. Some may not want to talk to a researcher, or fear that company secrets might be revealed. Because the study is taking over the course of a few months, it limits the time to analyze the interviews to find common themes. For this reason, the number of interviews will have to be limited.

Changes to project proposal

Following the project proposal defense, here are the changes made to the proposal based on feedback from the committee:

- Revised the research question to focus specifically on public media
- include “or failure” into my research question into the question
- Included someone from the Corporation for Public Broadcasting on the list of people that could potentially be interviewed for the research component.
- Included some questions about success in list of questions for interviews (see questions 11, 12).

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