

CONVERGENCE IN THE CURRICULUM: A SURVEY OF COLLEGE  
COMMUNICATIONS PROGRAMS

By

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This thesis is dedicated to all the people who put up with my rubbish the last two years.

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Multimedia journalism has transformed the way news is produced and consumed. This study, a survey of college journalism programs, found that the single most important reason for a curriculum revision is to keep up with the now-converged industry standard. In February 2008, college administrators reported whether they included forms of convergence in their curriculum. Through the examination of the data about teaching methods, coursework, facilities and faculty, it was suggested that the majority of administrators and faculty were altering their approach to teaching journalism to include multi-platform training. Only 9% of respondents reported they had not started to discuss a revision to integrate convergence. This study found that at least some form of convergence was present in the majority of programs, whether it is through teaching print and broadcast journalism in the same track, offering new courses, building a multimedia newsroom or hiring new faculty members. This study found that the curriculum alteration depended heavily on industry changes, cost and faculty support.

## CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

With pieces of an aged curriculum lying far behind him, John Lavine, dean of Northwestern's Medill School of Journalism, is fighting for the future he thinks will serve journalism students best. After Northwestern University's president and provost abandoned the idea of shared governance and gave the dean complete decision-making control over the school, Lavine revamped the traditional curriculum with classes such as Reporting and Writing Across Platforms, 21<sup>st</sup> Century Media and Multimedia Storytelling for the Web (Mangan, 2007).

The "Innovative Curricula for 2020" was unveiled in August of 2007, and controversy soon followed. Not only was the faculty miffed about the decision-making process, alumni grew furious about abandoning traditional teaching methods, and even students felt disadvantaged, saying they had come to Medill to learn to write well, nothing else. Colleagues in journalism programs across the nation questioned Lavine's reasoning to include marketing and "consumer" understanding in the new curricula (Mangan, 2007, p. 1).

But Lavine stood by his decision.

According to Johnson (2007), Lavine argued it is "worse than wrongheaded to continue to turn out journalism students the old-fashioned way, preparing them for disappearing jobs in print publications and giving them little knowledge of the changing demands of consumers" (p. 1). Lavine noted: "It is immoral" (Johnson, 2007, p. 1).

### **Industry Shift to Convergence**

While journalism educators decide where they stand on a converged curriculum, a fast-paced industry featuring team efforts, flexibility and digital technology has long since replaced typewriters and the one-man story. The dramatic shift in audience attention and behavior has

caused media to make information accessible through different vehicles 24 hours a day. Readers can access up-to-date news through web sites, television stations and even text messages.

“Newspapers cannot be defined by the second word – paper,” said Arthur Sulzberger, Jr., publisher and chairman of New York Times Company. “All of us have to become agnostic as to the method of distribution. We’ve got to be as powerful online, as powerful in TV and broadcasting, as we are powerful in newsprint” (Gates, 2002, p. 2).

Bob Schieffer, recently interim news anchor at CBS news said, “If the railroads had realized that they were in the transportation business, they’d own all the airlines today. Unfortunately, they thought they were in the railroad business, and that’s what we have to keep in mind here. We’re in the information business” (Johnson, 2006, p. 1).

In 2006, Gannett newspapers transformed 85 of their papers across the country into 24-hour, local Information Centers (Strupp, 2007). “We think online first, and don’t even think about the print paper until later in the day,” said Holly Towns, an executive editor with Gannett (Strupp, 2007, p. 20).

The professional world is looking for students to have multimedia basic journalism skills. But, as Chet Rhodes of [washingtonpost.com](http://www.washingtonpost.com) said, “When we hire people, we look for good journalists first. But if you have two resumes and one person is a good journalist and they’ve never used the Internet and the other person is a good journalist and has used the Internet, it’s obvious who you would hire” (Trombly, 2000, p. 2).

The majority of job postings on <http://www.JournalismJobs.com> for March 28, 2008 included multimedia duties. Out of 42 postings, 24 required a cross-platform aspect to the job. The other 18 did not mention any converged skills required.

Journalism schools, much like Medill, face challenges when making changes to the curriculum to mirror the industry.

### **Defining Convergence**

Scholarly writings offer many ways to define “convergence,” if they even use the term “convergence” at all. Others use the terms “multimedia,” “cross-platform” or “fusion journalism” (Huang et al, 2006). Huang et al found four categories to divide convergence into: content convergence, form (or technological) convergence, corporate convergence and, what is most important for journalism schools today, role convergence. Singer (2004) defines convergence as a combination of technologies, products, staffs and geography among previously separate areas of print, television and online media. She points out to some, convergence emphasizes information sharing (content convergence), to others, it involves newspaper reporters taping a voiceover for a newscast or television reporters phoning in breaking news details to update a web site (role convergence). For the purposes of this study, content, form and role convergence will be studied.

Researchers keep giving new definitions to the same word. To Henry Jenkins (2006), a media analyst, convergence is a culture. He writes: “Convergence is a word that manages to describe technological, industrial, cultural and social changes depending on who’s speaking and what they are speaking about” (Jenkins, 2006, p. 2-3). He argues that the idea of convergence should not just be understood as a technological process of bringing together multiple media functions within the same devices. Rather, convergence represents a cultural shift as “consumers” are encouraged to seek out new information and make connections among dispersed media content (2006). In this way, Jenkins supports Lavine’s new curriculum at Medill. A shift to audience attention is necessary. Jenkins writes the circulation of media content depends heavily on consumers’ active participation. Not only are consumers accepting

convergence, they are driving it. Jenkins (2006) explains that there is new relationship to be considered – the relationship between media audiences, producers, and content. He says three things are clear: “(1) convergence is coming and you had better be ready, (2) convergence is harder than it sounds, and (3) everyone will survive if everyone works” (Jenkins, 2006, p. 10).

Lowery, Daniels and Becker (2005) claim that the industry converging is a strong enough factor to push schools toward a converged effort, and most schools are moving from discussion to experimentation, but there is still a degree of caution that comes with it. They define three stages of curricular reform: “static, supplementary and realigned” (p. 34). In the case of converged curricula, programs in the static stage emphasize medium-specific training over cross-media training. Programs in the supplementary state maintain the traditional curriculum but supplement with additional courses or sequences that address the perceived pressure. Programs, like Medill, in the realigned stage, reconceptualize and reshape their overall curricula structure in response to perceived pressures.

Lowery, Daniels and Becker study was the first to quantify faculty interest in the direct correlation with an integrated convergence curriculum. Their hypothesis stated the stronger the faculty interest in pursuing a converged curriculum, the more likely the program will train students across media types. Their study gave support to suspected correlations.

The first function in the Lowery, Daniels and Becker (2005) study explains why journalism and mass communication programs pursue some level of convergence instead of emphasizing specialization. The strongest predictor is faculty interest. In their discussion, they suggest the issue of industry convergence is on the minds of most program administrators and faculty. Also, the perception that the news industry is seeking, or will be seeking, to hire cross-skilled graduates is an issue affecting journalism curriculums.

Huang (2006) concludes dealing with media convergence in college journalism education is a must, the primary reason being that students can get competitive jobs in journalism. He claims media convergence poses both challenges and opportunities to journalism schools to reconsider their current curriculum design, sequence setting, faculty composition, teaching methods, and internship approaches. These themes were used to construct part of this study's survey questions.

The goal of this study, a survey of college communication programs, was to know how many college programs are working convergence into their curriculum and to understand what is working, what is not working and what's to come for the future of the journalism curriculum.

## CHAPTER 2 LITERATURE REVIEW

Studies about media convergence claim it is a comparatively new topic in media research. Most research on convergence does not appear any earlier than the late 1990s (Huang et al, 2006). Although it is a relatively new topic, studies about convergence in the news industry have become repetitive. Dozens of studies have surveyed and interviewed media managers, editors and reporters and come to the same conclusion: convergence is happening, and it's happening fast (Carr 2002b, 2002c; Deuze, 2006; Huang et al, 2006; Quinn, 2005a; Deuze, Huang et al 2006; Singer 2004, 2006;).

Multimedia presence in the industry presents media managers and journalism educators with the task of appropriately training journalists. An organization cannot function with anything less than a properly trained staff. Good quality content is produced by a quality staff: this will define the news organization's values (Quinn, 2005). Cleary (2006) stated that there is some professional development training going on in broadcast newsrooms, but many employees say they don't believe there is strong managerial support for training. Newsrooms indicate journalism educators can play a part in the solution to the problem by serving as trainers themselves in professional settings and helping students develop "advocacy skills" to increase on-the-job training.

More than two thirds of journalists in the industry receive no regular training. Across the country, news organizations have not increased their training budgets in the last 13 years. They blame lack of money and time for their shortcomings (Newton, 2003). Many journalism schools are putting the brakes on integrating new media into the curriculum because of their skepticism with the professional media merging movement. The scholarly readings suggest the business model of multi-platform publishing is "a way to increase productivity among staff and – equally

important – as a way to grab as large a share of the advertising pie as possible” (Quinn 2005a, p. 32). Deuze (2005) noted that there is increased pressure for individuals to perform. Critics complain that having all the media in one region owned by the same company is a threat to democracy (Anderson, 2002; Blethen, 2002; Foster, 2002; O’Connor, 2002; Tompkins, 2001; Tompkins and Stenel, 2002). The issue of cross-ownership raises more than just concern about how it will affect society but also whether it is good for the craft of journalism (Huang et al, 2006). Robert J. Haiman, president emeritus of The Poynter Institute in St. Petersburg, Florida, calls convergence “evil” (Haiman, 2001). He stated: “I made a speech to some media executives last year in which I got a bit carried away and allowed myself to say I thought that convergence was just a terrible idea, an abomination with the full potential to take the news business straight to hell!” (Haiman, 2001, p. 2). Haiman argues content is king and says that if convergence does not go well, “It is going to subject journalists to time, resource, craft and ethical pressures, all of which will be bad for journalists, bad for journalism, and bad for the country” (Haiman, 2001, p. 2).

Haiman (2001) pleads to journalism schools and teachers to offer students the right curriculum to function best in that converged world, and this does not mean offering new courses in convergence.

Many editors and reporters said that school is the best place for journalism students to explore every facet of the media and acquire basic technical skills (Huang et al, 2006). Stewart (2007) notes not all media organizations are looking for multimedia skills first. Walter Middlebrook, the director of recruiting for the Detroit News notes: “The problem is, we see a lot of people with multimedia skills who lack the journalism skills. They still need to be taught journalism” (Stewart, 2007, p. 3).

On the other hand, some journalism schools are not teaching the media skills necessary for the newsroom today; many employees are often forced to do quick, fly-by-the-seat-of-their-pants training in using certain equipment, uploading to content management systems or planning stories for different media. The Society of Professional Journalists offers a web-based training site funded by a grant from the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation that allows journalists to search for journalism instruction by topic. The organization offers a traveling newsroom training program covering topics such as deadline writing, broadcast writing, online writing, newsroom ethics and public records (Tatum, 2007). The Poynter Institute also offers online training courses through NewsU.org.

### **Training for Convergence**

Articles correlating industry convergence and higher education are appearing more and more, especially in regards to curriculum changes.

James Gentry, a specialist in converged student training, redeveloped the curriculum at the William Allen White School of Journalism and Mass Communication at the University of Kansas in 1997. Gentry re-evaluated the journalism curriculum when it was time for re-accreditation. The results, after surveying five-year graduates, showed most students were in different fields than originally tracked (Birge, 2004). At KU, they combined “six former undergraduate tracks into two new divisions: news/information, which includes news-editorial, broadcast and magazine journalism; and strategic communications, a blending of management, marketing, advertising and public relations” (Nicholson, 2001, p. 3). Although convergence is still, after 10 years, leaving some schools confused, others have adopted its core principle. Birge’s (2004) article not only supports the need for a more fused journalism track, it also provides examples of universities implementing drastic changes from traditional teaching practices to a more open, cross-learning environment.

Dale Cressman, an assistant professor in broadcast at Brigham Young University, tried to teach print students with broadcast students but claimed it did not work. Administration at BYU found they were not covering the basics or technology adequately and took most of the multimedia offerings out of the writing classes to give the students a better foundation in journalism (Wenger, 2005).

In 2002, Indiana's Ball State University adopted convergence into their curriculum not because of what the newsrooms looked like at the time, but rather what they *would* look like in five to 10 years (Birge, 2004). Many students, with communications as their intended area of study, often play the field, signing up for magazine, print, editing and television classes. Mark Popovich, a professor of journalism at Ball State, found most schools were offering or planned to offer a converged writing class. He found teachers to be in a transition period about what they were doing and what their philosophies were (Birge, 2004). Journalism schools seem to be toying with ideas on how to integrate convergence courses. One issue to be considered is whether this class would be offered at the beginning of the students' sequence or at the end - during their senior year.

While some institutions like Northwestern's Medill, UC Berkeley and Ball State have adopted convergence into the core of their curriculum, others are left in the dust looking for direction. This has been a serious conversation between academics. Redeveloping a curriculum from scratch sounded near impossible – until August 2007, when Dean Lavine at Medill proved otherwise.

Many schools say they do not have the time or resources to reinvent the wheel with a new schedule of courses, new faculty training in convergence – given that many journalism faculty members have been out of the professional field for the last 5 years – or purchase expensive

equipment to be shared among disciplines. And certainly they do not want to feel they have fallen victim to “diluting” the curriculum because of an industry model and collaboration of big business in media. A concern for many is responding more to the profit-making, cost-saving reality of consolidated ownership of the media, and less to catering to the public’s interest and addressing the demand for new ways to receive information (Kolodzy, 2006).

### **Faculty Training**

Mindy McAdams, the Knight Chair in Journalism at the University of Florida, said there are only a few journalism teachers who know how to do anything online. “And many of those who act like they know something are in fact using techniques and approaches that are far, far out of date” (Stewart, 2007, p. 12). Most of the research indicates current journalism educators need more skills, although many universities are either unable or unwilling to commit resources for faculty development (Stewart, 2007). The Poytner Institute, a media learning center that often arranges seminars and workshops for teachers, sees many faculty members who are worried they do not know enough. And, they are there “on their own dime” (Stewart, 2007, p. 12).

McAdams says that money is an obstacle. “Resources and finances figure in, big time. You need some gear, even if it’s cheap gear – and you certainly need software” (Stewart, 2007, p. 13).

Some faculty members have taken convergence into their own hands, with or without support from their administrators. McAdams noted:

I have seen several e-mails in the past month from college journalism educators who are writing a syllabus for a new online journalism course at their school. So, the positive thing is, the courses are being started up. The worrisome thing is I think a lot of these educators should really go sit on the online desk at a mid-size newspaper for a month or two before they craft the course - but that’s not going to happen (Stewart, 2007, p. 13).

Many educators and newspaper employees are looking to bridge the gap McAdams said. Most literature indicates there is blame placed on both groups. Educators don't believe there is support from the industry, and the industry might not always feel education is keeping up (Irby, 2000).

Faculty themselves are admitting they need more training (Erb, 2001).

Most professors don't have multimedia skills. To teach across platforms, schools will have to rely on team teaching and using adjunct faculty (South, Nicholson, & Fisher, 2002).

A Kansas University professor said it was frightening to have to teach material he did not feel comfortable and competent enough in. It takes people outside of their comfort zone. Kansas University and other schools are provided in-house training for faculty, and the news industry seems to be helping (Nicholson, 2001).

The American Society of Newspaper Editors (ASNE) sends journalism professors into the newsroom each summer. Since 1995, supported by Knight Foundation funding, ASNE has sent more than 90 professors to newspapers for six-week residency programs. The professors get hand-on experience as reporters, editors, designers and learn some of the latest digital technologies (Liebeskind, 1999).

### **Convergence in Practice**

In the past 10 years, the availability of improved news gathering technology has changed journalists' reporting methods. News publishers, producers and managers are working in a world where content is delivered to digital devices. If these digital newsrooms can hire students trained in a college program inclusive of multimedia skills, the industry just might have a chance at catching up with itself and its audience.

Print media is not disappearing. Print is becoming increasingly visual, and visuals help people absorb information quicker. Video streaming and sound bites are available on web sites, laptops have become televisions and PDAs and iPods are information sources. News has developed into a 24-7 cycle. Inevitably, this process will intensify (Quinn, 2005).

In the book *Convergent Journalism: Writing and Producing Across the Media*, Quinn (2005) argues that the more work reporters do, the more likely they are to miss deadline. It is suggested that reporters who are forced to churn out stories for *each* medium will repeat themselves across media platforms. Critics of convergence argue that the “superjournalist” approach to teaching students would make for worse journalism because they could no longer specialize in any niche of journalism (Quinn & Filak, 2005).

A portion of journalism educators agree.

Wasserman (2006), the Knight Professor for journalism ethics at Washington and Lee University, has deep concerns about convergence and journalism. He offers four issues to consider: convergence is a response to business needs, not journalistic ones; convergence privileges certain technical capabilities over others; convergence seems to engender management practices that degrade newsroom working conditions; and convergence puts marketing above journalism.

In 1995, when Brigham Young University began talking about multimedia journalism, educators there did not believe it would hurt students in the long run. They moved students from print and broadcast into the same space. Dr. Stephen Adams, one of the college’s former deans, was not happy with what was happening to the curriculum. He said students knew about a lot of things, but did not know much in depth. It was argued that convergence course never allowed the

students to achieve mastery in any one area of writing before moving on to the next level of coursework (Wenger, 2005).

Instead, Quinn (2005) suggests ways journalists with varying skill backgrounds can produce separate stories that take advantage of each medium's strong points. When revising the journalism curriculum, many administrators are faced with one main question: should we combine print and TV into one integrated track or keep them separate, sharing equipment and professors for a few classes here and there?

Take this example from Quinn's book: covering a city council meeting where the board will vote on a controversial superstore to be built in the city. In *print*, the meeting could be covered in detail, perhaps including the use of a diagram and residents' reactions. In *radio*, conversation between the council and the neighbors interacting could be the focus. For *television*, rather than showing the meetings, the focus could be on the neighborhood, including interviews with residents and developers. Reports could show sketches of what the building would look like. The *website* offers the most media-rich opportunity. Creators could include interactive views of the store, a 360-degree view of how the store will look from people's yards, sound bites, and give readers the opportunity to comment, and even design, a layout. The chances are the "superjournalist" could not cover all angles of the meeting, proving that journalism specialties are still needed (Quinn & Filak, 2005).

### **Theoretical Basis for the Study**

There are two theories that shape this study: Diffusion of Innovations and the Interdisciplinary theory.

## **Diffusion of Innovations**

First is Rogers' (2003) Diffusion of Innovations theory. The professional news industry has fully adopted the diffusion of innovations and technology into its newsrooms. This study will examine where journalism programs stand in adopting convergence into their curriculums.

Convergence is the new idea to be adopted. The main elements included in the diffusion of new ideas include “(1) an innovation, (2) that is communicated through certain channels, (3) over time, (4) among the members of a social system” (Rogers, 2003, p. 36). With the introduction and adoption of the Internet and easily-accessible and usable technology, professional news organizations are able to create content in many more varieties than just print. Rogers (2003) notes that most technologies have two components: hardware and software. With the development of hardware, such as personal computers, digital recording devices and mobile phones, accompanied by content-management software and easy editing programs, it is more convenient than ever for journalists to produce content. The Diffusion of Innovations theory suggests, for this study, that the more mainstream media channels use convergence the greater the rate of adoption in journalism curriculums to teach what the mainstream media is doing.

Rogers (2003) suggested a method to categorize adopters. The cumulative number of adopters follow an S-shaped curve. The first 2.5% of adopters are the innovators, the next 13.5% are early adopters, the next 34% are the early majority, the next 34% of adopters are the late majority and the last 16% of adopters are the laggards. In this respect, using Rogers' theory, faculty members and administrators in journalism programs can be placed into these categories as well to serve as an indicator to the rate of diffusion of innovation in curriculums. Rogers identifies several additional characteristics in each type. The Innovator displays the characteristics of being adventuresome, has the ability to understand and apply complex

technical knowledge, and cope with a high degree of uncertainty about the innovation. Early Adopters are the role models for other members in the society, respected by their peers and are successful. Based on Rogers' characteristics of each, the prediction is that the more innovators and early adopters that are involved in the curriculum decision-making process, the quicker convergence will be adopted. Those identified as Early Majority display interaction frequently with peers, seldom hold positions of leadership, make up one-third of the members of society and often deliberate before adopting a new idea. The Late Majority is also one-third of the member society. They easily feel pressure from peers and are skeptical and cautious. Laggards are defined as having no leadership, are isolated and use the past as a point of reference. They are suspicious of innovations and make the innovation-decision process lengthy. The prediction that a faculty consisting of more Innovators and Early Adopters will adopt convergence quicker than those with faculty made up of Late Majority and Laggards was tested in this study.

When making curriculum-based or other decisions about including convergence in the curriculum, Rogers' five stages of adoption apply. The stages are awareness, interest, evaluation, trial and adoption. In the awareness stage "the individual is exposed to the innovation but lacks complete information about it" (p. 232). At the interest stage, "the individual becomes interested in the new idea and seeks additional information about it" (p. 232). During the evaluation stage the "individual mentally applies the innovation to his present and anticipated future situation, and then decides whether or not to try it" (p. 232). During the trial stage "the individual makes full use of the innovation" (p. 233). At the adoption stage "the individual decides to continue the full use of the innovation" (p. 233). Journalism programs go through this process when making decisions about integrating some sort of convergence idea into the curriculum, whether it be a class, a skill taught in a certain class, or even a converged newsroom.

Rogers defines the innovation-decision process as the “process through which an individual (or other decision-making unit such as a group, society, economy, or country) passes through the innovation-decision process” which is made up of five stages (p. 233). The stages are defined as first knowledge of the innovation, to forming an attitude toward the innovation, to a decision to adopt or reject, to implementation of the new idea, and lastly, to confirmation of the decision.

### **Interdisciplinary Theory**

Kraeplin and Criado’s (2005) theoretical approach to the converged curriculum is especially important to this study. They noted:

Most scholars agree that the presence of integration or synthesis means an interdisciplinary curriculum focuses on a process. The steps in Newell’s (2001) version of this process are abstracted from issues of teamwork and include such steps as defining the problem, question or issue; determining which disciplines or schools of thought are relevant; and developing a working command of the relevant concept and theories. (p. 49)

In a convergence curriculum, for integration to take place, according to interdisciplinary theory, the different media involved must contribute to a process that yields an integrated product (Kraeplin & Criado, 2005). They use a simple example to explain the practical application of the theory: “streaming audio and video must appear alongside in-depth print-style stories and web links, combined together into integrated digital web-based news content. A journalism curriculum that provided students with the conceptual, analytical and practical skills would be on its way toward achieving interdisciplinarity” (p. 49).

Students in a converged classroom environment need to attempt different disciplines, and if the story needs a converged approach, “the student will be expected to make that judgment then deliver on multiple platforms, and to integrate those media within a converged digital platform.

A converged environment can then be defined as complex. Newell (2001) writes that the best and perhaps only way to address complexity is interdisciplinary” (Kraeplin & Criado, 2005).

### **The Collision: Where Classroom Meets Newsroom**

A constructed, well-thought out curriculum in journalism schools would include critical thinking skills like the ones just demonstrated.

Is implementing convergence into a college curriculum only possible if the proper background research, technological upgrades and new faculty hires or shifts are made?

Understanding the way newsrooms implement convergence offers guidance for journalism educators. A key part of introducing convergence into the classroom is establishing symbols, such as a multimedia classroom with powerful computers, camera and video equipment and an assignments desk (Quinn, 2005). Does the establishment of a multimedia newsroom temporarily fix the curriculum revisions to include more convergence or does it offer long-term hope for change?

The Accrediting Council on Education and Mass Communications (ACEJMC) is the agency responsible for accrediting programs for “professional education in journalism and mass communications in institutions of higher learning” (<http://www2.ku.edu/~acejmc/index.html>). According to the ACEJMC website, accreditation is defined as a “collegial process based on self- and peer assessment for public accountability and improvement of academic quality.” The agency assesses the quality of the program and assists administrators, faculty and staff with improvements. The accreditation process is three tiered including a self-study using the preset accrediting agency’s set of expectations or “standards,” a written report by peer visitors to the institution, and the Council elects an Accrediting Committee to make recommendations based on the internal reports and the report prepared by the visiting teams.

There are nine standards included when evaluating the program. The standard most relevant to this study is “Curriculum and Instruction.” This unit requires:

That students take a minimum of 80 semester credit hours or 116 quarter credit hours outside of the unit and a minimum of 65 semester credit hours or 94 quarter credit hours in the liberal arts and sciences (as defined by the institution) outside of the unit. ACEJMC expects at least 95 percent of the graduating classes in the two academic years preceding an accreditation visit to meet this requirement. Units seeking re-accreditation must determine the percentage of students meeting the 80/65 or 116/94 requirement. The unit must provide a balance between theoretical and conceptual courses and professional skills courses to achieve the range of student competencies listed by the Council.  
(<http://www2.ku.edu/~acejmc/PROGRAM/STANDARDS.SHTML#std2>)

The cap of 65 semester or 94 quarter credit hours inside the unit, limits the number of classes that can be taught. If the average journalism class is three credits, there is a limit to only about 21 classes that can be taken by each student. If something is added to the curriculum, what has to go? Do educators sacrifice an in-depth class? Do they add credits to the program? Does this mean adjusting graduation dates? (Birge, 2004).

One of the example of how convergence has influenced the journalism industry is Media General’s News Center in Tampa, Florida. After moving *The Tampa Tribune*, TBO.com and WFLA-TV into one building, the News Center opened for business in March of 2000. Dupane & Garrison (2006) noted that “The *Media General 2002 Annual Report* painted a relatively rosy picture of the News Center’s financial results in 2002: the daily circulation of *The Tampa Tribune* increased by 5.8% from December 2001 to December 2002 and NBC-affiliated WFLA solidified its No. 1 position in the Tampa TV market” (p. 242). In Dupane & Garrisons’ case study (2006) respondents at the News Center reported the increased “availability of new equipment such as desktop and portable computers, software, telephones and telephone systems,

and cameras” (p. 246). Their interviews showed five themes of interest to journalism and mass communications educators:

First, respondents felt that students must be very good at one task or skill, but able to do others as well. Second, they emphasized writing and reporting as fundamental elements for any platform. Third, they identified the need for adaptability and collegiality across platforms. Fourth, News Center journalists highlighted the need for students to be good communicators regardless of platform. Finally, they stated that students must obtain experience working in a converged newsroom. (p. 249)

### **Making Changes in the Academy**

Forrest Carr, formerly news director of WFLA-TV at The News Center in Tampa, said it was obvious to him that journalism schools would have to change their thinking, and that it no longer made sense to pretend print journalists and electronic journalists are in different professions. (2002a).

But can they ever come together?

B. William Silcock, an assistant professor of broadcast journalism at the Walter Cronkite School of Journalism and Mass Communication at Arizona State University said “it takes guts” (Birge, 2004, p. 12). He noted: “We had people come in and tell us the only way to do it is to blow up the curriculum. Everybody is scared to admit maybe we’re wrong, and others don’t want to admit they’re being drawn (to convergence) by an industry model” (Birge, 2004, p. 12).

Journalism programs can be divided into three categories: converged, non-converged and mixed (Castaneda, Murphy, & Hether, 2005). A converged curriculum dismantles sequences such as news-editorial, magazines and broadcast news, and replaces the teaching of medium specific courses with multi-platform courses. Nonconverged programs offer multimedia courses such as Web journalism, but they train students in a specific medium and de-emphasize multi-

platform training. Mixed lies in between, offering both training in a specific media, and multi-platform training (Castaneda, Murphy, & Hether, 2005).

### **Developing Faculty Buy-In**

The lack of cooperation among faculty members from different sequences can halt the emergence of convergence in the curriculum (Huang et al, 2006). In Castaneda, Murphy and Hether's (2005) survey of the Convergence Core Curriculum at the University of Southern California, they say that *some* of the faculty echoed concerns that a convergence curriculum might dilute the teaching of key journalistic skills such as writing and critical thinking (2005). Statistically, both the student and faculty assessment of USC's Convergence Core Curriculum showed an improvement from the beginning of the semester to the end in three categories: critical thinking, writing across all three media and writing (Castaneda, Murphy, & Hether, 2005).

Joe Landsberger (2004) asks how faculty can weave various media, including their own lectures and assessments, into an integrated, purposeful, and effective strategy of instruction. He stresses that faculty are not only expected to learn how to use technology associated with the various formats of text, but are also expected to learn how to produce new text as well. The shift in instructional strategies away from traditional lecture/reading methods not only demands a proactive strategy of support and implementation, but also of integration, of blending the old and new and finding systems of incorporation. Senior faculty have different educational experiences than junior faculty, and all faculty groups have different experiences than the learners (Landsberger, 2004).

The issue of implementation strategy is an important one. Resistance to the curriculum revision at Northwest Missouri State University caused tension among faculty members and

forced them to come to terms with many long-standing barriers that exist among journalism faculty in many universities (Sudhoff & Donnelly, 2003).

There is a divide among faculty in much of the research about convergence curriculum. In recent studies, three major groups of faculty members stand out: convergence cheerleaders, cautious fencestraddlers, and those adamantly against it.

David L. Nelson, an associate professor at Medill, said some senior faculty members who have objected to the curriculum changes “don’t get the technology” (Mangan, p. 3) and don’t want to expend the effort of learning it. He says it is “a very interesting time to be a teacher and to put your head in the sand and ignore the changes is wrong” (Mangan, 2007, p. 3). Lavine defended the curriculum change despite some faculty criticism in *Chicago Magazine*, “They’re upset with change. I understand that. My response is, if you really care about journalism, you can’t ignore the reality. Doing more of what we’ve done doesn’t work” (Johnson, 2007, p. 5).

But Lavine wasn’t alone when making these decisions.

He said the faculty has spent hundreds of hours working with him to remake the curriculum. There were several instances of faculty involvement in the Medill 2020 plan. It was based on a report that the faculty voted on in 2005 that called for more emphasis on real-world experience and a better understanding of the audience. He claims 12 faculty committees each examined a piece of the curriculum in 2006, and their recommendations shaped the new version (Mangan, 2007). All Medill faculty members participated in a 10-week course on future strategies for the media industry. The course instructed professors on how to teach multimedia technology in their courses (Mangan, 2007). Lavine directly credits the faculty for the new curriculum launch. “We’ve managed to make enormous, sweeping changes in the past 18 months, and the faculty made it happen,” he said (Mangan, 2007, p. 3).

If the new technological demands pose challenges for students, it's an even higher hill to climb for teachers, especially those older than the generation born with a mouse in their hands (Johnson, 2007). Eric Ferkenhoff, a lecturer who has 15 years of experience as a reporter, says the tech-savvy environment at Medill means that "instructors are playing catch-up at the same time the students are playing catch-up" (Johnson, 2007, p. 6). Northwestern's general faculty committee passed a resolution charging that the curriculum changes were implemented without a vote of Medill faculty. The resolution warned of "curricular changes that are ill considered" that could demoralize faculty and cause "damage to the national reputation of the school" (Johnson, 2007, p. 6). Kraeplin and Criado (2005) plead to faculty members in the conclusion of their article. They said:

We as educators must challenge ourselves to grasp the true creative potential for convergence. Not because it is fashionable, but because it's the way our students should be learning to prepare them for tomorrow's media environment. But we can't do that unless we all let go of some of our own entrenched fears and phobias. On some faculties, this approach may mean that the practitioners of particular disciplines should undergo training in the other forms of media productions. Print media faculty should develop an understanding of the broadcast skill set and vice versa. For interdisciplinary to exist, this cross-training must take place. But faculty shouldn't expect miracles and should be ready to discuss team-teaching or hiring adjuncts with the needed skills to meet short term, and perhaps long term, curriculum needs. In some cases, faculty may need to adjust their expectations in terms of how quickly or completely they can move toward convergence. (p. 55)

In the spring 2006 *Neiman Reports*, Peg Finucane compared herself to a dinosaur who is training her students to evolve quickly while retaining the best parts of her "dinosaur" culture. She claims it is hard for some print dinosaurs to admit that other media might serve their audience as well as the newspaper. Change is seen sometimes not as an "evolution" but more of

a “criticism or rejection” and this change of trend might be easier for journalism students to embrace professors or journalists who are set in their ways (Finucane, 2006).

The students of today are the children of baby boomers. And many of them do not even pick up a print newspaper unless a quiz is threatened. But, they are gathering information all the time. They are online; they are texting and taking photos. They are on webcams and developing an online identity in popular programs such as Facebook or MySpace (Finucane, 2006). Finucane claims it’s the “over-40 crowd” who is hardest to please.

She agrees with Haiman: There will always be a need for content. But like many other research writings on journalism education in the multimedia world she has a call to action. She writes as though she is speaking directly to the faculty members who have a sour taste in their mouth. Like so many other writings, she tells them to wake up and smell the proverbial coffee. She says, “Dinosaurs are still teaching our students all of the old tricks while preparing them to learn new ones; we can explain the evolution of our industry as it’s happening and help them to manage change” (Finucane, 2006, p. 4).

After examining the literature regarding convergence in the industry and the beginnings of curriculum change, there is a large amount of information scattered throughout different trade publications like *Quill*, *American Journalism Review*, and *Editor & Publisher*, also in scholarly research journals specific to journalism studies and education. This study seeks to gather information from colleges and departments about the current state of their curriculums and how convergence is being integrated into the learning process and why. For this study, the following questions will be asked based on the hypothesis formed from the previous literature.

## **Hypothesis/Research Questions**

**H1:** Journalism programs with more innovators and early adopters on their faculty are more likely to have convergence in their curricula.

**R1:** Are journalism programs adopting convergence into their curricula?

**R2:** What factors contribute to the adoption of convergence?

**R3:** What are the successes to revision?

**R4:** What are the challenges to revision?

## CHAPTER 3 METHODOLOGY

This study used a web-based survey sent to college administrators to gather data about journalism curriculums. This method was most appropriate because the results could be generalized to the population of journalism programs and it proved to be the most productive way of gathering the data needed. A web survey was used rather than a print survey because of efficiency, time constraints and low cost.

The sampling method follows the steps used in Becker's (2005) annual Enrollment Report. It has been consistently used since 1988. Schools included in the survey are listed in either the *Journalism & Mass Communication Directory*, published by the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication, or *The Journalist's Road to Success: A Career Guide*, by the Dow Jones Newspaper Fund, Inc. All degree-granting colleges and universities with courses organized under the labels of journalism and mass communication are invited to be listed in the *AEJMC Directory*. To be included in the *Guide*, the college or university must offer at least ten courses in news editorial journalism, and those courses must include core courses such as an introduction to the mass media and press law and ethics, as well as basic skills courses, such as writing and editing. A combination of these two directories produced 493 listings of colleges in 2007.

The *AEJMC Directory* lists membership of the Association of Schools of Journalism and Mass Communication (ASJMC) and accreditation by the Accrediting Council on Education in Journalism and Mass Communications (ACEJMC). This information was included in the data file. The accrediting listing was verified against the listing for the Accrediting Council on its web site (Becker, 2005).

After removing schools that only offered a graduate program, those that did not have a journalism program, and those that returned the electronic survey saying they did not teach enough classes in journalism to take this survey, 451 schools remained. After the first survey was sent out, 40 e-mail addresses came back invalid. The invalid e-mail addresses were all re-checked through the journalism program's web site or college directory. The final survey sample included 411 schools.

The study's sample population was program chairs or directors and not designated for deans or faculty members. Deans of college journalism programs can often be hands-off in the curriculum decision-making processes. Also, the individual faculty members would not prove to be a reliable or valid source of information about the overall journalism program because they may be able to answer about what they teach in their specific classes, but not able to answer about what other faculty members are doing. Often times only a few members of the faculty sit on a convergence task force or curriculum committee, and if the survey reached a faculty member who was not on either, their answers would not be reliable or valid. Thus, department chairs and directors are the best choice. Some chairs suggested a more appropriate person to contact about convergence, and in those cases, a unique survey link was forwarded to them.

Contrary to Becker's use of a mail survey, this study used a web-based survey because of convenience, cost and the ability to resend to nonrespondents easily. Adams and Cleary (2007) stated that "[Web surveys] come with advantages including lower costs due to the elimination of paper, mailing, and data entry expenses" (p. 105). Because the surveys are distributed over the Internet, directly in their inbox, respondents can access the survey any time of day, whether they are at home, in an office, or even on their mobile phone. Adams and Cleary (2007) recommended a number of strategies to improve response rates, since it has been suggested that

response rates can be even worse via online survey than mail surveys. They suggest the first and second contact e-mail should be in a businesslike tone. It is expected that the first contact will prompt a quick surge of responses that will soon drop off. Adams and Cleary (2007) state that in their study: “the second e-mail contact wasn’t met with much enthusiasm, as very few nonrespondents took action” (p. 111). Based on Adams and Cleary’s (2007) experience, the third e-mail solicitation to the potential respondents used a less formal tone and reference and sympathize to busy work days and why the “person’s individual response really mattered to the survey” (p. 111).

An initial letter was directly mailed to administrators informing them of the survey. On February 7, 2008 a direct mail solicitation letter was sent to each of the colleges to promote awareness to the survey. The survey was sent on a Wednesday night because marketing research concludes e-mails sent on Wednesdays are more likely to be opened and read (Adams & Cleary, 2007). On February 13, 2008, the survey was e-mailed to each programs’ administrator using the survey-producing software, SurveyMonkey. A second e-mail of the survey was sent on February 19, 2008, to the non-responders and new recipients the program administrators suggested, along with a retry of the invalid e-mail addresses that were re-checked. The second e-mail had a smaller return of invalid e-mails. A third e-mail was sent to the non-responding schools on February 26. The survey closed on February 29, 2008. In each e-mail there was a short introduction to the purpose of the study and a link to the survey. It was also suggested if there are technical problems, the respondent should manually type the URL into the web browser. The online survey included a progress bar to show how far along the respondent was in answering the questions. The survey was 31 questions and, based on pretesting, took no more than 10 minutes

to complete. There were 176 respondents. After filtering out respondents who did not complete more than 30% of the survey, 166 entries were used. The response rate was 40%.

In the survey, administrators were asked to define the state of their unit's curriculum after the survey provided definitions for converged, non-converged and mixed curriculums. The survey measured what the unit is doing in terms of integrating convergence into their curriculum; questions included topics such as online courses, advisory boards, faculty training and facilities.

The survey asked the administrators about the factors that led to a curriculum revision and about team teaching and whether the unit has a converged newsroom or classroom. The latter part of the survey asked about faculty composition. Open-ended questions were scattered throughout the survey to more thoroughly probe the answers. The end of the survey asked questions about unit size, Carnegie rating, degrees granted, accreditation and overall university or college size.

Of the 493 programs, 330 were programs listed in both directories, 112 were only in the AEJMC listing, and 51 were only in the *Dow Jones Guide*. It was expected, as with Becker's questionnaire, information provided by administrators would vary greatly in detail and precision. Some administrators would answer every question and others only a few (Becker, 2005).

Data from the respondents were entered into a data file in SPSS. Frequencies and cross-tabulations were run with the data.

## CHAPTER 4 RESULTS

After collecting online survey data in February 2008, 166 responses were gathered, resulting in a 40% response rate. A response rate of 35 to 40% is acceptable for surveys via e-mail and the web (Schonlau, Fricker, Jr., & Elliot, 2002). Respondents not only filled out closed-ended questions, but also left written answers to explain and illustrate their answers.

### **R1: Are Journalism Programs Adopting Convergence into Their Curricula?**

Twenty percent of respondents had a revised curriculum to include convergence. The majority (69%) of programs had administrators and faculty who had started discussion about a revision to integrate skills, such as training students in multimedia reporting. Only a few schools (9%) did not have administration or faculty who had discussed a revision. The majority (46%) of respondents said it took more than a year from when they first started talking about revising the curriculum until they actually started implementations. When asked to define the state of their curriculum as converged, non-converged or mixed, the dominant response (64%) had a mixed curriculum, lying somewhere in between, offering both medium-specific and multi-platform training. (See Table 5-1.) Out of 159 respondents, more than half of the respondents (58%) reported offering a class in converged media, such as an online reporting class, while less (42%) said they didn't offer a specific class. Of those programs offering a course in converged media, most of the 118 respondents (25%) had the course both as a requirement for some students and an elective for others. Only a few programs (17%) had the course as a required part of the curriculum, and others (21%) only offered it as an elective. A smaller number (34%) of respondents reported keeping broadcast and print journalism as separate majors, while the

majority (42%) said they were taught in one track. This data suggests the majority of programs have either revised or discussed revising the curriculum. Respondents reported some of the following constraints to offering an entirely converged curriculum were budget restraints and whether faculty and administration could agree what was the best way to teach students. One respondent said:

We all have concerns rushing into convergence, without really considering how to insure fundamental writing, storytelling, and presentation techniques within the journalism context...In our view it's about new publishing platforms, rather than a radical new world of information.

While the majority of respondents reported moving toward a converged curriculum, others are retaining aspects of medium-specific training. Some respondents reported students having multimedia courses early on in their sequence and then picking a specialization. The literature suggested many schools are aware they need to revise the curriculum due to major industrial changes, but respondents showed differences in the way these changes are made. While some administrators are adding classes, other are integrating multimedia instruction into pre-existing courses by assigning converged projects. One respondent said:

We're in the midst of changing and have a revised curriculum in the pipeline for university approval. [The] new curriculum will have a two-course sequence in multimedia journalism taken in the sophomore year, then allow students to choose an area of specialization. [The] point is, we want students to think and be trained in multiple platforms early in their education and then allow them the opportunity to develop a specialization.

Respondents who reported their programs had a specific faculty member who specializes in converged media (44%) were fewer than those who didn't (46%). While most of these faculty members were reported to be adjunct professors with a specialization or guest lecturers from the profession, some respondents said their programs had full-time faculty who helped others with

implementing cross-platform skills into their own classes. Some respondents reporting making adjustments based on the faculty they currently have in place. One respondent said: “We’re doing what we’ve always done as technology advances: We’re learning on the job, picking up new technology as it comes along.”

Because faculties have people from different backgrounds, the respondents reported they were working together. One respondent said:

We each come from divergent backgrounds in the industry, but we are each fully supportive of convergence and our efforts focus on bringing our individual strengths to the process to reach that objective. We engage each other’s help in the cross-training process and in conversations to better understand the potential differences in perspective from those divergent backgrounds.

Other respondents said faculty are experimenting with a modular teaching approach, where the class is segmented, and material is delivered by different faculty with expertise in a particular area. The majority of respondents reported they were searching to hire faculty members with cross-platform experience. The majority of respondents had the same to say as this respondent: “We do not have such a faculty person presently but will be searching for a new faculty member within the next year whose specialty will be working on converged media.” When asked about team teaching as a method to help adopt convergence, a smaller number (28%) of respondents said they used it, while the majority (63%) reported they did not.

Roughly a quarter of programs (27%) have built or use a converged newsroom or classroom, while the majority (61%) has not. Some respondents said they work out of small labs, while others built or are planning to build more costly rooms or buildings. Some respondents said they were planning to build one. One respondent said:

The school is constructing a new \$30 million building to open in 2009, there will be one specific classroom called the multimedia

“news bubble” and all classrooms and our studio spaces will be multifunctional.

Another respondent described their newsroom as having “something like 40 AVID-equipped PCs in the open spaces so that all students can ‘play with the toys’ at will, 7:30 a.m. to 10:30 p.m. Monday through Friday and some open hours on the weekends. Print-based students now use them as much as anyone else.” Other newsrooms are much more developed in terms of space, technology and support. One respondent said:

We have a newscenter that is directly adjacent to a convergent classroom that is “wired” to another convergent classroom, to the radio station airbooth, and to the television studio and production room that are just down the hall in the media center. The newscenter has a raised platform in the middle of the room that is the central desk for the convergent news director, the newspaper editor, the radio station news director/producer and the television news director/producer. The newscenter is the primary work space for producing the newspaper and the magazine and both have access to the computers in the adjacent convergent classroom for additional workspace. The newscenter is also cabled to take a live feed directly to air (or recording) for both radio and television. All of the areas in the media center are cabled or wired to be able to transfer text, audio, and video files to each other as well and each area has access to upload news content to the online hub or to any of the individual student media sites.

The majority of respondents said their programs use the newsroom to produce a media product, whether it is an e-zine, news web site or newspaper with online components. One respondent talked about the capstone class taught in their converged newsroom:

Students have had all other writing, reporting and skills classes. They now become part of a converged newsroom that has 9-day news cycles. Each news cycle begins with students pitching a story to the entire newsroom, presided over by the instructor. At the conclusion of this news budget meeting, students join in teams of no more than five. ALL MUST contribute words to the report. Photos, videos, and words are placed in a folder assigned to the team working on that story. In the final days of the news cycle, producers/packagers harvest material from their team’s folders and create three packages – print, online and Web – to tell their story.

The majority of written answers concluded programs have working labs with Macs or PCs, video and sound editing, and design and web development software. There are fewer newsrooms with equipment like digital recorders, mikes and minicams.

## **R2: What Factors Contribute to the Adoption of Convergence in the Curricula?**

As expected, the respondents noted change in the professional industry to be the main reason for curriculum revision, although other factors were cited. Rogers' Diffusion of Innovations theory suggested that the more the mainstream media channels use convergence, the greater the rate of adoption in journalism curriculums to teach what the mainstream media is doing. Rogers' theory illustrates what is happening in journalism programs across the country.

When asked what the single most important factor was when deciding to revise the curriculum, a majority of respondents (65%) said it was because the professional industry was shifting to converged newsrooms, and the second largest response (19%) was faculty suggestion. (See Table 5-2.)

Many respondents reported that they wanted to teach the skills students would need for jobs. Because there is a link with curriculum revision and the industry, some administration and faculty members have a steady communication with the profession. One respondent said, "...we are in constant contact with professionals who we consult for feedback on the relevance of our coursework." One respondent said their faculty members visit media newsrooms to gain further knowledge about how the real world of journalism works. The respondent said, "We interact with many professionals. Our faculty has been visiting media outlets for more than 10 years in order to develop the 'converged curriculum' that we currently have." The second biggest factor is the suggestions made by faculty. One respondent noted: "Faculty input is primary."

Out of the respondents who defined their curriculum as mixed, the majority (70%) had an advisory board. The majority (52%) of programs with any sort of convergence did have an advisory board. (See Table 5-3.)  $X^2(1, N=141) = 0.722, p = .395$ .

Respondents who said their programs have an official advisory board in place have heavily relied on their suggestions, although not all are made up of professionals. Other types of advisory group members include those with alumni, graduating seniors, faculty members and administration. One respondent noted the role alumni had in their revision, “We have no formal structure but rely heavily on advice from alums; our move to convergence is a direct result of such advice.”

Another variable is whether the unit has training in multimedia for faculty members. More programs (58%) do not train their faculty in multimedia, while the minority (30%) do offer training for faculty members. Out of respondents who defined their curriculum as being mixed, a majority (79%) offered training for faculty members, but those in mixed curriculums also had a large percentage (66%) who did not offer training to their faculty members. When comparing the converged and mixed curricula with the non-converged, the results show that making training available to faculty members (39%) goes hand-in-hand with having a converged curriculum. These findings are significant and revealed that any type of convergence led to an increase in faculty training,  $X^2(1, N = 166) = 4.75, p < .05$ . (See Table 5-4.) Although faculty training is more likely when converged skills are part of the curriculum, the majority of programs are not offering this.

Respondents said their programs used workshops, boot-camp style training, brown-bag lunch discussion sessions and summer training programs. They also reported sending many faculty members to conferences at the Newsplex and The Poynter Institute. One respondent said

faculty training is “not required, but we’ve been working with our local media, especially the newspaper, which has invited our faculty to attend workshops the paper holds to cross-train its journalists. There’s a lot of interest among our faculty for this type of training and the response has been very good.” Some respondents said their program has supported trained faculty members offering help to others. One respondent said, “Faculty are helping other faculty.” The coaching method between professors was a common theme in the comments. One respondent said they offer “afternoon workshops given by another faculty member.” Other programs offer financial support to those faculty members who want to attend conferences or seminars that include online media training. While training is not officially required in the majority of journalism units, one respondent said, “Faculty are required to learn our multimedia front-end news production and asset-management system.” One respondent said they try a variety of different training methods:

We’ve tried in-house training (bringing people in to show use of certain software). We’ve tried sending faculty out to workshops. We have a technology manager who works with faculty to help train them on software (particularly blogging software and CMS). And we have faculty who work to train themselves with self-help books and programs.

Another variable, as to whether the program adopted convergence, was if they were accredited under ACEJMC standards. Of the respondents who defined their curriculum as converged, more programs (8%) were not accredited than those that were accredited (6%). For respondents who defined their curriculum as mixed, there was only a slight difference between those accredited (69%) and those programs who were not (70%). There was no significant difference between the accredited and non-accredited programs in terms of their curriculum.  $X^2(2, N = 137) = .805, p = .669$ . When curriculums that are converged or mixed are compared with

those that are non-converged, more (39%) non-converged curriculums are accredited than those who are converged (34%)  $X^2(1, N = 148) = .338, p = .561$  (See Table 5-5.)

The Carnegie Standards were also used as a variable to determine the implementation of convergence into the curriculum. Out of the respondents who considered their programs to be converged, the majority (14%) were classified as a Bachelor's university, while only a few (4%) were defined as a Research university. Respondents who defined their curriculum as being mixed were spread across the table with the majority (75%) as a Research university, followed by a Master's university (70%) and last a Bachelor's university (66%). (See Table 5-6).  $X^2(4, N = 148) = .585, p = .949$ . When curriculums that are converged or mixed are compared with those that are non-converged, the results were practically even and not significant, with Bachelor's universities having the majority (24%) with some aspect of convergence, where the fewer (22%) had a non-converged curriculum. Master's universities (47%) displayed more non-converged curriculums than converged (44%). Research universities were broken down the middle with converged curriculums (32%) only slightly outweighing non-converged curriculums (31%),  $X^2(2, N = 148) = .105, p = .949$ .

### **R3 & R4: What Are the Successes and Challenges to the Revision?**

Since the successes and challenges have yet to be formally defined by many programs, the survey asked an open-ended question about both in regards to revision, with the invitation to comment. The most common themes that developed for successes included moving towards rethinking and revising the curriculum. Team teaching, faculty who are becoming more engaged in revision, and building and fine-tuning a newsroom for students were also included. Among other successes marked were developing a converged product for students to provide content for, developing new courses, and completing and implementing the revisions.

The majority of respondents reported they are still in the planning stages of developing a formal set of assessment guidelines, and usually come up with informal ways to evaluate whether their implementations are working for students and faculty. One of the major themes throughout the comments included knowledge of curriculum revision and demonstrated steps toward rethinking a revision. One respondent said,

Generally, things are going well. We have an acute knowledge of how far 'behind' we are and are scrambling to catch up, but so far everyone has been extremely enthusiastic, which has been heartening to me as the primary faculty member in this area trying to move in that direction.

Other respondents dealt with the revision as more of an enjoyable exercise than a challenging one: "We're all in the midst of rethinking and redesigning – as is the industry. We're having fun actually." Although there weren't nearly as many successes reported as there were challenges, most of the respondents felt confident what they were doing was being well received by students and faculty. One respondent said, "We have come a long way toward accreditation and I am proud that during a preliminary visit last fall, our convergence curriculum was praised. We are very proud of it and the students seem quite happy with it also."

A major theme in success came with the implementation of team teaching. Whether the respondents reported deciding to match multimedia faculty members with those who were more theory based, or provide courses constructed by two faculty members, there seemed to be a great deal of success. One respondent said team teaching was "good so far. We've taken people who have backgrounds in different mass media (broadcast, print, design, visual) and teamed them. Prep time increases and coordination takes more time, but faculty seem to understand the need to move in this direction." Respondents reported that student appreciate and respond well to team-taught settings. One respondent said, "Interestingly, students enjoy the give-and-take of print vs.

broadcast faculty as they understand the cultural barriers standing in the way of convergence.”

Another respondent agreed, “It’s been very successful so far, students appreciate it.” Team taught structure varies from program to program. Some units include all faculty members while others use a specialized faculty member to supplement already existing courses. One respondent said there are “Two levels 1) at the beginning, we have team taught until ALL JOURNALISM FACULTY have become proficient at a basic level with software and hardware in all three platforms 2) at the advanced level capstone, converged newsroom class, we have two sections, headed by faculty persons with deep, advanced skills in separate platforms” Faculty members are even working together to develop course material as one respondent explained, “A faculty from broadcast and one from print team teach the news practicum where students report for individual media. Each week they all meet to critique their stories. This familiarizes students with other format weaknesses/strengths. We also require an Information Gathering course where students learn basic reporting skills. A broadcast and print faculty member work together to design the course.” Most of the modular forms of team teaching require a different teacher to facilitate specific weeks of skills learning, one respondent warned against doing this, “Our team teaching tends to work better when both instructors are active in the class and it is not a case of my week, your week.”

Many respondents relayed success by commenting on their faculties’ willingness to become more engaged with the revision. One respondent said,

It has been an evolving process. It began with facilitating the cross-training process for students. As the faculty become more engaged in the process and our own conversations have become more in-depth, we have transformed into a more integrated approach. We have found that there are very few textbooks that use an integrated approach, so part of our preparation always is to address where we will need to supplement the text to make the content more clearly convergent, not simply web-based.

Respondents who reported having converged newsrooms or classrooms talked about being pleased with the facility and the opportunity it gives students to collaborate across mediums. In this respondent's case, it was the newsroom that propelled the program to cross train more students:

Currently, we have a newsroom that exemplifies various forms of communication and was one of the leading reasons for our merger. Looking at the shifting ideas of print media and broadcast, we determined that we need our paper to have a greater online presence as well as a restylized paper. We recently restructured our newsroom to take advantage of our advertising and marketing students, our graphic design and photography students, as well as still maintain the concept of staff room meetings. We have one large room that we now make use of.

Through the development of these converged newsrooms and classrooms, respondents said their programs have been able to develop. One respondent talked about their transformation from a print-based to an online publication:

For 27 years we have printed a journalism magazine. This year, no more printed materials. Focus is an Indesign fully electronic publication with audio, video and flash embeds. Students submit content in aural, visual or traditional text formats. We encourage experimental approaches to news, features and public relations.

Many successes were reported about hiring faculty members who are trained in multimedia. One respondent said they hired a "convergence coordinator" who handles all the hands-on technical instruction, while the professor manages the overall assignments in the class. A few respondents commented about hiring more than just PhD candidates, but rather those who had professional experience in a converged newsroom. One respondent said, "We have hired faculty with MFA terminal degrees rather than all PhDs." One particular respondent stood out when reporting the success of their program, "we had to restructure our class assignments and

the way print people think but I'm amazed how smoothly it has gone. We had NO faculty opposition to this.”

The most common challenges respondents noted included: cost, limited budget, faculty and student resistance. Other challenges included the need to hire more faculty, classroom space, limitations of credit hours and scheduling classes between departments. Also the respondents found the approval process, space in the curriculum and defining convergence a challenge. Other themes were time, the industry not knowing what they want to do, keeping pace with new technology (both hardware and software), offering fair compensation to faculty, team teaching challenges, administrative support and seeing failures in other universities.

While certain successes were reported, they did not outweigh the overwhelming amount of challenges many respondents faced. In fact, one respondent said, “You’re kidding. We’ve been at this for years – there is no way I can summarize the challenges.” A common challenge, only second to cost, was the overwhelming amount of faculty resistance to change. One respondent said, “The biggest problem is that faculty, no matter how much they wish to have a converged curriculum, they still think in terms of specific media and not in terms of converged media” Another respondent agreed, “Faculty are eager to converge, but the mind set to be converged is a challenge.”

Some respondents reported facing “turf wars” when it came to making decisions about what classes to add or revise. One respondent said, “...there are powerful “turf” wars that truly inhibit the integrity of the program.” Respondents also said a lack of qualified faculty members was one of their challenges, often resulting in a lag time between coming up with ideas for integrating convergence and actually implementing the ideas. One respondent said, “We have wanted to build courses that involve convergence but have not been given the freedom to add the

needed faculty until this year.” While respondents said they had faculty members on staff who specialized in convergence, whether they were adjuncts or guest lecturers, other respondents had no such faculty member. One respondent said, “No one on the faculty is properly trained to teach convergence courses and most have held back even from experimenting and introducing aspects of it into existing courses.” Another respondent agreed, “Another challenge is finding forward-thinking and techno-savvy adjuncts to complement full-time faculty.” Many respondents said they had faculty on staff with some sort of professional experience, but if these professors came from the business even five years ago, what they were doing then is not what they are doing now. One respondent reported abandoning the idea of hiring all PhDs, but still faced challenges in getting everyone on board with that idea. They said, “Getting the administration to let us hire individuals with less than a PhD but considerable experience professionally. Getting out of the old academic model that they must have a PhD and it must be in the designated specialty.”

Not only did many of the respondents report having a problem “finding profs that would change,” others cited the students as having concerns with the revisions. One respondent said:

Biggest surprise was student reaction. While we communicated to them, and some participated in the process, by and large they were confused about the changes. We now have two cohorts: those who will be graduated under the “old curriculum” and those who will be graduated under the “new curriculum.

Another respondent agreed: “Some students arrive with parents or counselors with ideas that we are still in the golden age of newspapers and broadcast news, and they, therefore, wish to lock themselves in that same approach to training.” Beyond the challenge of finding faculty and having students interested in the idea of convergence are those schools facing facility problems. Space is a primary concern for administrators. Not only classroom space, but finding space in the curriculum has been hard. While challenges range from respondents who cannot even get their

faculty on board with revision to the smaller concerns, like budgeting time and priority to students in the programs converged newsroom.

There is a concern about the limitations some programs face on credit hours, giving proper “credit” to a specific department and scheduling. Because most colleges practice shared governance, approvals can be a road block for schools that already have specific revisions in mind. One respondent said, “We have submitted a converged curriculum but it’s taking forever to be approved by our curriculum committee (years).” Another agreed, “Dealing with the paperwork to get the changes approved. Even if the faculty approve, the long climb up to acceptance (up through the state, etc) causes many people to give up.” Many respondents said they are still struggling to find a definition of convergence and cite the profession’s lack of direction for their delay in revision. While many schools are facing budget restraints for purchasing equipment others are in a race to keep up with the technology changes. When the respondents were asked to describe their unit’s experience with team teaching, although there were some successes, many challenges fell into this category. Not only do administrators face the problem of figuring out who gets evaluated or what department gets the credit, team teaching to implement convergence can sometimes be too much. One respondent said, “...the course was our intro to reporting course and the converged part of the class was too much with topics already in the course.” Other respondents reported problems with faculty members being too territorial over class material, and in the end, resulting in an uneven course load. One respondent said, “...sometimes one teacher ends up doing most of the work.” Another respondent reported students not liking it, “...the students HATE it find it confusing – it also limits the number of students we can have in each section – we have a section in each fac. Members’ name and then we “join” the two sections and we don’t allow more than 25 in the joined section – so that limits

the two sections to 12-13 each.” Even location can be somewhat of a challenge to implementing convergence into the curriculum. One respondent said:

I think part of the difficulty (besides lack of money) lies in our location. We’re in a small town nowhere near an urban community. Our students most often find work in similar locations; only a few venture to larger areas beyond our state’s borders. Given that our advisory board hasn’t pushed us to teach convergence and that our senior faculty probably don’t want to learn the technology, we haven’t kept pace.

Getting beyond just talking about it is still a challenge for some programs. One respondent said, “Everybody talks about what a great idea it is, but getting people to step up to the plate and make the changes is a whole other issue.”

A few respondents still question convergence and its implication for the future of journalism. Some respondents said their program teaches a more traditional model for teaching journalism. One respondent said:

Convergence is a question of the mechanics of delivering good journalism. These are tools that professionals must use, but programs shouldn’t lose sight of the fact that their mission is to develop journalists with a high level of integrity and a good understanding of ethics in a changing world, who can write clearly, concisely and correctly.

Another agreed, “Students don’t want to do everything, they want to specialize.” Another respondent talked about media conglomeration and how convergence, if not taught properly, could result in producing revenue-driven journalists:

We know what it means to work across platforms and what it means to leash reporters to the converged newsroom so that they fail to cover communities. Mobile technologies were meant to be taken to the field, and the problem with the newspaper professionals – publishers and editors, really – is that they are foisting a productivity model on ACEJMC institutions that was programmed technologically for revenue generation. It is up to those of use left from the Watergate era, some of us in

administrative positions like myself, to remind media conglomerates that our industry differs from other because of the Constitution and our obligation to defend its freedoms. In return, the Constitution allows owners to make profit, unlike governance documents in other countries.

Using Rogers' Diffusion of Innovations theory as a guideline, it was predicted that more Innovators and Early Adopters would be on the converged curriculum faculty as opposed to the non-converged curriculum faculty.

**H1: Journalism Programs with More Innovators and Early Adopters on Their Faculty Are More Likely to Have Convergence in Their Curriculum.**

Each respondent was asked to define which of Everett Rogers' categories of people most represented their faculty. They could choose between Innovators, Early Adopters, Early Majority, Late Majority and Laggard. Using Rogers' theory, faculty members and administrators in journalism programs can be placed into these categories as well to serve as an indicator to the rate of diffusion of innovation in curriculums. The Innovator displays the characteristics of being adventuresome, has the ability to understand and apply complex technical knowledge, and cope with a high degree of uncertainty about the innovation. Early Adopters are the role models for other members in the society, respected by their peers and are successful. Based on Rogers' characteristics of each, the prediction is that the more Innovators and Early Adopters that are involved in the curriculum decision-making process, the quicker convergence will be adopted. Those identified as Early Majority display interaction frequently with peers, seldom hold positions of leadership make up one-third of the members of society and often deliberate before adopting a new idea. The Late Majority is also one-third of the member society. They easily feel pressure from peers and are skeptical and cautious. Laggards are defined as having no leadership, are isolated and use the past as a point of reference. They are suspicious of innovations and make the innovation-decision process lengthy.

When asked to characterize the make up of their faculty, the most reported answer (35%) was said to be part of the Early Majority, followed by Early Adopters (28%). The least reported answer was Laggard (4%). (See Table 5-7.) This hypothesis is proven in the data because those programs that were fully converged had a large amount of Innovators (28%) and Early Adopters (11%). The converged programs had no (0%) Late Majority or Laggards. There is significant difference between programs that have Innovators and Early Adopters on their curriculum.  $X^2(8, N = 145) = 21.93, p < .05$ . (See Table 5-8.) Respondents who defined the curriculum as non-converged had a majority (50%) of Laggards and Late Majority (23%). Respondents who defined their curriculum as mixed had all five categories on their faculty, with the majority (77%) being Late Majority, followed by Innovators (72%). In converged curriculums, when the categories were collapsed, the majority of Rogers' categories were the Innovators and Early Adopters (16%) and no (0%) Late Majority or Laggards. Whereas the non-converged curriculum had a majority of Late Majority and Laggards (27%).  $X^2(2, N = 145) = 7.052, p < .05$

Table 5-1. Curriculum defined by respondent (N=163)

Converged	7.8%	(n=13)
Non-Converged	20.5%	(n=34)
Mixed	63%	(n=106)
Other	6%	(n=10)

Table 5-2. Reasons for curriculum revision (N=158)

Professional Industry Shift	64.5%	(n=107)
Faculty Suggestion	18.7%	(n=31)
Other	7.2%	(n=12)
None	1.8%	(n=3)
Administrative Suggestion	1.2%	(n=2)
Student Suggestion	1.2%	(n=2)
Advisory Board Suggestion	.6%	(n=1)

Table 5-3. Advisory board influence

	Converged	Non-Converged
Advisory Board	52.3% (n=57)	43.8% (n=14)
No Advisory Board	47.7% (n=52)	56.2% (n=18)

N=141,  $X^2 = (df 1) 0.722, p = .395$

Table 5-4. Faculty training influence

	Convergence in the Curriculum	Non-Converged
Training	38.9% (n=42)	17.2% (n=5)
No Training	61.1% (n=66)	82.8% (n=24)

N=137,  $X^2 = (df 1) 4.754, p < .05$

Table 5-5. Accreditation Influence

	Convergence in the Curriculum	Non-Converged
Accredited	33.9% (n=39)	39.4% (n=13)
Not accredited	66.1% (n=76)	60.6% (n=20)

N=148,  $X^2 = (df 1) .338, p = .561$

Table 5-6. Carnegie Standard influence

	Convergence in the Curriculum	Non-Converged
Bachelor's University	24.1% (n=28)	21.9% (n=7)
Master's University	44% (n=51)	46.9% (n=15)
Research University	31.9% (n=37)	31.2% (n=10)

N=148,  $X^2 = (df 4) .585, p = .949$

Table 5-7. Percentage of faculty who display characteristics of Rogers' categories (N=154)

Innovator	12%	(n=20)
Early Adopter	27.7%	(n=46)
Early Majority	34.9%	(n=58)
Late Majority	14.5%	(n=24)
Laggards	3.6%	(n=6)

Table 5-8. Programs that reported what percentage of the faculty represented which of Rogers' categories

	Innovator	Early Adopter	Early Majority	Late Majority	Laggard
Converged	27.8% (n=5)	11.1% (n=5)	3.6% (n=2)	0% (n=0)	0% (n=0)
Non-Converged	0% (n=0)	15.6% (n=7)	32.1% (n=18)	22.7% (n=5)	50% (n=2)
Mixed	72.2% (n=13)	73.3% (n=33)	64.3% (n=36)	77.3% (n=17)	50% (n=2)

N=145,  $X^2 = (df 8) 21.93, p < .05$

## CHAPTER 5 DISCUSSION

It is clear that journalism programs are adopting convergence in their program's curriculum in some form or another. Only a few (9%) respondents said their program had not discussed a curriculum revision to include multimedia. It is evident that convergence is integrated into journalism programs through the curriculum, addition or re-creation of specific courses, hiring of specially-skilled faculty members and development of a converged newsroom. Respondents were interested in breaking down the silos between print and broadcast majors, which seems to echo how the journalism profession now operates. There is an evolution among journalism programs that are moving toward a new type of curriculum that has everyone involved. Not only are new technologies being introduced, but also new ideologies about working together across platforms to gather and distribute information to readers.

### **Curriculum Revision**

To revise the curriculum, it takes not only administrative support but also faculty and student support. To update current course offerings, faculty members who specialize in cross-platform journalism must be hired. Schools that follow the ACEJMC standards are restricted to a certain number of credits offered to students. This provides some hurdles to the creation of new courses, so they are forced to consider changing courses that already exist. Respondents said they have taken several approaches to the way they teach students multimedia skills. Some administrators changed required classes into electives and added new classes that emphasized multi-platform skills and storytelling. Other programs put the classes that taught specific skills early in the curriculum and then offered a capstone class where they utilized those skills. Other respondents said they took advantage of their introductory classes to bring students together and

then required all the majors to take specific core classes. In the end, they bring them back together. According to the interdisciplinary theory, for integration to take place, the curriculum must provide students with the conceptual, analytical and practice skills they need (Kraeplin & Criado, 2005). Because the administrators and faculty might not be able or do not want to fully converge their curriculum, adding multimedia portions to already existing courses makes sense. One way to help faculty members add a converged component to a course is through the consultation with a faculty or staff member who specializes in convergence. This could be someone who has just come from the industry, who has experience in a converged professional newsroom, or someone who has been studying convergence in a master's degree program. This faculty member could be an adjunct or a graduate student who specialize in online journalism. Adding these types of people to a faculty means the program is more likely to integrate convergence.

An important part of bringing convergence into the classroom is establishing symbols, such as a multimedia classroom with powerful computers, camera and video equipment and an assignments desk (Quinn, 2005). Many respondents reported their programs had a converged classroom or newsroom or were going to build one, which means that having this up-to-date classroom for students to work in is certainly a component to cross training students.

### **Reasons for Change**

Respondents attributed the change in the curriculum to many factors, especially noting the change in the journalism profession accompanied by faculty suggestion. Because programs are changing their curriculum and coursework based on the profession, this means their administration, faculty or students must be connected to the professional world. There must be an open communication line between the two. Some respondents noted that getting their students

into the professional industry is one way they have “adopted” convergence into their teaching practices. One respondent stressed the importance of newsroom experience:

We have an aggressive internship program that places students year round in converged newsrooms. We also offer capstone classes that have a group internship component where students spend one day a week in class and another in the newsroom.

The program might have people on staff who were once part of a newsroom. However, if their experience was 5 or 10 years ago, the profession has changed since then. To have a grasp on what is happening in the profession, faculty and administration have to stay connected with people who are currently in media newsrooms.

Faculty suggestion was named as the second biggest influence when deciding to revise the program. If the faculty isn't making the suggestions, and there is no faculty buy in, the program is unlikely to adopt convergence. Facing a faculty whose attitude is to not change proves difficult to enact any revisions. Most administrators employ academic freedom to their professors, which means, if they are not on board, convergence is not going to happen. Using Rogers' (2003) Diffusion of Innovations theory as a guideline, the more faculty members who classify as Innovators and the Early Adopter, the more likely it is that convergence will be adopted into the curriculum. If a program's faculty does not have an Innovator or Early Adopter, the Late Majority and Laggards will take much longer to adopt the idea of convergence. There are a number of reasons faculty members may not be supportive of the integration of multimedia skills into coursework. They might feel uncomfortable teaching something new or feel the pressure to learn a new skill that is foreign. They may not have the money to do what they want in class or have the attitude that students will not appreciate the change. They may feel that convergence is wrong, which means programs with faculty members having these sort of apprehensions are less likely to revise their curriculum to cross train students.

Student suggestions also played a big role in whether to integrate multimedia skills into coursework. Although many respondents did not choose student suggestion as the main factor, they made textual comments about how the revision was made in order to meet the needs of students who will be entering the workforce in the next five years. One respondent said their curriculum revision was “driven by sufficient interest from students to offer the area of study.” Respondents were asked if they had an assessment program for whether their revisions were successful and one respondent said, “The benchmark for our program is that our majors enter a top 100 markets upon graduation. We are driven by the end-user.”

It was common for programs that had some sort of convergence in their curriculum to have an advisory board, but it was also common for those programs that had a non-converged curriculum. This could be because advisory boards are not always made up of people from the industry, they could include faculty, students or alumni. This means the degree of influence these advisory boards have on administration and faculty is not known.

Training faculty members in multimedia skills goes hand-in-hand with having a converged curriculum, but many programs are not offering such training. This means there might be a lack of funds for such programming, a lack of interest, lack of space for training, or a lack of time. The fact is, many programs are not offering training, and this can be a setback when trying to integrate convergence into the curriculum. The more trained faculty members who are in a program, the more opportunity there is for multimedia teaching. Faculty members who are already training in any sort of multimedia skills (even something like blogging) could help other faculty members learn the skills. This sort of predicament has fostered the creation and experimentation of team teaching. For the most part, many respondents noted they had tried to

do team teaching, and although, on a minimal scale, it worked out for the best, many respondents said there were too many complications for their program to stick with it.

More respondents noted that their program was not accredited in this survey. Although the data showed that being accredited had no affect on the curriculum, programs that are not accredited seem to be moving more quickly towards a converged curriculum. This means that the accreditation standards, in terms of how many credit hours the program can offer, is a barrier towards integrating multimedia skills. Some respondents also noted making multimedia courses a requirement, which has led to more converged curricula. Other factors leading to change included providing multimedia and skills courses as electives, allowing students to substitute classes and having upper division reporting classes produce content in multi-media platforms. Also, using team-teaching, having internship placement programs so students experience converged newsrooms, producing a department-wide publication, talking to professionals and looking at other schools has helped. There is more than one way to integrate convergence into the curriculum.

### **Reported Success**

Respondents were candid about their successes and challenges when filling in textual answers. Many respondents said they did not have an official assessment plan to evaluate the program's changes but noted they were in the process of developing one. Some respondents considered just talking about a revision to be a success. For many respondents, it only took a couple of faculty members who were interested and revision grew from that, which means faculty members have a great influence on the curriculum. Team teaching was marked as a success indicator for some respondents, which means the faculty has started to work together and

convergence is more likely to occur in these situations. One respondent gave an example of a team teaching success:

The exception is a special class in sports reporting that we just finished for seven students going to China to work with organizations covering the Olympic Games. The class was taught by a sports broadcasting adjunct and a print reporting adjunct because we were cross training.

Faculty are becoming more engaged in the revision process. If the faculty stays on the sidelines and does not contribute or engage in any of the changes, it will take the program much longer and be much more of a struggle to get converged skills in place. Respondents reported great success in building or updating converged newsrooms or classrooms. The more of a priority this is, the quicker convergence will be adopted into the curriculum. Having a facility like this opens the doors to many possibilities. More faculty and students can have a place to work together on these multimedia skills. Many respondents noted adding a department-wide publication to their curriculum for students to produce. For integration to take place, according to the Interdisciplinary theory, the different forms of media must contribute to a process that produces an integrated product (Kraeplin & Criado, 2005). The example used to explain the practical application of the theory is streaming audio and video next to a story with web links. This is what most of these integrated news products do.

Respondents who said their program did not have a product are now introducing one into the coursework. Instead of just getting graded on these assignments, they are “going live” and publishing the product for an audience to view. The actual implementation of such converged components was the most noted success. This means that programs are willing to experiment with many different methods of integration. This is key to adopting convergence into the curriculum.

## **Reported Challenges**

The two main challenges that were reported when trying to add multimedia training to coursework are cost and faculty support. Administrators who might want to add more convergence into their curriculum are held up by powers they cannot control, like cost, university-wide budget cuts and hiring freezes. This means if a program is facing lack of funding for such additions, the rate of adoption is going to be much slower than for those schools with more money to spend. Without funding, program administrators cannot afford proper hardware and software, equipment such as digital recorders and mics, new faculty members who are trained in multimedia journalism, or proper training for current faculty members. This means integration will take much longer and is practically impossible until proper funds are allocated to do such things. Another factor holding programs back from this integration is faculty resistance. The lack of cooperation among faculty members from different sequences can halt the emergence of convergence in the curriculum (Huang et al, 2006). Respondents reported heavy turf wars and the lack of a converged mind set were holding the program back. There are three types of faculty members: those who wish to go to a more multimedia platform of teaching, those who are on the fence about it and those who want nothing to do with it. There must be a balance on the faculty for the adoption of convergence to be possible. Those faculty members who are in front of the line, most often, as Rogers defined them as Innovators and Early Adopters, have to be the ones to convince the Early Majority (the ones on the fence) to cross the line. Soon enough, the Late Majority and Laggards will follow, which means if the faculty is made up of more Late Majority and Laggards, convergence will take much longer to adopt.

Beyond cost and faculty buy in, there are other challenges to overcome when trying to integrate convergence. Space is a primary concern for many respondents. Many reported there is

no room in the curriculum or physically in the building to add courses that teach primarily multimedia skills. This means there may be a desire to become more converged but space issues limited a program's ability to do so. Although respondents cited having a success with team teaching, others said it was impossible to do because of the workload and mechanical issues as to which department or faculty members receives "credit" for teaching or which faculty member is evaluated. Two respondents cited student's resistance to team teaching as well, saying they were confused by it. Although team teaching may be a good solution to add convergence to coursework, there are many details that have to be worked out to do so. Time is also reported to be a challenge, because administration and faculty simply do not have the time to revise or integrate more work into their schedules. Researchers and industry professionals have yet to come up with one clear definition of convergence, which means there is apprehension to move towards a fully converged curriculum based on the uncertainty of what the word actually means. As noted, scholarly writings offer many definitions for "convergence." They also use the terms "multimedia," "cross-platform" or "fusion journalism" (Huang et al, 2006).

Although a few respondents cited uncertainty over the direction which the industry is taking as one of the main challenges, this does not hold up as well as it did a few years ago. The industry has been working in a multiplatform structure for awhile, which means these programs are out of touch with the profession. Lowery, Daniels and Becker (2005) claim the industry converging is a strong enough factor to push schools toward a converged effort, and most schools in this survey appear to be moving from discussion to experimentation. The industry has established a clear way of working and whether the administrators or faculty believe convergence is right or wrong, there is still an obligation to teach students to be prepared for jobs that exist in the media profession.

As predicted, programs that had more Innovators and Early Adopters on their faculty were the ones that defined themselves as converged. If a program wants to integrate more multimedia aspects, the faculty needs to be part of the group that wants to become converged. Rogers' theory definitely predicted who would be the faculty members most likely to adopt this new form of teaching. The stereotype that all older or senior faculty members are part of the Late Majority and Laggards was disproved. Respondents noted many senior faculty members who were on board for changes. Age is not a significant determinant in categorizing faculty members into Rogers' theory.

## CHAPTER 6 CONCLUSION

It is clear from this data and research that the journalism curricula is changing, specifically to integrate convergence and multimedia training. The majority of schools surveyed have a mixed curriculum with a few programs ahead of them as a fully-fused converged program and a few behind them, following a traditional structure. While there seems to be a great deal of pressure from the industry's shift to multiplatform journalism to change the curriculum, some programs are failing to keep up, due to many challenges. The college journalism curriculum is going through an evolution, and it is happening fast. Instead of administrators and faculties wondering if they should add some form of convergence to the curriculum, they need to be asking how to do this quickly. Judging from the responses, there are ways to bring convergence into the curriculum, although there are many challenges along the way.

Discussion in the majority of programs has opened the doors for administration and faculty to begin revision. This has left few programs that will stay with a fully traditional track. A program does not have to go completely converged – meaning teach print and broadcast students in the same track – to successfully add multimedia aspects to the curriculum. For starters, administrators and faculty members have to be open to discussing change. Forming a committee made up of administrators, faculty members and industry professionals could be a good way to get conversations started. In the discussion of the revision, administrators and faculty members should proceed with caution. It is important to keep the integrity of the program intact. Administrators and faculty members must decide what specific skills they want students to leave their program with. It is quite impossible to prepare every student for every job opening, but there must be a priority in the skills taught. Many respondents choose to keep writing and storytelling the foundation of their program, while others decided on specific skills training.

There is only so much room in a curriculum, and it can often seem overwhelming to make room for new courses. While some programs have the freedom to develop additional courses, other programs are limited by credit numbers, so it becomes a decision between what goes and what stays. This can either be a drastic makeover or a simple one, by adding digital components to courses that already exist. The majority of respondents are in the “planning” stages of many of their implementations. One such major change will be the adoption of a separate converged major. One respondent said, “While we have some elements of convergence already in place, that will grow after next fall with the implementation of a BS in Convergent Media and a Masters of Applied Arts in Convergent Media.” Some even mentioned moving from a non-converged curriculum to a converged one in only a semester’s time. Also, specific courses are being developed for many of the units. One respondent said, “All journalism students (as of next year) will take an advanced course titled Multimedia Journalism.” Another respondent agreed, “The latest course we have created, yet to be offered, is designed as a team-taught course. Newsgathering: An advanced course in newsgathering and writing for print and digital media with a particular focus on convergence-based journalism. Students will prepare news content for multiple media programs. Students are required to prepare content for both the print and online versions of campus newspaper.” These examples are specific ways to go about making changes in the curriculum.

Program administrators should develop an advisory board if there is not one already in place. This board should be made up of not only industry professionals, but students and specific faculty members as to allow for many different perspectives. Developing a space for “convergence” to take place should be considered. This converged newsroom or classroom can be something simple to something extravagant, dependent on availability of funds. Many

respondents noted they already had “architectural plans” ready and should be a reality in the next couple of years. It is also suggested by respondents that an actual physical place can be replaced by many virtual spaces if there is no room availability. Students can upload to the same server from different locations. If program administrators have a limited budget, they should explore the free software available. For example, there are many video and audio editing programs available online for no cost. This is where having a faculty member or adjunct professor who specializes in convergence would help. Even having one or two faculty members with cross-platform experience can aid in the adoption of convergence. Allocating specific resources for faculty training is important, although not a priority for many respondents. Even having outsourced workshops or in-house skills training by a specific faculty member can be helpful.

Administrators continue to develop an assessment plan for whether their implementations are working. Many administrators are calling for a pre and post test, exit exams, student review, alumni surveys, graduating senior surveys and internship reports. Having a way to access the program implementations is a must. Program administrators must keep an open line between faculty and students as to what is working.

Through all the successes and challenges, many respondents offered words of advice for programs that are facing the same task. One respondent said:

A good administrator helps faculty streamline and concentrate offerings so as to monitor workload and ensure sufficient FTEs to cover necessary classes. Otherwise you deal with curricular glut, and the result of that are courses that specialize too narrowly. The goal is to know what you can and cannot do and to focus on what you do well.

Another respondent said, “Keep talking, tolerate experimentation, mistakes, engage professionals and continue to come back to our core mission as storytellers. Tell students that they shouldn’t define themselves in terms of channels of distribution.” Trial and error has been a common

theme for the majority of respondents. The development of the curriculum seems to have taken time for administrators, faculty and students to understand, both in theory and in practice. One respondent said "... trial and error has been our most frequent tactic, as has openness to change."

Even if there is no option for implementing any sort of technology change, administrators and faculty can be talking about it in their courses. One of the most important lessons students should learn is to communicate with others. If they are not taught the basics of how to communicate with each other early on in their education, they will continue to move up a silo and stay isolated from other majors.

One respondent had these words of advice, "1) You can't move fast enough; 2) You can't be too careful; 3) This is a moving target; 4) Give credit to the poor souls entrusted with keeping up on the technology; 5) Above all, we need to protect the standards and light of good journalism." Another respondent agreed, "The wave is coming and we can either ride it or get swept under by it. It's our job to train students for jobs for the next five years and their job to continue to learn and adapt to industry demands and trends."

### **Best Practices**

The following is a best practices list constructed from the data:

- Start talking, but hold true to the foundation of your program. Prioritize the skills to teach students.
- Hire faculty members who specialize in convergence. Begin to look for professors who have an active interest and who are trained in multimedia journalism.
- Assemble an advisory board with industry professionals. Also include faculty members, students and alumni.

- Begin faculty training. Start small with in-house workshops, online tutorials and brown bag lunches. Start sending faculty members to conferences that have a focus in online media training.
- Talk to students. It's important to understand what the students are looking for in terms of their communications education. They may even have some good ideas on how to implement more convergence into the curriculum.
- Utilize what you already have. Administrators don't have to build an entirely new converged newsroom, use a classroom space that has access to the Internet, use faculty members from other colleges or departments who know something about technology or connect with your local media to schedule visits.
- Develop an assessment plan. Have a way to know if it's working, whether this includes exit surveys and interviews or feedback from faculty members.

### **Limitations to the Study**

One limitation to this study is the changing nature of the topic. Journalism administrators and faculty members are constantly changing the curriculum and coursework, so this study is only a snapshot of what is happening at a certain point in time. This data is sure to be different if the study is replicated in another year or two. Also, having a response rate less than 50% means that there were more programs left out of the study than were in the study. The survey did not reach all the programs necessary due to invalid e-mail address. There were many programs included in the population that did not teach journalism or taught only one class in mass communications. After removing these, the sample was smaller. There was a heavy time restraint, because the survey was conducted during a two-and-a-half week period.

### **Further Research**

There are many topics related to convergence and its place in the journalism curriculum to be studied. Many respondents left contact information, and conducting in-depth interviews with administrators about this process could make for an interesting qualitative study. A survey of faculty members to get their perspective on multimedia training could be done. A developed team teaching study, including other academic departments, about how to organize, implement and succeed.

Other questions include what specific tracks of journalism should be converged? Should magazine students be included in this? How are journalism programs defining convergence? How does that affect the implementation of convergence into the curricula? Perhaps considering another theory to drive this study would be interesting. Also, a more in-depth look at the challenges journalism programs are facing.

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