



Dean Cummings <dcummings@georgiasouthern.edu>

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**Fwd: AEJMC - Poster Mockup**

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Dean Cummings <drdeancummings@gmail.com>  
To: Dean Cummings <dcummings@georgiasouthern.edu>

Mon, Jan 15, 2018 at 1:08 PM

Sent from my iPhone

Begin forwarded message:

**From:** "Somani, Indira S" <indira.somani@Howard.edu>  
**Date:** May 29, 2014 at 1:26:27 PM EDT  
**To:** "Somani, Indira S" <indira.somani@Howard.edu>  
**Subject:** Re: AEJMC - Poster Mockup

Dear Electronic News Participant:

Your paper presentation is scheduled as a Scholar-to-Scholar session. This is not a panel with a moderator and a discussant. This process involves creating a poster to be pinned (it's best to bring your own tacks) to a bulletin board (see the the attached example of a poster-mockup).

Your session is scheduled for:

Thursday, August 7

1:30-3 p.m.

During this time you should be standing next to your poster, because a member of the Electronic News (EN) leadership will be by to view and rate your poster/presentation. EN still has to issue an award for the best Scholar-to-Scholar paper/presentation.

If your paper/presentation is selected as the Top Scholar-to-Scholar presentation, we invite you to attend the Electronic News Division's Business Meeting on Thursday, August 7, from 6:45-8:15 pm. Your cash award and certificate will be presented at that time.

If you have any questions, please email me.

Sincerely,

Indira

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# MAKING AIR WITH A MAGIC BULLET

## THE MULTIMEDIA JOURNALISTS IMPACT ON NEWS PRODUCTION

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### ABSTRACT

The impact of a multimedia news delivery at the 1990s, where news agencies are not only being their own...  
The impact of a multimedia news delivery at the 1990s, where news agencies are not only being their own...  
The impact of a multimedia news delivery at the 1990s, where news agencies are not only being their own...

### INTRODUCTION

Journalists (2001) have...  
Journalists (2001) have...  
Journalists (2001) have...

### METHODOLOGY

An ethnographic study of the...  
An ethnographic study of the...  
An ethnographic study of the...

The ethnographic study...  
The ethnographic study...  
The ethnographic study...

### RESULTS

1. Outlining of News...  
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# MAKE AIR!

PERFORMANCE	1976	1990	1995	2000	2005	2010
NUMBER OF PACKAGES	100	101	100	100	100	100
AVERAGE LENGTH (in sec)	80.0	82.1	82.5	83.0	83.5	83.5
NUMBER OF EMENTS/PACKAGE	166	133	131.6	72	74	62
AVERAGE LENGTH (in sec)	20.4	23	40	47.5	5.89	5.89
NUMBER OF SOURCES	20	29	47.5	302	297	297
AVERAGE LENGTH (in sec)	727	475	485			

### MANAGING MAX HEADROOMS

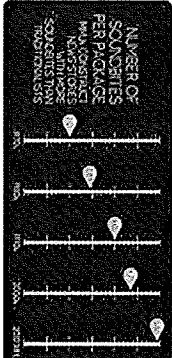
1. Managing Max Headrooms...  
1. Managing Max Headrooms...  
1. Managing Max Headrooms...



TECHNOLOGY IS THE EXCUSE FOR IT!

### MMS CAN DO IT!

2000: 15% 2010: 100%  
2000: 15% 2010: 100%



### ADAPT OR DIE!

1. Adapt or Die!...  
1. Adapt or Die!...  
1. Adapt or Die!...

CONCLUSIONS

**Making Air with a Magic Bullet: The Multimedia  
Journalist's Impact on News Production**  
*Dean Cummings, Sheffield University*

**INTRODUCTION**

The average lifespan of a television news director at any particular television news station is not very long. In this study involving WKYC-TV in Cleveland, Ohio and WSTM-TV in Syracuse, New York there were frequent changes at the helm of the news department. From 2006 – 2011, both WSTM-TV and WKYC-TV hired three news directors. News directors have a difficult task. They are expected to change a culture quickly when they are hired but expected to work within the restraints of television programming, fragile egos and budgets. Employees who are hesitant to change impede the application of the news director's ambitions. News directors live in the wake of chaos from inside the newsroom and face the dictates from the General Manager's corner office. General Managers look for magic bullets to destroy the competition, such as hiring the highest rated anchor from the competition. They look for programming miracles to bring their ratings upward, such as the Olympics or Dr. Phil. Unfortunately, some stations struggle to achieve the financial success the corporations expect. There is an assumption the multimedia journalist is a magic bullet. The introduction of the multimedia journalist is viewed as a way to cut production costs while maintaining productivity. It has proven to be more difficult than expected.

Schudson (2003) claims, 'One can stress that news is a manufactured good, the product of a set of social, economic, and political institutions and practices (Schudson, 2003: 13).' It may be possible to look at the final manufactured goods as the results of a process geared toward efficiency and salability. It may be a contentious perspective to both practitioners and academics, to view journalism as a commoditized exchange of information rather than an ideal of social enlightenment or democracy (McChesney et al., 2010: 11-18). It appears with deregulation, technology and increased competition, the production methods are being altered to address the challenges of production needs and profits. From the corporate headquarters to the field workers of news, there are changes and challenges to local television news. One remedy being sought by news managers and corporations is the integration of the multimedia journalists (MMJ), whereas journalists take on all the crafts responsibilities as well as journalistic responsibilities. The crafts individuals, such as the photographers and editors, are removed from the staff to save payroll costs or they are converted into MMJs to expand productivity. In the quest to make deadlines and fulfill all the production requirements, it appears the MMJ and managers will tend to take the path of least resistance. Consequently, production values may descend to the lowest common denominator of television news, encouraging more profit-driven content decisions (Scott, 2005: 114). The innovation of the MMJ is meant to offset the loss of revenue, by downsizing staff and demanding 'multi-skilling' (Aviles et al., 2008: 221-231).

WSTM-TV viewed the adoption of the MMJ as increasing flexibility of their staff. Flexibility can be viewed as a requirement for modern television news journalists (Kolodzy, 2006; Halpern-Wenger et al., 2008; Killebrew, 2005; Underwood, 2007). It

appears what is integral to flexibility is the notion of multi-skilling. The 'one man band' has been utilized since the beginning of television news but the MMJ appears to be more than dynamic application. The MMJ's multi-skilling appears to be a form of work organization formed by political factors rather than core characteristics of technology (Cottle et al, 1999: 33-34). The work is, as Nichols and Beynon (1977) argued, organized around technology in a way that suits capital, that is, in a way that best facilitates the creation of profit (Nichols and Beynon, 1977). Therefore, the perceptions of skill that are generated by interaction between particular technologies and division of labor can be argued to be a direct outcome of the capitalist drive for increasing profitability (Thursfield, 2000: 63). At WSTM-TV, the MMJ was believed to be the future model because it encouraged lower labor costs with minimum risks. Management adopted the model because technology allowed the implementation.

New technologies influence the acceptance of the MMJ. The less expensive equipment is in an incentive for the News Directors to implement the MMJ into the staff and save capital costs. The lightweight gear helps to persuade and lower the hesitations of the staff to adapt because the equipment is less burdensome. Regardless, the technological change involves phases of adaptation to the innovation (Singer, 2004: 16). For some news organizations such as WSTM-TV, adaptation was mandatory, while at WKYC-TV the introduction of the MMJ was half-heartedly applied. The diffusion of innovations does not have a specific timetable for the acceptance and it seems assumptions are made about the current paradigm (Kolodzy, 2006: 14-15) as to whether it can sustain the changes of convergence.

Thomas Kuhn describes two phases of science: normal and revolutionary (Kuhn, 1970). During the normal phase, the level of consensus is high and most scientists working in the field accept the validity of the current paradigm. There is a level of acceptance that the present paradigm arrives at the present state because it appears to be adequately tested and is the 'best method', which causes a cultural resistance to the new innovations (Singer, 2004: 4). WKYC-TV held firm to their ideology the best method of news production was their current method.

Producing a news story is more an art form than routine tasks but the process requires a number of tasks to be completed in order for the product to be made. The traditional crew of reporter, videographer/editor separates the process of producing a news story into individual skills and processes in a Fordism method. The Fordist method results from a cultivating period (videotaping/resourcing), to design period (writing), to a manufacturing period (editing). There is some flexibility but each period requires a particular worker.

The MMJ mixes the periods of production into a malleable synchronous methodology. Therefore, Post-Fordism seems to be the model to identify the work of the multimedia journalist. To some degree, the MMJ has a dual personality. Part Taylorism, performing a series of standardized operations, carried out on a standardized object with standardized tools, the technical task is a repetitive cycle, which can be transposed into other areas (Doray, 1988: 128); it is also part post-Fordist, whereupon the process involves flexible

specialization (Beck, 2003: 19). The MMJ seems to utilize the post-Fordist methods of producing television news to decrease the cost of labor by de-skilling the worker from a specialist in one area (Cottle, 1999: 26). It can be argued, the method does not increase the quality of the work but increases the valorization of the employee. These changes are not designed to increase the information power of media outlets but to increase their earning power. Technology is driving these changes at one end, while increased profit motivates the changes from the other (Killebrew, 2005: 7).

## METHODOLOGY

An ethnographic study at two local television stations, WKYC-TV in Cleveland, Ohio and WSTM-TV in Syracuse, New York was conducted. The purpose of the ethnographic study was to compare and contrast the newsgathering between the traditional and converged journalists. The study resulted in qualitative data identifying paradigms within the news crews. The paradigms were examined for variations between the traditional and converged journalists. My approach is a mixed method approach (Creswell and Piano-Clark, 2006), combining quantitative and qualitative methods to evaluate changes to the production methods of local television news gatherers (Deacon et al, 1999, Emerson et al., 1995, Hansen et al., 1998). It was my intention to be a reflective practitioner (Machin & Niblock, 2006: 25); in such a way, the researcher can step back and contemplate the events presented and contemplate the wider forces at work.

The ethnographic study began in 2007 and continued to 2011. In that time the traditionally based production methods of both television stations were challenged by the implementation of a few multimedia journalists. A total of twenty-three interviews in Cleveland, Ohio were conducted; ten observed subjects were interviewed. Seven external influential subjects were interviewed, including management, sales, and producers. Six other interviews were conducted with other journalists and management from other stations or departments at WKYC-TV. For WSTM-TV, a total of eleven interviews in Syracuse, New York were conducted: four observed subjects were interviewed. Two external influential subjects were interviewed. Five interviews were conducted with reporters, producers, and management from WSTM-TV, as well as individuals from WTVH-TV. WSTM-TV maintains an operating agreement with WTVH-TV, which includes sharing staff.

## OBSERVING A HYBRID MODEL OF MANAGEMENT

During the ethnographic study conducted in Cleveland, Ohio at WKYC-TV and in Syracuse, New York at WSTM-TV it was observed a hybrid model of Taylorist and Post-Fordist methods were used to manage the MMJ. The hybrid model seems specific to the MMJ and not the traditional crew. The hybridization may be occurring because the new model is attempting to fit into the previously existing post-Taylorist, Fordist models and there might not be an adequate substitution, causing what appears to be needed additional supervision in order for the model to satisfy management. WSTM-TV news management

was motivated to apply direct guidance upon the crews in order to facilitate the production requirements of their news stories. The middle management relied on intimate supervision to instruct and direct the MMJ with the intent to increase efficiency, while attempting to utilize technology to best support the production.

The issue of production impacting journalism seems to reside in experience, interactions, time, research and training (Machin et al, 2006: 4-9). It seems as if the process of change in the production methods allows for tight control of management through the phases of adoption (Killebrew, 2005: 108-115), resulting in new working methods, combining the old culture with the new technology (Hemmingway, 2008: 206-207). The new production models apparently create a number of compromises whereby the business of creating a news product becomes significantly greater than the theoretical underpinnings of journalism (Croteau et al, 2006: 162). Whether or not it is the managerial adjustment to an expanded marketplace, a de-skilling of staff, or corporate mandates, there seems to be a growing fissure between the standards of production and the costs of production (Scott, 2005: 55). While the audience may ultimately determine the value of a news product, they are not aware of the deskilling of the journalist during the transition to the production of information. Ursell (2000) refers to the eagerness of young workers (Ursell, 2000: 816): 'The television production apparatus, as vampire, (ingests) youngsters at low prices from a large pool provided by the education system, working newcomers and established hands remorselessly, discarding the older and less accommodating at will.' The worker becomes commoditized, not just for labor power, but also as a commoditized personality or commoditized source of a particular aesthetic for audience consumption. The consumption by the audience enhances the market status of the individual's labor power (Ursell, 2000: 818).

At WKYC-TV, the traditionalists see their methodology and epistemology as being more valid in both acquisition and presentation. They base their criteria on time management effectiveness and quality control. There is a Fordist belief among traditionalists that the new method is less efficient, 'If something is emerging, it is not really a thing, but a new dynamic expression of the contradiction in the form of industrial sociality imposed by the dominant mode of production (Doray, 1988: 166).' It is evident that the division of labor in the traditional crew successfully outperforms the converged journalist in breaking news stories requiring logistical maneuvers at a location. Both converged and traditionalists agree that when immediacy is the goal, the division of labor effectively enhances the speed at which duties are performed.

Thomas Kuhn contends that in normal science, scientists accept almost without question the dominant scientific theories in their research areas, even if there are observations that the theory is unable to explain or which suggest the theory is wrong (Kuhn, 1970). In such a way, traditionalists and converged journalists observe the construction of a news story by a division of labor as more productive, yet it was observed during the ethnographic research to not be the case. In fact, the converged journalists were observed as more productive. In truth, on a non-immediate or 'breaking news' story, both crews appear to perform the task of construction at the same pace. The mitigating circumstance needed to make the processes equivalent seems to revolve around the amount of time

spent producing their news product. Based on morning meetings, WSTM-TV MMJs had two more hours to produce their work, compared to WKYC-TV. Kuhn (1970) contends the observer, the theory, and the equipment are all an expression of that point of view under observation. From such a perspective, most journalists consistently repair the traditional model as a paradigm. As in the past, industrial change involves clashes of paradigms (Doray, 1988; 165). In this study, the clashes of paradigms were created by the transition from the Fordist construction of traditional television news crews to the MMJ.

Paradigm repair occurs when the groups, such as WKYC-TV's staff, try to maintain the status quo, making it difficult for management to fully implement the changes. Stations successfully adopting the new paradigms do so based on how they introduce it to the existing paradigm (Ruggiero, 2004: 92-106). This study observed WSTM-TV successfully implementing the new paradigm. The advancement of the technology helped in the adoption of the paradigm. Management is aware that the development of their production model is dependent on the workers accepting and implementing the new technology. According to managers interviewed in the study, the adoption is as political as it is scientific. There is pretense the science and the construction model is the variable in adaptation, however, the ethnographic study reveals it is a dynamic synergy of political and technological factors. As is suggested by Ruth Hubbard (Wyer et al., 2001: 159), 'If we want to integrate politics into our science, we must insist on the political nature and content of scientific work.' In other words, management seems to approach the new technology aware of the political ramifications of changing the roles of the existing workers. The workers' hesitation towards the new model seems to be viewed in political terms, as if there is a loss of status and position. Acceptance of the technology seems to require the newsrooms to shift their existing paradigms.

More often the conversation about the transformation to converged journalists involves a common thread. Technology is enabling the transformation (Kolodzy, 2006), (Hemmingway, 2008), (Quinn, 2004: 110). When asked why the transformation is occurring, there are common responses. The equipment is smaller. The equipment is easier to use. The equipment is lighter. The MMJ is assuming the roles of the videographer but some of the tasks are not transferring. Lighting equipment is largely unused for most of the MMJ. Traditional crews frequently complain they are unable to use lighting equipment because of the perceived lack of time to set up the equipment. If management demanded the equipment, the perception of necessity might be altered (Killebrew, 2005, 96-97). It leads one to conclude that if the traditional crews believe they do not have enough time, then it seems rational that the MMJ has even less time. None of the observed single news production crews used lights for interviews. The traditional crew used lights sparingly in circumstances when they were not pressed for a deadline. In many instances, however, lights were not used, even if time was not a concern. It was a matter of effort by the videographer.

At WSTM-TV, the MMJs appear to be self-aware of their work and in terms of the production processes, manage themselves internally with recognition of the balancing between various variables of their work model. The Post-Fordism model is formulated by

the MMJ to balance the production requirements of technogrammatic skills, the sociogrammatic interactions and the chronogrammatic pressures of deadlines. The model of the MMJ is one that requires flexibility and direct supervision, in what appears to be a hybrid of management techniques of Taylorist and Post-Fordist models.

### **MANAGERS PREFER EFFICIENT PRODUCTION**

In the observed newsrooms of WSTM-TV and WKYC-TV there is less time for journalism caused by increase in demands on production. Work shifts are altered to minimize overtime and more news packages are requested from each reporter or MMJ. However, there is little time for the reporter to research and investigate future news stories. Management facilitates the selection and initial fact checking for efficiency sake. Requiring new employees to be multi-skilled may be, in part, a way to raise productivity and reduce costs but may also increase labor exploitation (Ursell, 2001: 176). 'Burnout' is a term used by many of the interview subjects with regard to the new model of the converged journalist. WSTM-TV originally had 8 MMJ's but the difficulties of the job seemed too much for four of them, and they were released because of 'burn-out', although management did not feel this was a problem with the new paradigm. According to Schaufeli et al., burnout can be described as exhaustion, cynicism and a lack of professional efficacy (Schaufeli et al, 2008: 175). Burnout was not observed at the news organization at the time of the study. The MMJ's at WSTM-TV did not seem to be exhausted or to be experiencing a draining of their mental resources. There was cynicism among traditionalists who were being retrained to be MMJs, but the other MMJ's showed very little cynicism. And all of the MMJ's looked at their performance in positive terms and expressed a desire to improve their work. This study observed the remaining crews as efficiently meeting deadlines and performing rigorous tasks, such as creating two packages a day, as well as material for the station's website. The strain of producing news at a non-stop pace was seen in the behavior of the MMJs, where there was a sense of urgency and an inability to slow down during the process of producing the assigned news package. Burnout may occur in the future, but there did not seem to be any at the present time. Age did seem to affect the attitude toward the job.

The ethnographic study reveals that technology is adapted at different rates because of several variables: the age of the journalist, technological savvy, prior experience and time management skills. The process of construction is not improved by technology itself but is dependent on the adaptability of the individuals applying the technology. Those workers trained in traditional newsrooms seemed to have more difficulty accepting the transition; they enjoyed being specialists. Job demarcations based on craft can offer workers some protection (Danford, 1998: 409-431).

There is a sense the valorization of the employee is changing with the development of the new production model, as the elimination of two individuals raises the importance of the remaining worker. We often do not look at journalism as labor, with a commoditized product attached. In this sense, the reporter can express frustration to be known as laborers (Martyn, 2009). While management may view the shift in valorization and



status for reporters as an acceptable and beneficial change, the MMJ may view the alteration as erosion of status, importance and quality. In this context, management takes on risks of modernity in forms of control and success is viewed by fulfilling the criteria of production, with each action of the MMJ as a savings of production costs (Van Loon, 2007). The actions of each MMJ are viewed as capital, from carrying the equipment, to lighting an interview, to interviewing a subject, to writing a script, to appearing on camera, and to editing the story. The same actions by the traditional crew appear to involve more expenditure of labor and in comparison the value of the MMJ may be greater than the traditional crew. Using Labor Process Theory, it appears the surplus value of the MMJ is the difference in wages from the traditional crewmembers, as well as the costs for each task required to complete the production. An exchange of 3 for 1 gives management a surplus value. Each action can be seen as a value and a form of concrete labor. With the new model, the exact same amount of product can be created at a third of the cost, and with it the operational expenses drop.

### **MAKING AIR – EFFICIENCY ABOVE ALL ELSE**

Management at WSTM-TV is more concerned about ‘making air,’ or ensuring the story makes its deadline, than aesthetics at this point. It is important to the news organization to train the MMJs to be efficient, factual, accurate, independent and multi-skilled. With the concerns over framing news stories and news agendas, the MMJ appears to encourage gatekeeping of news stories based on production. The limitations of the converged MMJ due to ‘de-skilling’ or downsizing the crew, and the ‘multi-skilling’ of the individual who must perform the act of production alone combine to instigate managerial changes designed to ensure the success of the new process of producing news. In the case of the MMJ, the news stories are not only framed based on ideological and theoretical hierarchies (Schudson, 2003: 47) or economic factors of importance (McChesney et al., 2005: 65) but they also appear to be framed by multiple factors of efficiency (Fallows, 1997: 144). Unlike Herbert Gans’ view of television news production in the 1970s, when he concluded journalists were not pressured to choose news to attract the most profitable audience (Schudson, 2005: 120), today the journalist is pressured by both management and owners (Preston, 2009: 92).

The gatekeeping of news stories is not only based on the content of the stories directly but also on an observed awareness of the ability of the production crew to produce the story efficiently. Stories are more apt to be chosen or ignored based on the criteria of production needs, with the emphasis placed on timeliness and efficiency. The element of time is a diffuser of innovation, and in the case of the MMJ is the measure of success (Singer, 2004: 5). In terms used by the observed MMJs and by management, as long as the story is capable of “making air” or “makes its slot,” the story is a success. The objective and the measure of success is gauged by whether the news story appears on the air on time. This is nothing new; deadlines have always been the driving force of news, and Schlesinger denoted the newsroom as a ‘stop watch culture’ (Schlesinger, 1978: 83-105). Hemmingway (2008) found the application of the MMJ into a news organization required the management to make adjustments based on the structure of the crews:

'planners have got to fit jobs to the crewing, whereas before you sent the crews to the job, I think that has now reversed. They know what time the crews start so they know they won't get the jobs covered. (Hemmingway, 2008: 99).' As the MMJ is initiated, what may be occurring is an escalation of news stories with reoccurring sources, within a specific geographic range, and relying on press releases for information. The reason for this gatekeeping technique appears to be to ensure the production process is efficient (Killebrew, 2005: 109).

As newsrooms converge their crews to the MMJ, the management has changed their approach to benefit the 'multi-skilling' element of the journalist. The geographic range, from the news organization, is shortened in order to minimize drive time for the MMJ, as they cannot work while driving. Reduction of production time, leads to greater probability the story will not "make air" on time and viewed as a business model, convergence should be able to produce more news for the same or little more money, which means that media organizations should be able to cut costs through increased productivity (Quinn, 2004: 110). The use of press releases helps to increase productivity and also appears to ensure the variables for efficiency are in place (Pavlik, 2004: 28). The press release usually includes contacts, location and information (Stryker, 2002: 519-520). The MMJ and management will use the press release from familiar sources instead of researching new sources and making contact with unfamiliar entities, as a way of saving production time. It could be that the transition to news production in the 24/7 news cycles creates a supply chain management approach (Simchi-Levi et al., 2003: 4-8). Again, efficiency is the criteria and many of the factors of agenda setting and framing are the result of the need to maintain the production process at a quick and consistent rate (Kleinman, 2009: 268-269).

Businesses tend to broaden roles, automate, and utilize the post-Fordist principles (Saltzis et al, 2008: 224). Television news has entered a phase of the business life cycle in which the core principles of journalism are loosely applied in order to facilitate the best means of production; however, the product may look the same but the quality suffers (Killebrew, 2005: 23). The perception of quality is subjective and it is difficult to assess the production methodology when the traditional crew appears to create a translucent final product devoid of evidence of specific authorship. Without direct observation it is difficult to comprehend the contributions of various individuals working on a television news story. The MMJ may expose evidence of craftwork the traditional crew does not, as there appears to be one author, and all elements of production are crafted by the one individual. In that sense, the elusiveness of accountability is removed and within that perspective, the quality may improve, as MMJs will be held responsible for all facets of production. However, this study indicates, there are other forces within the newsroom that aid in the production of a news story, that is not craftwork, and those forces are placed upon the MMJ. The influence upon the MMJ creates a different type of elusiveness, whereas the story sources, such as press releases, may hide the journalistic value of the information. Also, the production contribution of the Taylorist management strategy to the news story may be invisible to the audience, and to some MMJs who were observed to perform habitual work without questioning supervisory decisions.

There seems to be a daily set of codes established as a part of the decision-making strategies. Known forces, such as other news reports from competitors, put pressure on the group to respond and make decisions over the pressure they apply on the newsroom. The morning meeting would codify the importance of certain sources. Those codes would rank the importance of sources utilized during the production of the news package. The sources were chosen for a variety of reasons. At WKYC-TV and WSTM-TV, stories affecting known sources would be attractive. It seems the attractiveness of the story would be based on the ease of production, as well as the personal interest. If the story affected the news management personally, it would be codified and highly ranked.

*'So the decisions are made in the morning meeting as to the convenience. What story, it might not be the best story, but it might be the easiest story to get on the air? So, from that point of view, it's really cut into, I think the overall quality of news.'*

– Jim Kenyon, news reporter, WSTM-TV, Syracuse, New York.

*"(I don't go to morning meetings) because the morning meeting is the management people discussing what was in the newspaper because that's the only way they know what news is. And they've already decide who's doing what, when and where, and we have no input. If we show up at that meeting, they ask, "Why are you here?"*

– Dave Hollis, News Photographer, WJW-TV, Cleveland, Ohio

The gatekeeping of the management staff can also affect the MMJ during the process of gathering news and writing the story. There was concern by veteran reporters that the MMJ could be influenced into reporting false information or allowing a source to craft the message. The fear is that the premise of the story created in the morning meeting, plus the source of the story and the strict time restraints caused by the additional work of producing a story, will lead to overlooked facts or unheard expressions of concern.

*'Certain people will try to tell you one thing and put a spin on a story that you may not have time to check out. You've got to worry about that. I think at some point it, if they cover a big enough story, they're going to have to put their foot down and say, "I'm not comfortable airing the story the way it is now. I've got to find out more." And that might be a difficult thing to get through to a producer or a news director, but those are the times we live in now.'* - Jim Kenyon - Reporter, WSTM-TV, (Syracuse, New York.)

A traditionalist crafts individual is part of a division of labor. The role is dependent upon the skills required. A reporter has a selected number of tasks needed to produce a news package. The job seems to be defined by the tasks. A MMJ is hard to define by the task. There are several ways of labeling the job but the label does not indicate the type of job as the job has multiple skills. It seems traditionalist reporter will use gatekeeping to avoid doing unassigned tasks, such as tape editing or videotaping. The traditional reporter will block external forces that require a differentiation in work. The MMJ seems to be more likely to take on external challenges because of the multi-skilling. As an example, a traditional reporter will not leave the building to report a story because the reporter does not have a photographer, whereas a MMJ will leave the station and report the same story, encouraged to produce the story without a crew, and without delay. The

MMJs are becoming self-sufficient and, in the case of WSTM-TV, the news management encourages the MMJs to be independent.

## CONCLUSION

The debate over multi-skilling of journalists is as a contentious issue for both the practitioner and the academic as skills are transferred to one person, now defined as a journalist. Observed in this study, multi-skilling impacts news content and information and it may not improve the quality of journalism in terms of information value because it appears as if the process dictates the form and content. Efficiency is improved for the sake of economics (Paterson et al., 2008: 161). Mentioned earlier, the merging of jobs may cause a loss of perspectives, expunging a system of checks and balances (Duhe et al., 2004: 87), this is compounded by the interjection of perspectives from management.

News directors are expected to replace the mentorship of experienced peers to guide young multimedia journalists. As the work of the television journalist becomes more technologically simplified but task magnified, it can be argued that the journalist is 'deskilled' and the profession appears to become superfluous (Meikle et al, 2011: 169). It raises the question of how the trend is viewed both by the worker and by management, as well as whether it can be considered a successful business model by managers, and a mandate as well (Singer, 2006: 15).

In that context, management declares success of the business model by requiring it to be a mandate of the organization, whether or not the worker believes it to be attainable. If the worker creates the product under the new business model it would be considered a success to the organization. Therefore, it appears the success of the MMJ is measured by redefining goals adjusted to guarantee success. Observed behavior during the ethnographic study indicates managers are creating self-fulfilling prophecies by hedging the workloads of reporters with research aids such as press releases, repetitive reliable sources, and video feeds supplied by other news organizations. As mentioned in the previous chapter, the news director at WSTM-TV showed a great emphasis on creating more 'packages' as the benchmark of successful production. Her stance was important in the selection and success of her MMJs. She readily admitted she released journalists unable to perform their job with efficiency and recruited younger employees capable of maintaining the energy required to produce the required amount of work.

*"We are losing veteran reporters. We first lost veteran producers. Now we are losing veteran reporters who are going to find other lines of work. Because journalism really has to be a passion and a calling; and we've gone through an interesting time period when we brought one generation through who were more passionate about being on television than necessarily were about journalism making a difference, creating change, doing right from wrong, standing up for the little guy. That generation kind of got past by this MTV generation who, I'm on TV...hello!...and the holdovers that we have from that generation, which I kind of think started in a post Watergate type era."*

*– Former News Director, WKYC-TV.*

In terms of creating staff and managing their productivity, it seems to be a case of, 'we are going to make this work, no matter what.' The 'make it so' causes an increased amount of stress (Killebrew, 2005: 51). Structures and styles of management, and the constraints built into various types of technology are extremely influential factors in the generation of perceptions of skill. The management practice, of bringing in less experienced workers, and putting them under greater managerial control, aids in the collective perception of skills within the news organization (Martocchio et al, 1994: 360).

Workers may also have an inflated opinion of their own sets of skills. The notion of fame is attractive for young reporters (Pearson, 1988: 132), (Ursell, 2000: 819-821) and it seems to be an alluring reward despite the amount of work required of the MMJ (Saltzis et al., 2008: 222). Young journalists are in the 'game' to become famous (Hobsbawn, 2006: 34). A young individual's drive and effort toward accomplishing goals can be referred to as the Galatea Effect (Kreitner, 2010: 199), (Eden, 1991: 770-780), (Martocchi et al, 1994: 358). In a Pygmalion manner, news directors have an expectation that their belief system will be adopted by the MMJs, and that this will ensure their behavior and performance, are in line with the directors' expectations. A 'halo effect' affects their performance, as failures of the individual units seem to be interpreted as the failure of the news management, therefore the desire for employee to succeed is great (Gordon, 1987: 44). The MMJs are then judged by an equity theory of social comparison. They are compared with the performance of the other units not with the traditionalists. The self-serving bias of the young MMJs limits their own perceptions of their inabilities (Kreitner, 2010: 205). The conclusion seems to be that there is little blame for any mistakes or shortcomings. Any criticism of the newsroom or the MMJs is viewed as an attack on the organization. The insular nature of the newsroom creates a groupthink rating of the external criticism as unjustified and false. There seems to be a striving to validate the perceptions of reality within a newsroom, no matter how faulty or unrealistic they may be (Meier, 2009: 7-8).

According to the observed veteran reporters, the enthusiasm of youth is important to the process of the idea of multi-skilling. While the traditionalist feels threatened with dismissal from the organization if he or she cannot keep up the pace, the young reporters felt enabled by the coaching and direction of the news director. Because of the news director's enthusiastic nurturing, productivity may increase and this may explain the observed differences between MMJs at the news organization in this study. The observed MMJs of WSTM-TV produced more work than the traditional crew of WKYC-TV. On a daily basis, the WSTM-TV MMJs would create two 'news packages' a day, while the WKYC-TV crews would produce only one. It could be argued that the technology may have enabled the single news unit to be more productive, but in observing the construction process, it was clear that the increase in production was due to other circumstances. Those circumstances seem to revolve around the social system created by the individual news organizations, in which feedback may influence the trainees' motivation and attitude (Burke, 2008: 227-230). In the isolation of the MMJ, it is likely that the control over the performance of journalism will be associated with higher positive affective states, and the lack of control and performance to be related to lower

positive affect. Trainees who believe they have control over performance seem to cope more effectively than those who do not.

Actualization by young reporters demonstrates how self-esteem and self-actualization could motivate the need for achievement and for power, especially among peers and within the news organization (Gordon, 1987: 92). The actualization may be the catalyst for the implementation of the MMJs, as both needs seem to be fulfilled by the amount of praise and acknowledgement they receive from management. In terms of Actor Network Theory, the young reporters value their technogrammatic relationships as much as they value their sociogrammatic standing. In most cases of the observed reporters, both MMJ and traditional, power was reflected in control of the product. In comparison to the traditional crew, the MMJ was able to control all aspects of the news story from beginning to end. The traditional reporter sacrifices control of the constructed elements to others in the crew. The level of productivity of the MMJ journalist seemed to be either equal to or higher than that of the seasoned traditional veteran, despite the additional work. Maslow's theory may explain the reason for this by detailing the prepotency of needs. Need motivates an individual to act to fulfill it; satisfied needs do not motivate. In the case of the MMJ, it may be a matter of 'melding' or belonging to the larger community (Shaw et al, 1999: 6-7). The veteran reporter has experienced recognition and esteem, and appears to be 'melded' and established. The MMJ seems to be a threat to traditionalists.

The needs of the traditionalists are different from those of the younger MMJs. They seem to want to maintain a sense of established hierarchy and within that hierarchy; certain tasks are below their position. Traditionalists feel comfortable with "team production" function (Alchian et al., 1972: 779-781) in their traditional crew. They believe that the more effort exerted by one person in the crew, the more productive the other members of the group. It may be considered a "social trap" whereas the routinized behavior of the traditional technogram masks the actual relationships and interactions creating the differentiation of work, and stipulates the sociogram is unchanged by the technology, improperly creating status roles and inaccurately credits contribution of work from each individual (Miller, 1992: 31). For example, the videographer may be given less of a status role, yet in some situations may constitute more effort and greater contribution to the product than the reporter.

In terms of the traditional crew, it may appear the production of a story is created quickly within the group, as each member is active during the process in parallel synchronization, yet in some instances all the processes do not occur simultaneously. The traditional crew may associate their chronogrammatic value with the synchronized group action despite the fact the product, in many instances, may be created in a linear time frame, similar to the MMJ. In other words, the two crews may finish their product at the same time, utilizing the same amount of time for production, indicating the traditional crew may not be as efficient, as each member may not be exerting maximum effort. Efficiency in either case requires coordination, even hierarchical interaction. Some of the older traditional journalists felt embarrassed to be seen operating a camera, as it felt to them like a loss of esteem, as if their place in the hierarchy had been diminished; some

considered it to be a retrograde step. It may be the impetus for the term 'de-skilling' or the derogatory connotation of 'multi-skilling.'

The impact of younger journalists, who are 'street ready' MMJs, was observed as a massively disruptive force to the paradigms of news production. Because of the introduction of young journalists and the dismissal of veteran reporters, there seemed to be a cultural shift within the observed newsrooms. It was witnessed at WKYC-TV and WSTM-TV that there was a change of the dominant culture from senior reporters mentoring younger reporters, to a culture of management enabling younger journalists to be self-reliant. Management attempts to impose meanings on work to influence workforce perceptions of skill and support the ruling hierarchy being formed. The intention is to insure all news products "make air" with limited resistance. The "magic bullet" of the multimedia journalist to lower costs, increasing efficiency, and maintaining productivity is not without the consequences of altering the targets of journalism.

*"I'm very much worried about it. I think every legitimate journalist in the country is worried about it. Think of where we're going. Local stations have 'skim the surface' journalism. That's all people are going to see is, what's usually handed out as a news release or news conference or some meaningless kind of story or whatever...I'm afraid of where we are headed."*

*– Jim Kenyon, Veteran Investigative Reporter, WSTM-TV, Syracuse, New York.*

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