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# Redesigning the St. Louis Journalism Review: A New Media Task in Web and Critique

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REDESIGNING THE ST. LOUIS JOURNALISM REVIEW:  
A NEW MEDIA TASK IN WEB AND CRITIQUE

by

Diana K. Soliwon

B.S., Southern Illinois University Carbondale, 2009

A Research Paper  
Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the  
Master of Science degree.

Department of Mass Communications and Media Arts  
In the Graduate School  
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RESEARCH PAPER APPROVAL

REDESIGNING THE ST. LOUIS JOURNALISM REVIEW:

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for the Degree of Master of Science

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William H. Freivogel, Chair

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## AN ABSTRACT OF THE RESEARCH PAPER OF

DIANA SOLIWON, for the Master of Science degree in NEW MEDIA, presented on August 12, 2010 at Southern Illinois University Carbondale.

TITLE: Redesigning the St. Louis Journalism Review: A new media task in web and critique

MAJOR PROFESSOR: William H. Freivogel

The present project took root when the St. Louis Journalism Review (SJR) agreed to give its rights and publication to the School of Journalism at Southern Illinois University Carbondale. The work began before the July 1, 2010 transfer date and as homage to the collaborative nature of web development and journalism, will continue after this degree. At hand was a new media task: with creative freedom, redesign the SJR's website to fit the parameters of the new management, with considerations for the challenged journalism industry, its principles, workflow, the guidelines of web development and visual communication, and a budget. The website and which software to use became critical points in this attempt to streamline old school journalism with new media practices. The objective was to simplify content delivery for the reader and the writer or publisher, both visually and practically, while experimenting with new ways to help the SJR profit. The result extends the literature on the uses of Wordpress as journalism and media production evolve.

## DEDICATION

In memory of Jan and Karin Soliwon.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to first thank my committee: chairman William H. Freivogel, Dr. William Babcock, and Dr. John Hochheimer. The attention and accommodations made on my behalf have helped ease what could have otherwise been an untimely delay in personal and professional transition, probably ruining my life. It was a pleasure working with all of you.

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## CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

To conclude the course of study in Professional Media and Media Management from the College of Mass Communications and Media Arts at Southern Illinois University Carbondale, a redevelopment of the St. Louis Journalism Review (SJR) website as the final project was chosen. There were also secondary tasks, as the operation was so new to SIUC that it was without office, phones, computers or a logo.

Twitter, “Like” buttons, logins, passwords, LOL, RSS, Google, Amazon, eBay, Craigslist, fiber optic cables, wireless adapters, e-mail, retweet, chat, apps, iTunes, TurboTax, PayPal, Bejeweled, Blogspot — herein lie just a few lexicon landmarks the world has grown to recognize thanks to the Internet’s power. Updating the website for a critique of the media itself required a critique due to the current challenges in the industry and the fact that Internet and media-rich device usage have become societal habits. The average American is online 60 hours a month, spending 42% of that time viewing content (Visual Economics, 2010). The surge toward the Internet could indicate a high demand for online journalism. But while the number of people turning to the Internet for news has increased, most Americans still turn to the television and then newspapers and radio before going online (Pew Research Center, 2008, p. 35). Because of the sheer abundance of information online, 62% of the audience prefers a “grazing” of news, or a general overview, and because looking at news web sites is so hard on the eye (Pew Research Center, 2008, p.35; Lynch, 2010b, para. 15). Web professional Luke Stevens suggests it is time for web developers to use this

kind of data and build performance-based sites — sites customized the way users want them (Magain, 2009, para. 9-15). In the case of content-driven, journalism websites, this means simplifying design and function.

Further, the economist Milton Friedman held that business and mission don't go together (Overholser, 2008, para. 2), and if he was right then one could argue the state of journalism is an example of that thought. According to the Society of Professional Journalists, "the duty of the journalist is to further (public enlightenment) by seeking truth and providing a fair and comprehensive account of events and issues" ("SPJ Code of Ethics," n.d., para. 1). But someone must pay for this service. Since the 1830s, newspapers have largely depended on advertising revenue to maintain their operations. In 2009, the newspaper industry lost 27.2%, or almost \$10 billion, of its advertising revenue, which the *New York Times* reported as its worst year since the Depression (Pérez-Peña, 2010, para. 2). The business has recently trumped the mission for many industry greats. More than 150 papers have closed or stop publishing print editions in the last three years (Lin, 2010). The *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*, the *Rocky Mountain News*, and the *Baltimore Examiner* have closed in the last two years, the *San Francisco Chronicle* threatened to close, and in December 2008, the Tribune Company filed for bankruptcy protection (Ferro, 2009, para.11-12). In 2009, the Christian Science Monitor, which had published daily for 100 years, began publishing weekly. When the *Rocky Mountain News* shut down, newsrooms mourned the four-time Pulitzer Prize winner. A journalism review is a bi-product

of the print profession and dependent on a niche market. With the subject of its coverage declining, maintaining a profit could be difficult.

SJR, currently a bi-monthly critique of journalism in the greater St. Louis area, was originally founded by Rose and Charles Klotzer in 1970. At one point the review boasted almost 4,000 subscribers. Notably, it was the first entity to report in the 1980's that rival newspapers *St. Louis Globe-Democrat* and the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* would operate jointly ("About SJR," n.d.). It was inducted to the Media Hall of Fame in St. Louis in 2008 ("About SJR," n.d.). In 2003, former SJR editor Ed Bishop wrote that the Klotzers performed an important service to society by maintaining the country's last local journalism review and subsidizing their personal checkbooks to fund operations (para. 2). SJR was published by Webster University from 1995 to 2006, and has now transferred its operation and rights to the SIUC School of Journalism. It announced on April 17, 2010, that professor William Babcock would be its new editor in chief. Babcock shared during preliminary meetings that subscriptions were down to a little more than 1,200. It seemed like the Klotzers, in their 90s, had started to outlive the periodical's popularity.

As reported by the *St. Louis Business Journal*, School of Journalism Director William Freivogel said in a statement that the transfer "preserves SJR as an important media watchdog and offers an opportunity to broaden the scope of the review to issues of media accountability in the Midwest" (2010, para. 5). Babcock and Freivogel both share the goal of expanding SJR's coverage to 16 states: Arkansas, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Michigan, Missouri,

Nebraska, North Dakota, Ohio, Oklahoma, South Dakota, Tennessee, Wisconsin, and Minnesota. Both also want to frequently post to the website, which previously only delivered content by providing the digital files of SJR's print publication. While most of the Klotzers' contributors were from the St. Louis area, Babcock wanted to designate correspondents throughout the 16 states to write blogs and articles. Redeveloping the website was the crux to shifting operations from only producing bimonthly content to maintaining an industry critique — especially of the Midwest — on a daily basis. Adding interaction, social media and a simple editing workflow immediately became goals. The product also had to work well with a direct e-mail campaign for new subscribers. If successful, this collaboration could become a reference for combining old-school media principles with new media tricks.

## CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

In a recent piece of graphic art, Stuart McMillen depicts the evolution of a bright, excited mind desperate to learn more, ending with, “As adults there is no curriculum to follow ... except the goals we set ourselves. With no one challenging me, I choose to challenge myself” (2009). SJR has potential but is also in need of a challenge. The “minds” behind it — Babcock, Freivogel, and Scott Lambert, a graduate assistant who would produce web and print content — set the editorial goals. As the only one assigned to the website, it was in this designer’s hands to challenge its online presence and profitability.

The two national journalism reviews, *Columbia Journalism Review* (CJR) and *American Journalism Review* (AJR), were used as benchmarks during this project. CJR, the larger of the two, reportedly had a circulation of 20,000 as of January 2010 (NPR, para. 8). Founded in 1961, it prints bi-monthly and has taken radical steps to preserve publishing funds. In a statement after it slashed 45 percent of its staff in 2004 to “prop up the money-losing print edition of the magazine with a direct-mail campaign,” (Billboard, n.d.), Columbia Journalism Review Dean Nick Lemann wrote:

In 2004, thanks to the generosity of a consortium of foundations, we were given a wonderful opportunity to start a Web site called Campaign Desk -- a branch of Columbia Journalism Review that monitored the press coverage of the last presidential campaign. When the campaign ended, we turned Campaign Desk into an ongoing, general-purpose site called CJRDaily. We did this on a wing and a prayer, because we did not have

funding commitments in hand to keep the staff at the size it was during the campaign indefinitely. We have had considerable success in fundraising for Columbia Journalism Review, but not so much that we can keep CJRDaily at the same editorial budget it has had, so we are going to reduce that budget, with regret. But even after the reduction, CJR will have the most substantial Web reporting and writing staff of any publication its size that I know of. We are making that commitment because we believe so deeply in the journalistic promise of the Web, even though, as everyone in journalism knows, it does not yet produce revenues commensurate with its quality. Our goal for Columbia Journalism Review, under the leadership of Victor Navasky, is that it be, in print and on the Web, as strong a media monitor as we can make it with the resources we have. (Romenesko, 2006)

Reports indicate that CJR's subscription rate dropped between 1997 to 2006, from more than 27,000 to 20,000 (PR Newswire, 1998, p. 4; Seelye, 2006, p. C3). Back in 2000, CJR received more than \$1.5 million in funding from the James L. Knight Foundation and several others (Ascribe, para. 1), and by 2007, editor Mike Hoyt said it was "having its best financial year ever" for being in the black by \$50,000 (Malone, p.4). The next year, Hoyt told readers in a letter to join the new "CJR Press Associates" club and donate \$50 to \$500 because the publication still faced a constant struggle ("CJR ask," 2008).

The *Washington Post* reported in 2007 that the Industry's other influential critique faced a budget deficit of about \$200,000, seriously endangering its

operations. AJR has been struggling to maintain for the last several years. In 2003 AJR president and former dean of the Phillip Merrill College of Journalism Thomas Kunkel wrote that like other media outlets, AJR grappled with recession and had to shrink to a bi-monthly print schedule. He said the periodical previously printed 10 editions a year, with two “double issues” annually. By 2008 it was down to one full-time employee (“CJR asks,” 2008). Reports indicate that the slide began when Gannett pulled its advertising, 8 annual pages, in 1999 after AJR ran an unfavorable article about some of its executives (“CJR asks,” 2008). AJR is also incurring charges in libel case with the *Santa Barbara News-Press*, which claims AJR freelance writer Wendy McCaw defamed the paper when describing turmoil at the paper (Malone, 2007, p.4). The review’s libel insurance policy did not cover freelancers.

Both reviews rely heavily on donations and have received millions in financial support from journalism foundations and donors like former *Philadelphia Inquirer* editor Eugene Roberts. AJR reports it counts on donors for about a third of its budget (Malone, 2007, p.4). Unlike AJR, CJR has more staff and uses traditional ad space on its website to solicit donations, offer special web rates on subscriptions, and offer media events. AJR launched in 1977 as the Washington Journalism Review and its industry recognition serves as an example of successful rebranding. In 2002 it was known for its coverage of media business and hovered around 25,000 subscriptions, same as CJR (Smillie, p. 6). Overall, revenue struggles are a cyclical problem that leads to fewer writers, less content, and can lead to a subpar website. But online third-party accounts like PayPal and



Google Ads have helped many websites profit because of their simplicity, which among other things could enable online subscription campaigns.

When it comes to design, no one has established a clear set of guidelines for how a journalism periodical should look online. The CJR attracts talented contributors who consistently feed its website with timely, relevant content, in Figure 1. Instead of three- or four-graph blurbs, featured content takes the form of traditional news articles, ranging from 600 to 900 words. Blog posts are much shorter and usually provide 2 to 4 links to their references. In these ways, CJR content becomes unique, handy sources of information. For example, when Army



Figure 1

Spc. Bradley Manning's name was revealed as the soldier who gave footage to WikiLeaks of two Reuter journalists killed by the U.S. military, CJR produced a blog with a comprehensive timeline of a Guardian reporter's quest to identify him (Hendler, 2010). The article became referenced in other blog posts, leading to more readers (Bershad, 2010). AJR also contributes to its site, Figure 2, but not as consistently as CJR. However, the second menu item, "news sources," provides links to a directory of thousands of newspapers, magazines, television networks and affiliates, radio, wire services and media companies. But AJR lacks daily content and any secondary art. The main story has a dominant image but

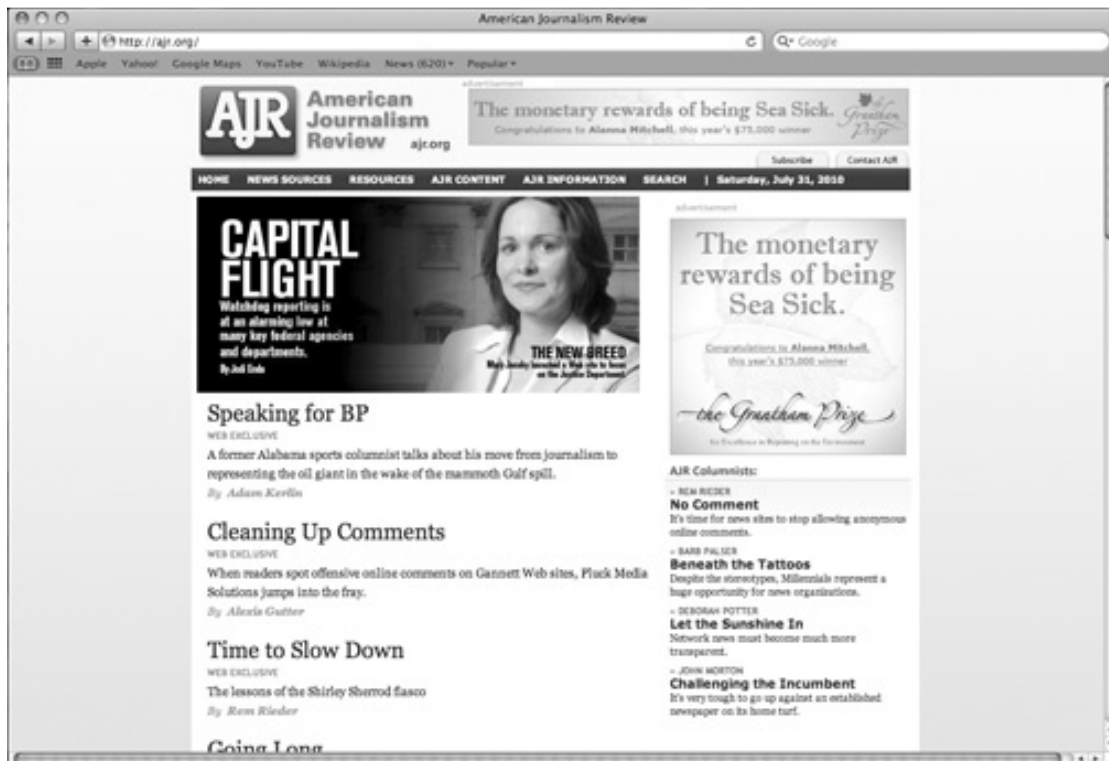


Figure 2

stays static, or the same, for several days. There are no other categories. CJR breaks up its content by category, or “desk,” with three areas reserved for featured content. But It also incorporates a list of latest posts in two different areas, giving a block-text effect instead of catching the eye.

First, responsible web design begins with standards. Allsopp (2010) points out that without web standards, the Internet could become “its own kind of tower of Babel” (p.11), with the computing brains behind Safari, Firefox, Facebook, and so on all speaking different languages. Like the United Nations, the World Wide Web Consortium (W3C), founded by Tim Berners-Lee in 1994, united competition long enough to agree on web underpinnings (Allsopp, 2010, p. 10; “Facts about W3C,” n.d.). Thus, developers can easily categorize what major technical decisions a project will demand and after those decisions, “talk” to a piece of software or server in the same language another developer halfway around the world is responding with. Two examples are HTML and CSS. HTML, or “Hypertext Markup Language,” is a standard language devoted to the semantics of encoded information. CSS, or “Cascading Style Sheets,” is a standard language for translating presentation. HTML organizes, CSS designs. It is imperative to maintain this type of consistency in a universe such as the Internet, as exemplified in a map by Ethical Media in Figure 3.

But like the human brain that sends signals to the mouth to speak, what will send CSS, HTML, and other programming code to the web browser to display? The beginning of any new web development venture begins with the question of



Figure 3

which content management system (CMS) to use.

A CMS is the core of any web operation because it manages posts, communicates code, and automatically updates content, among other functions. Ample debate exists over which platform is better than the other (Idealshare, 2009; Ruby, 2006; Stiffler-Dean, 2009). Options can range from homemade platforms only used by its programming engineer to popular, What You See Is What You Get (WYSIWYG) platforms like Drupal, Joomla!, Wordpress, Moveable Type, Custom CMS, and Plone. The better the CMS, the faster and easier it is to build and maintain a website.

In 2008, industry blog Technorati declared Wordpress the most-used CMS online, while in 2009 the CMS Wire blog published a report giving Joomla! the title (Conroy, 2008; Waring, 2009). Both have proven to be quick, robust solutions, with choice coming down to specific functionality and personal preference. For example, within SIUC's School of Journalism, the school's site runs Joomla! while the student newspaper, the *Daily Egyptian*, uses Wordpress. Drupal usually joins the ranks, but it is best known for developers with advanced coding skills, while Joomla! is known for design flexibility and Wordpress for its user-friendliness (Stiffler-Dean, 2009). Journalist and web developer Scott Lynch has spent 2010 writing about Wordpress' power to change journalism-driven websites. He and other new media professionals argue price (none, because Wordpress is open-source, or free, software), support (open-source software by nature is created by a development community of thousands), and scalability (Lynch, 2010a, para. 1-20). Scalability is the CMS' ability to run smoothly as it is populated with increasingly more content. For example, as of August 1, 2010, the *Daily Egyptian* (the DE), which publishes Monday through Friday, was managing 7,481 posts.

But no one can rightfully claim to have the answer yet. As the introduction for a 2010 CJR survey and report suggests:

Although those involved with magazines and their Web sites have varying levels of knowledge and sophistication about their métier, it's fair to say that the proprietors of these sites don't, for the most part, know what one

another is doing, that there are no generally accepted standards or practices, that each Web site is making it up as it goes along, that it is like the wild west out there. (Navasky & Lerner)

Lynch says journalism educators are partially to blame for this, if not indirectly, because they “were practicing well before the Internet became the primary media consumption platform” and simply do not know the online skills to teach them (2010b, para. 7). It is certainly rare to see someone over the age of 40 teaching someone else about Wordpress or PHP scripts. Lynch, editor in chief of the Seattle University student newspaper just a few years ago, represents a growing

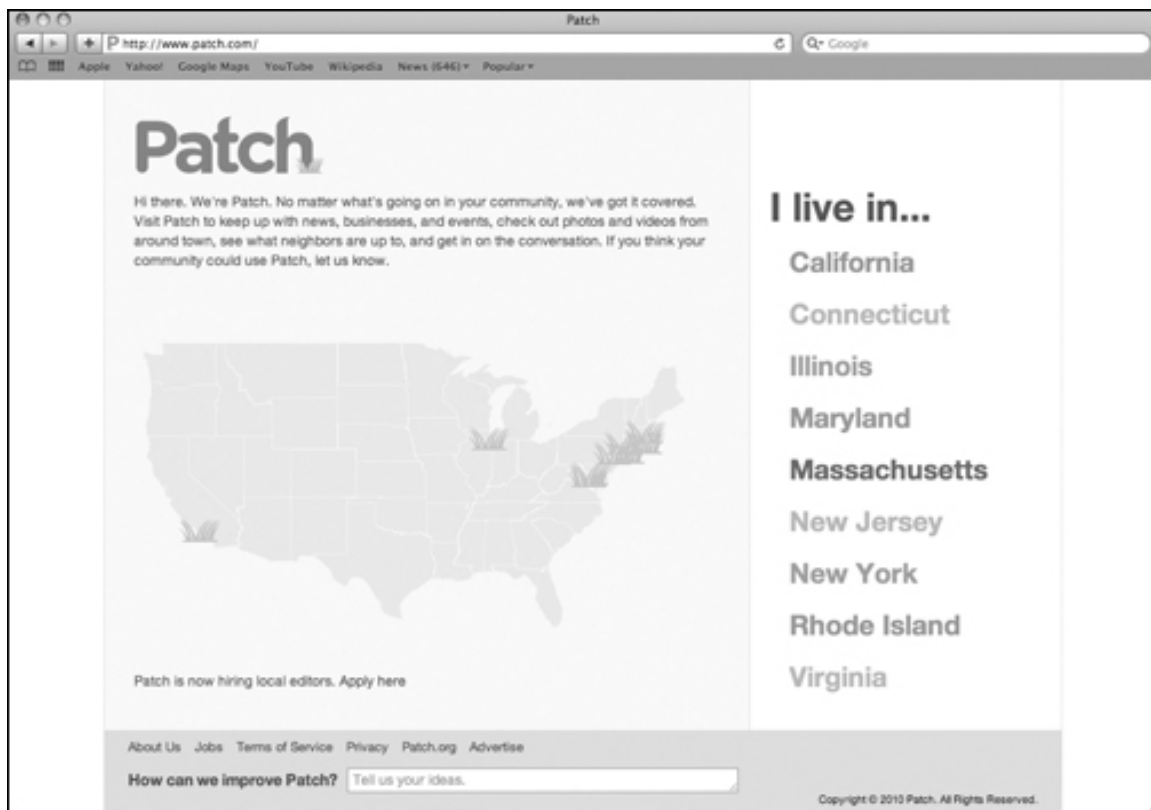


Figure 4

demographic of 20-somethings that is guiding the way of new media in web. CoPress, a short-lived company run by web-centric student journalists, helped more than 30 college newspapers flee the limited College Publisher CMS and start up a self-hosted Wordpress site in less than 2 years (CoPress, n.d.). Online startups with young staff members are starting to appear all over the country. Figure 4 is an example of Patch.com, an AOL startup currently hiring journalists to write for a hyper-local website. Aesthetically, the site is simple and interactive. Once the user selects a state, a dropdown menu appears of all the communities in that state that already have a Patch. They may also use the map to find and click on Patches. This is a small example of interactivity and the effects web design can have on the content it frames. It certainly looks nothing like a typical news site but to be fair, once users choose a city, they will find themselves on a site much more similar to content-sagging news home pages to which one is normally accustomed.

## CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

Since the Internet has changed the way people respond to information, several questions needed answers before committing to production. What did the editors want? What were the designer's strengths and limitations? Americans use the Internet more than ever, but how exactly could we use this "rebranding" period to get more people to visit the SJR website?

### The timeline

The SJR redevelopment was on an accelerated timeline, Figure 5, which influenced several choices from the start. Usually, a semi-pro designer and developer can build a website in 6 weeks (iDesign, n.d; Schindler, 2009,

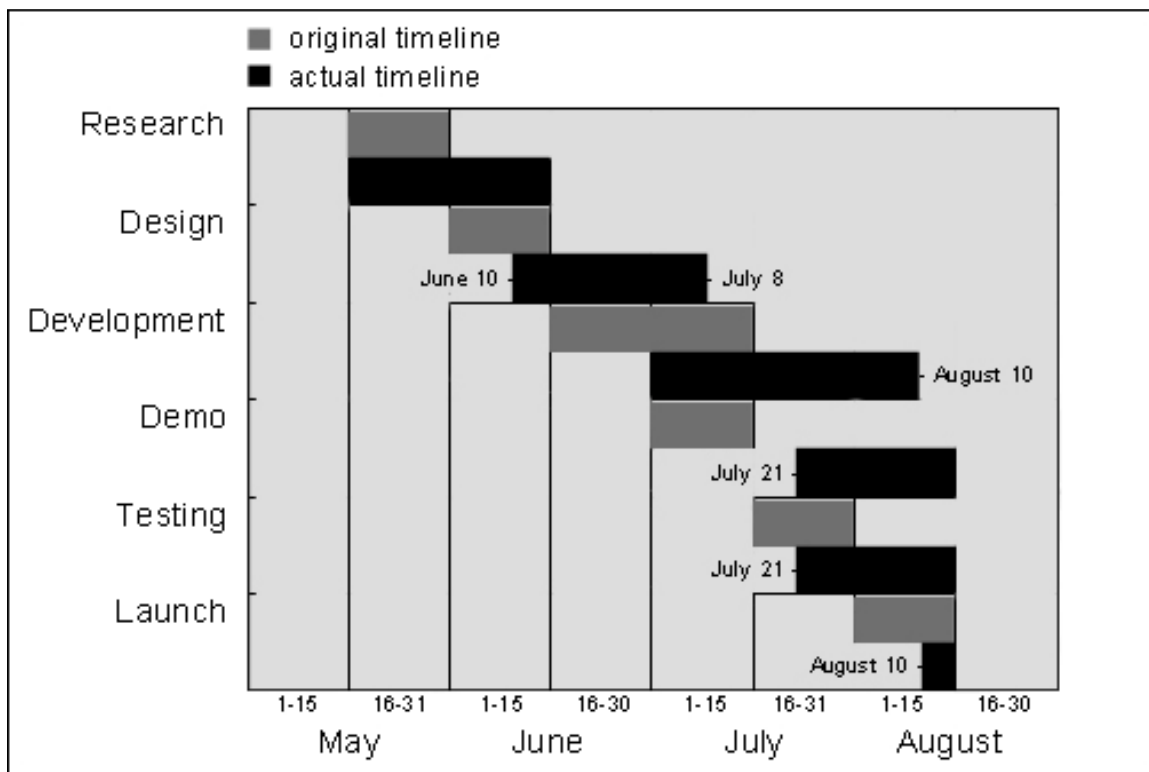


Figure 5



para. 19). The SJR's original timeline versus the actual timeline varied greatly. It became a challenge to adjust the workload to fit normal hours. A running joke in the web development community is that a simple website can be built with some Red Bull and a good CMS in a few days. Because we didn't want to compromise any of the planned functionalities despite the late start, we applied a rigorous schedule to complete the same work slotted from June 15 to August 1 in about 3 weeks. Below are the timeline's definitions.

**Research.** Every development project begins with a project proposal, which is the set of goals the client, or in this case, the SJR group, has. From there, a review of literature, CMSes, themes, plugins, and so on is essential and can take 20 to 30 hours before deciding on which of those to use.

**Design.** The amount of time it takes to create a visual representation of the client and designer's goals.

**Development.** The amount of time it takes to combine design, function, and goals using CMS tools and script knowledge. For example, a plugin is a piece of software a developer can add to Wordpress to enhance and add functionality to the program as a whole. Thousands of plugins exist that enable tasks like photo display, online shopping, and sign-up for e-mail alerts.

**Demo.** The amount of time it takes to modify or replace design and function based on client feedback and using script knowledge.

**Testing.** The amount of time needed to ensure intended designs and functions work properly.

**Launch.** The amount of time it takes the website to successfully transfer from its testing domain to its live domain, which can take as little as 24 hours or up to a week to complete. Server settings and choice of data migration programs can greatly effect the length of this process.

### **The content management system**

Since we wanted more content, we wanted more authors posting to the website. We also wanted to be fast. The project needed a familiar, user-friendly interface. Wordpress, originally known for its simple blogging software, hosts hundreds of thousands of free blogs off its servers at Wordpress.com. Other sites like Blogspot, Tumblr, and LiveJournal have helped expose millions of people to the process of adding simple content — text and photos — to a website. A choice of thousands of plugins, or ways to customize the site, comes with Wordpress (and other popular CMSes) because so many developers contribute to the online community. It became the obvious choice.

Wordpress is also flexible in that it processes powerful scripting languages, reading thousands of files with thousands of lines of code. If a file is overwritten with the wrong information at any point during development and testing phases, which at worst can crash the site, it is the developer's responsibility to have a back-up guarantee. An extremely important industry standard is this rule: back it up and then back it up again. It was imperative that the SJR had a dependable way to secure and restore its files if necessary, especially because no time was allocated for the ultimate failure of losing files permanently. With Wordpress

came the opportunity to use a high-end tool called Backup Buddy, which presented pro's and cons.

### **The design**

Attention to design is important for projects whose goals are increased readership and profit. Poynter has advised for years that readers are turned off by elements like blocks of text and competing visual elements (Dube, n.d.). A website is not necessarily contained by the parameters of the screen. A user can scroll down, up, left or right — if coded correctly, a web page could go on forever — quite unlike the fixed-width of a TV screen or the tabloid's layout. However, that kind of innovative design is only appropriate in certain settings. The SJR has a graying readership that needs the simplicity of a fixed-width design.

Basic web standards like screen resolution, a color scheme, image ratio, fonts, featured story display, and so on had to be decided from scratch since the old SJR site did not have any rational ones. Web designers tend to either operate independently or together with a programmer. Working in tandem creates a better product because each person is applying his or her strongest skill set, rather than splitting time and attention. Also, web development is collaborative by nature, proven by Wordpress' open-source platform.

### **The functionality**

It is no secret that the digital age has lead to a change in consumer expectations. For example, if an Internet user already knows that a simple shopping function like PayPal exists, odds are that same user will not want to shop on another site that offers a longer, more complicated method of payment.

Changing something as simple as a button can make a website \$300 million or increase its page views by 30% (Magain, 2009) A large e-commerce site removed a registration requirement for users who wanted to make purchases without signing up, and sales went up 45%, or \$15 million, in the first month (Magain, 2009). The SJR's old site only offered an e-mail address for potential subscribers to write to if they wanted to place a subscription order, and then they had to remember to specifically request that they receive a digital copy of the publication each time.

In order to incorporate dynamic elements like "latest posts" or a content slider, which loops a list of posts continuously through a viewer, a number of interactions have to occur within the CMS. The AJR and the CJR do not have any Javascript or Flash elements on their sites. Someone fluent in advanced scripting languages was essential for that function and several others. Michael Rzeznik, the administrator for the DE's website, agreed to collaborate his programming skills with my design. With programming came the opportunity to help the SJR turn a profit online using Google Ads and PayPal. Finally, incorporating social media tools like Facebook, Twitter, and a digital archiving tool called Issuu dictated the use of header and footer space in hopes that they would improve the SJR's online presence.

## CHAPTER 4: ANALYSIS

From May to August, students, faculty and staff met to plan how the SJR would operate at SIUC and what it should achieve. We discussed our audience, which we described as news geeks, working journalists, and academics, and how we could reach them. Babcock announced May 18 that he wanted to expand the review's coverage from metropolitan St. Louis to metropolitan areas in the closest 16 states, so we had to discuss new reader incentives, choice of subscriber databases, and so on. Every week to 10 days, the group would reconvene. Each time, the website was one of several points to address. We established deadlines that became moving targets so that the website could be put through a proper development and testing schedule.

Wordpress themes, plugins, and platforms were researched and tested from May to June. We originally planned to review a mockup, or Photoshopped design, by June 15, but for several reasons, we began to experience delays typical of a web development project (Courret, n.d.). The design schedule was the first to take longer since the more discussion we had, the more several concepts evolved. In order to begin expanding the critique's scope, the site needed to clearly depict that its content was not exclusive to St. Louis happenings. Debate centered around the site's navigation menus, which went through several styles, as meetings went on. Eventually we decided on a top menu with business and archival functions and an editorial menu that would leave room for expansion. For example, the category "Midwest" could have a drop-down or horizontal sub-menu that represented each bureau or special topics as the SJR built up its

online content archive. “Blog” could grow to have a directory of blogs. Because we decided the site needed this kind of scalability, development began to overlap with design.

Development also overlapped with the demo, testing, and launch stages of the project, which isn’t an ideal situation. However, ongoing meetings and correspondence led to several important changes and additions. For example, everyone in the industry understands that content bottlenecks as it travels up the editorial hierarchy. Navasky & Lerner’s report (2010) on magazines and their web sites addressed a point that has started to gain notoriety — do new sites sacrifice basic editing standards when in-house users are allowed to post to the site without notifying anyone? They found 59% of publications either have no or less vigorous editing online than for their print edition (p. 7). Charles Klotzer expressed this same concern in the final stage of the SJR’s domain transfer in July. Various CMSes have different versions of the solution I reviewed, which was the EditFlow plugin for WordPress. Coincidentally, some former CoPress founders who were working on a way to streamline college newspaper workflow developed it. The plugin allows writers to save posts in several modes other than “publish immediately,” and those modes then dictate who reads the post next. The developer can create categories, such as copy editors, photographers, desk editors, and so on that the author selects while posting, which then sends an e-mail to the author’s editor, notifying them that the content is queued for reading (Figure 6). This ensures that an appropriate person reads the post at least once before it is online.

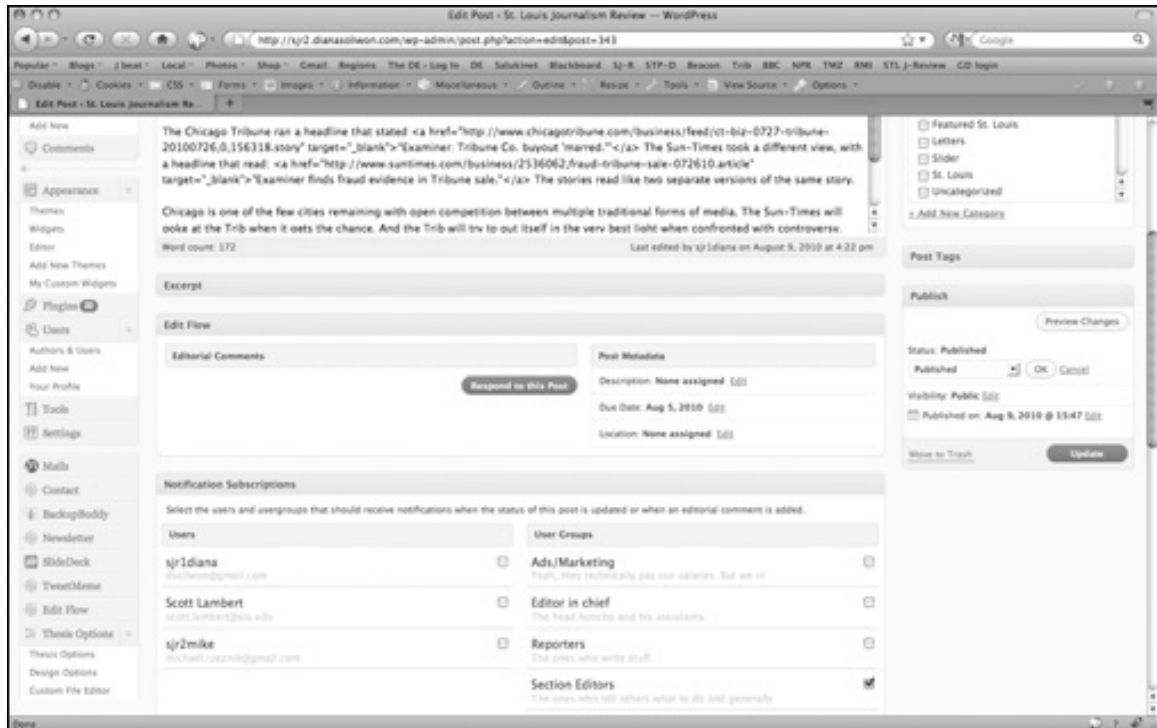


Figure 6

Some choices were eventually left at the designer's discretion, such as the color scheme and category and story templates. A total of seven templates and a palette of 10 colors were used to create the new SJR website. These files were created in Photoshop using the "North American Web/Internet" color settings, which uses an sRGB working space. All the images on the site were formatted with these settings. The website has a fixed width of 965 pixels in order to accommodate users with smaller computer screens.

After providing Rzeznik with template mock-ups and a list of other functionalities this designer did not have the coding knowledge to implement, he used combination of jQuery, PHP, Javascript and CSS scripting languages to

customize the theme. This designer has coded straight-HTML websites with some simple Javascript and Flash tools like Lightbox and Flash Nifties, so once the structures of each function were in place, this designer could understand where to edit them and made design changes. The header, menu and footer were also customized, and social media accounts like Twitter and LinkedIn were incorporated. Twitter and a program called TwitterFeed would allow the SJR's latest posts to automatically "tweet," feeding both its Twitter account and its Facebook Fan Page. Google Ads is a free ad placement service that allows a business to collect revenue per-view or per-page in exchange for displaying Google-generated advertising links. We also wanted to use it as promotional tool by allowing readers to purchase a print subscription online and donate money.



Figure 7



SJR was linked to its own Paypal account, which allowed Rzeznik to implement one-click e-commerce. E-commerce refers to a website's ability to provide monetary transactions. In other words, SJR is equipped to receive donations, subscription payments and Google Ads revenue in one central account.

SJR was so new to SIUC that it had no proper office when the project began in May. It had no phones, computers, or software. Three months were spent coordinating these things. The equipment, which the SIUC School of Journalism was able to provide, included three eMacs and a Mac tower for web work. The DE agreed to include the SJR on its local network, which provided a very fast Internet connection. We decided to add three phone lines to the new space, and that one would receive forwarded calls from the main SJR number with a 314 area code. Freivogel said he did not want to force readers to incur long-distance charges from calling Carbondale, and also wanted to maintain identity to the St. Louis area. Meanwhile, Babcock and several others, including advertising/marketing adviser Vicki Kreher, wanted to change the name of SJR to something that encompassed the new Midwest scope. Suggestions were narrowed down to some variation of "Gateway Journalism Review" or "St. Louis Journalism Review – Gateway." The redesign also included mock-ups of several logos, but stipulations in the transfer agreement stopped the implementation of any of them, in Figure 8, before this project ended.

From the beginning, the consensus of the SJR group has been to hope for the best, expect longevity and plan on several workspaces for several workers.

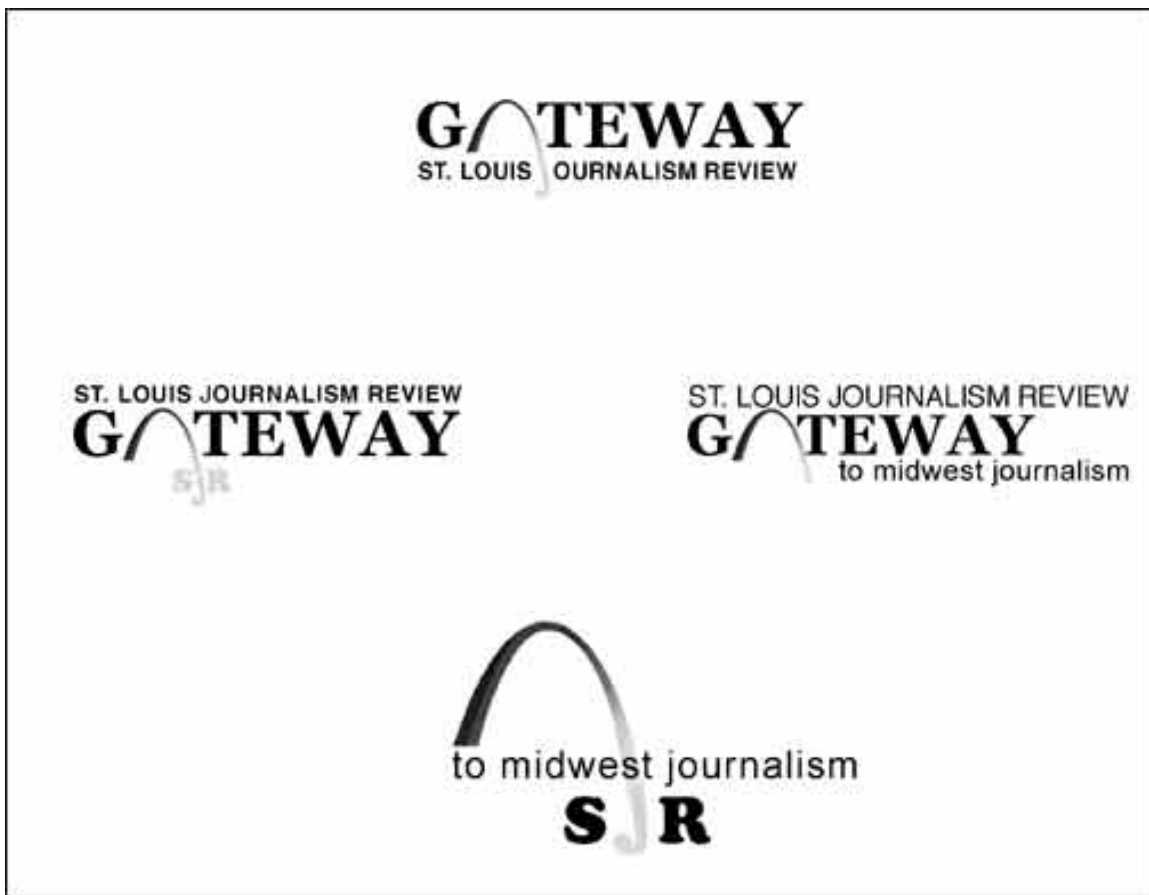


Figure 8

The publication received \$25,000 from MCMA dean Gary Kolb over four years, its subscribers, and donations as potential revenue streams. Future SJR staff should make maintaining the website a high priority, both for its readers and for the possibility of increased profit. Websites that change their look see a readership increase of 10 percent in people between the ages of 25 and 34, and 5 percent in people between the ages of 50 and 64 (Pew Research Center, 2008, p.18). But a vestigial elitism seems to prevail for printed content, and the

redesign of SJR's magazine should reflect the new website's function while maintaining its own identity.

The SJR website is now equipped to provide an experience the user expects. E-mail alerts, commenting, and forums will provide them with ways to stay up-to-date with SJR, and provide the staff with ways to build a digital directory of readers and their information. As time goes on and SIUC produces its first print edition of the SJR, more opportunities to tweak featured sections and design will present themselves. This website is built to evolve, and the more it does, the more the SJR will succeed online. As Napoleon Bonaparte once said, "Ability is nothing without opportunity." Hopefully, there will always be enough students, faculty and staff at SIUC to take advantage of what the SJR brings — a 40-year tradition of critique, collaboration and evolution in the journalism field.

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