Explicating Journalism-as-a-Conversation

Measuring it, loving it, refining it ...

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Find this presentation and more at www.sasquatchmedia.com/"Goodies"

Throughout those three years, 3 overarching questions guided me:

Experimental test of 3 types of conversation*: Twittered, wiki and "collaborative" news:

* Design: 3 (types of stories) by 3 (story topics), within-subjects design

* Convenience sample: N = 67 (201 sets of responses)

* Dependent variables:

Conversation (processing variables)

Coorientation/homophily Social Presence Interactivity
Friendliness Informality

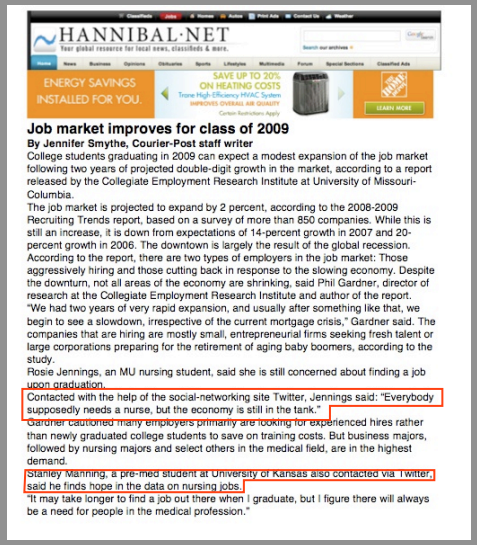
Outcome measures

Article credibility Web site (source) credibility Expertise

* Defined in this study as deep collaboration between citizen/journalist for purpose of news reporting

1. Fake Twitter exchange between reporter/citizens

Story derived from that Twitter exchange ...



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Job market improves for class of 2009

By Jennifer Smythe, Courier-Post staff writer

College students graduating in 2009 can expect a modest expansion of the job market following two years of projected double-digit growth in the market, according to a report released by the Collegiate Employment Research Institute at University of Missouri-Columbia.

The job market is projected to expand by 2 percent, according to the 2008-2009 Recruiting Trends report, based on a survey of more than 850 companies. While this is still an increase, it is down from expectations of 14-percent growth in 2007 and 20-percent growth in 2006. The downtown is largely the result of the global recession.

According to the report, there are two types of employers in the job market: Those aggressively hiring and those cutting back in response to the slowing economy. Despite the downturn, not all areas of the economy are shrinking, said Phil Gardner, director of research at the Collegiate Employment Research Institute and author of the report.

"We had two years of very rapid expansion, and usually after something like that, we begin to see a slowdown, irrespective of the current mortgage crisis," Gardner said. The companies that are hiring are mostly small, entrepreneurial firms seeking fresh talent or large corporations preparing for the retirement of aging baby boomers, according to the study.

Rosie Jennings, an MU nursing student, said she is still concerned about finding a job upon graduation.

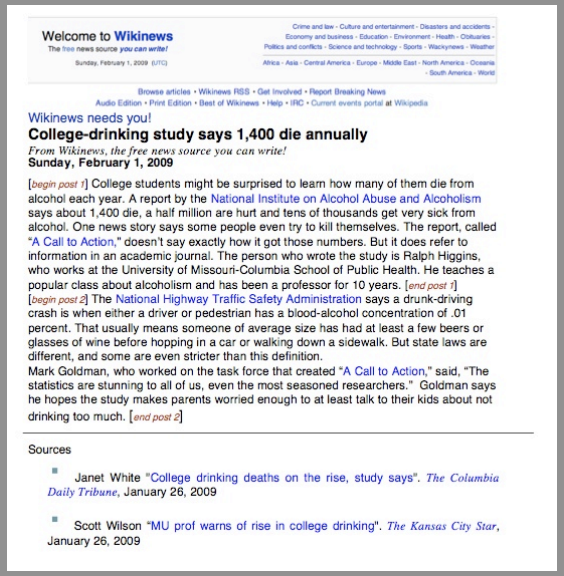
Contacted with the help of the social-networking site Twitter, Jennings said: "Everybody supposedly needs a nurse, but the economy is still in the tank."

Gardner cautioned many employers primarily are looking for experienced hires rather than newly graduated college students to save on training costs. But business majors, followed by nursing majors and select others in the medical field, are in the highest demand.

Stanley Manning, a pre-med student at University of Kansas also contacted via Twitter, said he finds hope in the data on nursing jobs.

"It may take longer to find a job out there when I graduate, but I figure there will always be a need for people in the medical profession."

2. Fake Wikinews story:



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Sunday, February 1, 2009 (UTC)

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Wikinews needs you!

College-drinking study says 1,400 die annually

From Wikinews, the free news source you can write!

Sunday, February 1, 2009

[*begin post 1*] College students might be surprised to learn how many of them die from alcohol each year. A report by the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism says about 1,400 die, a half million are hurt and tens of thousands get very sick from alcohol. One news story says some people even try to kill themselves. The report, called "A Call to Action," doesn't say exactly how it got those numbers. But it does refer to information in an academic journal. The person who wrote the study is Ralph Higgins, who works at the University of Missouri-Columbia School of Public Health. He teaches a popular class about alcoholism and has been a professor for 10 years. [*end post 1*]
[*begin post 2*] The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration says a drunk-driving crash is when either a driver or pedestrian has a blood-alcohol concentration of .01 percent. That usually means someone of average size has had at least a few beers or glasses of wine before hopping in a car or walking down a sidewalk. But state laws are different, and some are even stricter than this definition.
Mark Goldman, who worked on the task force that created "A Call to Action," said, "The statistics are stunning to all of us, even the most seasoned researchers." Goldman says he hopes the study makes parents worried enough to at least talk to their kids about not drinking too much. [*end post 2*]

Sources

- Janet White "College drinking deaths on the rise, study says". *The Columbia Daily Tribune*, January 26, 2009
- Scott Wilson "MU prof warns of rise in college drinking". *The Kansas City Star*, January 26, 2009

What's most distinct about this writing voice is its informality--lack of journalese and crispness that distinguishes most professional news sites. A little bit of colloquialism.

3. Fake "collaborative" story:

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More needs to be done to curb college steroid use

Sound off! Courier-Post staff writer Jenn Rockwell heard from several readers about college steroids use and has incorporated their comments into this story. She's planning a follow-up story this weekend with more comments based on discussions at a forum, scheduled for 5 p.m. in the Marker Forum meeting room at the newspaper, 1201 Market St. The Courier-Post will collect your thoughts at opinions@hannibal.net or on our Web site — www.hannibal.net

By Jenn Rockwell, Courier-Post staff writer

Fans and former athletes who contacted this newspaper as part of an investigation have confirmed what several college coaches, including University of Missouri Head Coach Tom Johnson, said months ago: Gaps in the NCAA steroid testing program have allowed performance-enhancing drugs to become a rising problem in collegiate baseball.

"I think steroids in college baseball is getting out of hand, " Johnson said, though he added it has not been an issue with his team. "It filters down from the majors. Steroids in college baseball is a problem."

Readers agreed: "If people want to clean up professional sports, they have to start at the college level," Jerome Williams wrote in a series of e-mails with the newspaper.

The NCAA doesn't regularly test baseball, or any sport other than football, for steroids during the regular season. And that has some fans who responded steamed.

"That's probably why the pros have such problems with drugs," Jeff Briggs wrote on the newspaper's message board. "They got away with it scott-free while they were in college."

While those who contacted the newspaper were all quick to point out they didn't see any problems at the University of Missouri, they nearly universally called for stricter testing by the NCAA.

"The NCAA won't let an athlete take a free dinner or even a personal note from the coach's wife, but they'll let baseball players take steroids?" Tina Marie wrote in an e-mail. "What a joke!"

The NCAA does test every sport during postseason play, but only tests nine athletes outside of football at each Division I school annually for steroids.

According to the NCAA document from 2006, the most recent year available, only half of 70 Division I-A institutions that responded to an NCAA survey test for anabolic steroids.

Lisa Mitchell, who identified herself as an MU baseball fan, said it's not enough to hold a seminar about drugs like the NCAA did the day before the ACC Baseball Tournament opened. "It's like D.A.R.E. programs in schools," she wrote in an e-mail. "Just talking to students isn't enough. There has to be penalties."

Reach Jenn Rockwell at jrockwell@hannibal.net

Note big, colorful editor's note detailing how/that audience helped and what comes next and how to continue that collaboration, feature-style (human-scaled) lede, emphasis on ordinary people in quotations affected by news rather than "officials," e-mail tagline at end to further the conversation.

Findings:

1.) Conversation is both real *and* powerful, but nuanced

2. It appears to consist of a half dozen or so features, though some are problematic and deserve further study:

* **Coorientation/Homophily (Likeness)**: perceived similarity to journalist

* **Interactivity**: perceived smart use of Web tools to interact with audience

Social Presence: perceived humanness of journalist

Friendliness: perceived openness, accessibility of journalist to audience

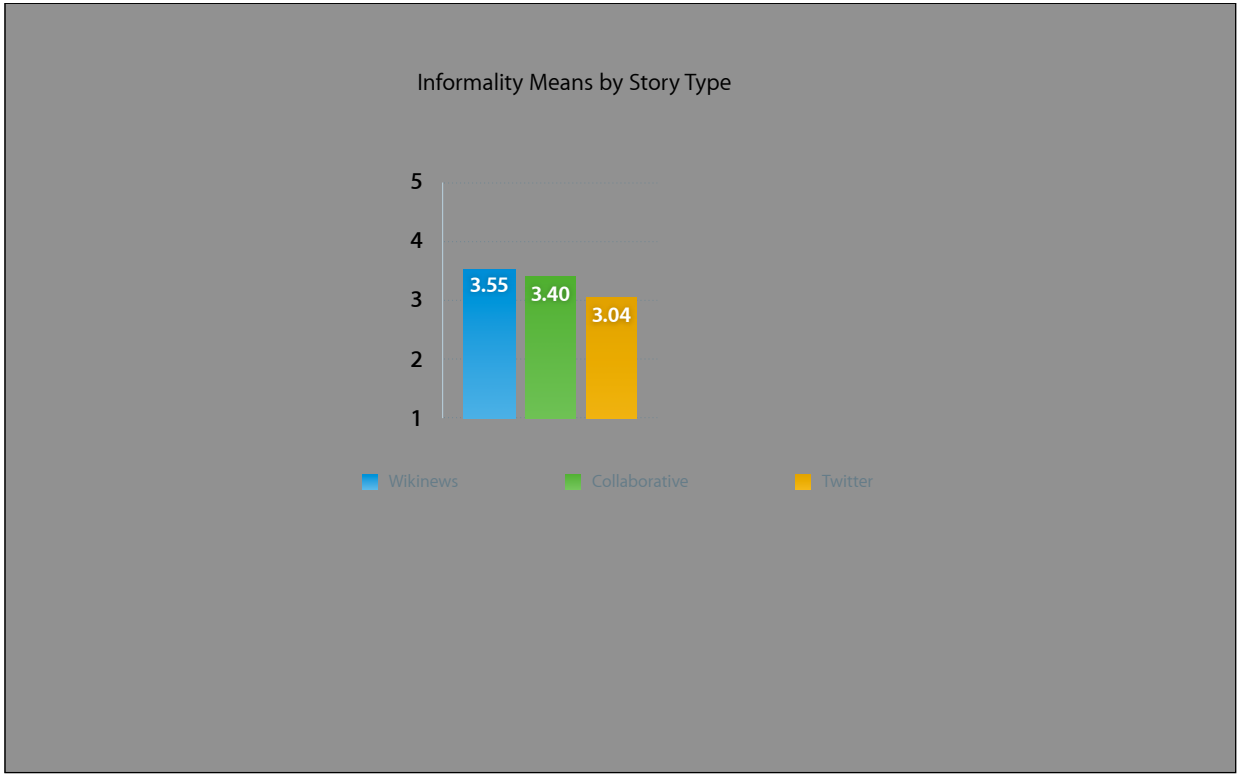
Informality: perceived casualness of journalist with audience

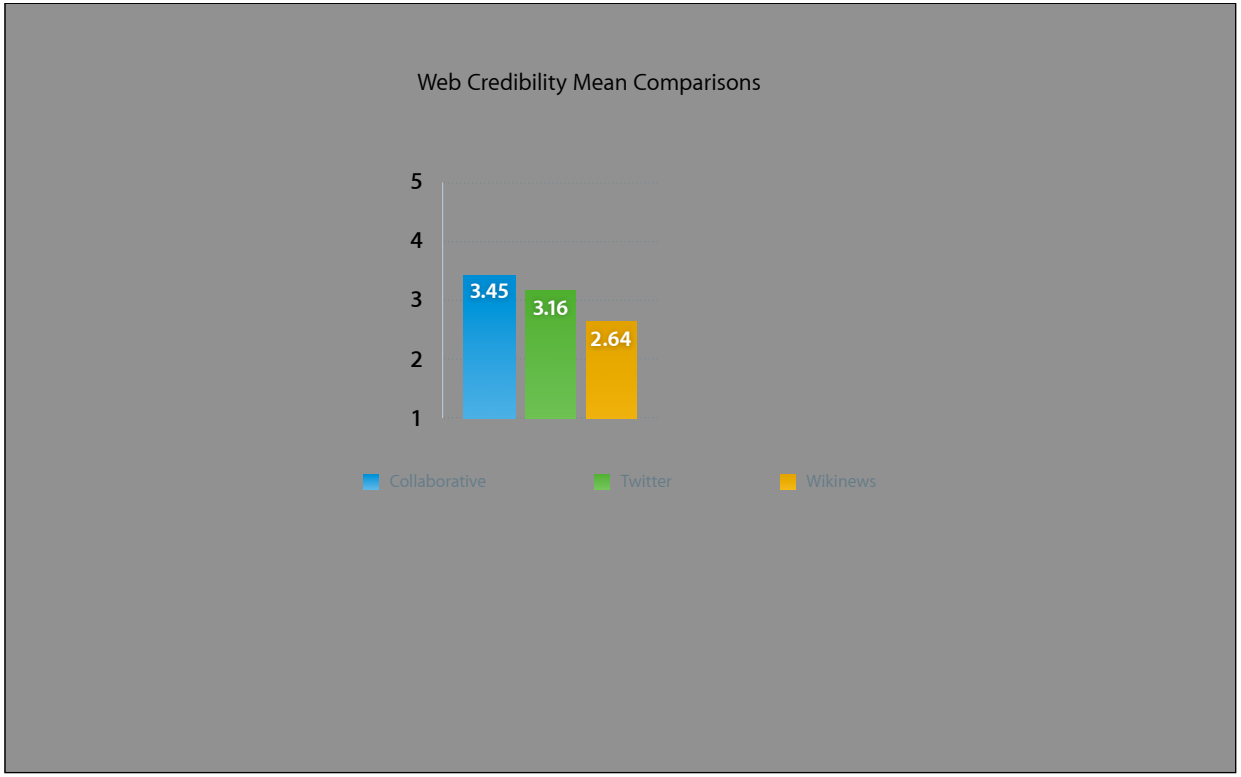
* The real powerhouses

Findings (cont.):

3.) Social presence seems to require presence of video to have impact

4.) Informality, and to a lesser extent friendliness, can hurt perceived credibility (see next 2 slides)


Informality Means by Story Type
5
4
3
2
1
3.55
3.40
3.04
Wikinews
Collaborative
Twitter


Web Credibility Mean Comparisons
5
4
3
2
1
3.45
3.16
2.64
Collaborative
Twitter
Wikinews

Future research?

· Experimental:

- Test different pools of participants

- Test different types of conversation — is reader-reader interaction in story comments conversation, even without the journalist?

· Non-experimental:

- Case study: Apply data to *Seattle Times* recent breaking-news Pulitzer (innovative uses of social media/conversation)

· Multi-method:

- Minnesota Public Radio's public insight-journalism: Depth interviews with citizen participants, content analysis of stories, newsroom survey

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