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# FEEDBACK

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Feedback is an electronic journal scheduled for posting six times a year at [www.beaweb.org](http://www.beaweb.org) by the Broadcast Education Association. As an electronic journal, Feedback publishes (1) articles or essays—especially those of pedagogical value—on any aspect of electronic media; (2) responsive essays—especially industry analysis and those reacting to issues and concerns raised by previous Feedback articles and essays; (3) scholarly papers; (4) reviews of books, video, audio, film and web resources and other instructional materials; and (5) official announcements of the BEA and news from BEA Districts and Interest Divisions. Feedback is not a peer-reviewed journal.

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### SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

1. Submit an electronic version of the complete manuscript with references and charts in Microsoft Word along with graphs, audio/video and other graphic attachments to the editor. Retain a hard copy for reference.
2. Please double-space the manuscript. Use the 5th edition of the American Psychological Association (APA) style manual.
3. Articles are limited to 3,000 words or less, and essays to 1,500 words or less.
4. All authors must provide the following information: name, employer, professional rank and/or title, complete mailing address, telephone and fax numbers, email address, and whether the writing has been presented at a prior venue.
5. If editorial suggestions are made and the author(s) agree to the changes, such changes should be submitted by email as a Microsoft Word document to the editor.
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Please email submissions to Joe Misiewicz at [joedr@sbcglobal.net](mailto:joedr@sbcglobal.net). If needed: Joe Misiewicz, *Feedback* Editor, Department of Telecommunications, Ball State University, Muncie, IN 47306, USA.

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# YOUR STORY NEEDS FIVE CHARACTERS: WHO ARE THESE CHARACTERS AND HOW DO THEY ACT?

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Paper presented at  
BEA 2005 National  
Convention  
April 21-23  
Las Vegas, Nevada

**Panel:** The Action's  
In The Writing  
III: Exercises And  
Methods To Give  
Characters Life

## ABSTRACT

The primary result from the exercise in character is first, an aural depiction of a lively scene created from randomly selected character sketches and a typical scene layout. Second, is the application of randomly selected student written character sketches to one or more scenes. During this exercise students see how attention to character detail does impact the potential for character inclusion and participation in a scene. Also, students demonstrated their ability to write viable characters for radio and television applications.

This experiment allowed for a close look at how teachers can engage students in developing characters that work on a script page. The findings show that students can gain confidence in their character writing skills for television without having to create an entire history for the characters involved in the story. Writing for television and film requires the screenwriter to have a very secure grasp of the abilities and potential of character; however, the characters have to function by using screen action as a primary ingredient for revealing character. Student responses suggest that teaching traits and characteristics important to story telling is more important than teaching character to gender. The results of student work suggest a greater and more immediate success writing characters in story.

An analysis of findings revealed that there was overall improvement in confidence for the class when comparing student responses to pre to post test questions regarding confidence writing character for radio and television.

Hilliard (2004) identifies the three major elements in play structure as character, plot and dialogue (p.349). The writer supports a consistent and clear theme for the screen presentation by weaving these elements. The writer does not arbitrarily arrange the elements of play structure. Hilliard suggests the writer construct layers of research to “acquaint yourself fully with the potentials of your play” (p.349). Hilliard suggests analyzing

the character on paper so the writer is familiar with a “character’s complete histories and motivations” (p.349). This larger than life analysis is to be used to write scenes and scripts that turn into screen action. Hilliard (2004), Seger (1990) Indick (2004), Ballon (2005) and Axelrod (2004) suggest a complete analysis as a means of knowing your character. I propose that this “knowing your complete character” leads to knowing too much about a character for novice television or film writers. This “knowing” leads to trouble for novice screen writers because it impairs their ability to create believable script characters because beginning screen writers (and even experienced screen writers) end up confronting their confidence in selection motivation and history to facilitate the theme for the proposed “on screen” play. While the “knowing your complete character” approach would be useful for a novel, it serves little functional purpose for the screen. The scriptwriter needs to know the relevant aspects of the character to facilitate the mental and physical action portrayed on the screen. To that end, I investigate student perceived confidence writing character and a “reduced” character development exercise emphasizing theme and situation for a group of on-screen characters. This paper presents the findings related to student confidence before and after developing characters using a pattern of character development derived by examining the character writing essentials from noted scriptwriting authors like Hilliard.

Hilliard (2004) and others; Seger (1990) Indick (2004), Ballon (2005) and Axelrod (2004), emphasize, “character is the prime mover of the action and determines plot and dialogue” (p. 354). In particular Hilliard notes novice screenwriters make a mistake when trying to “conform the characters to a plot structure” (p.354). The screenwriter frequently reveals failure by presenting artificial and confusing (to the audience) characters. Hilliard and others mentioned above instruct screenwriters to create character that drives the action through plot rather than plot or action driving the character. I pose that an initial situation drives the action and the character, because of his or her character creates the reciprocal situation(s) contributing to the actual plot. Hilliard (2004, p.354), Seger (1990) Indick (2004), Ballon (2005) and Axelrod (2004) claim, “Character is delineated most effectively by what the person does at moments of crisis.” As a result Hilliard encourages the screenwriter to create characters as “dramatically heightened interpretations of reality.” I believe, as do the scriptwriting authors noted above, to do so the writer must put the character for television or film into “actions that strikingly reveal the individual character” (Hilliard, p. 354). However, their advice related to the “character’s complete histories and motivations” confounds the novice screenwriter. The efficient screenwriter creates character by using action and dialogue revealing character through the actions or reactions caused by the prevailing situation. That is, character leads to actions that move the plot toward resolution.

Seger (1990) writes about the consequence of choice as a character element (p 109). She explains “the triangle” used by writers to exploit contrasts between character, situation and plot. This “triangle” works when the writer exploits plausible elements of character as the story is revealed. Specific aspects of character make choices made by a character believable for the audience. When the audience observes characters in relationships, the conflicts and alliances between characters are revealed through character action and dialogue resulting in situations often derived because of situations caused by the primary character or put upon (derived by other characters) the primary characters. Of course, the result is conflict. According to Seger the conflicts provide additional

opportunity to amplify or reveal character “insecurities, flaws, bad decisions and desperate emotions” (p. 112).

The “triangle” Seger describes works because characters are relevant to the theme of the script through the obvious characteristics they possess, their conflicts and alliances as well as what Seger (1990) identifies as the character’s “shadow side” (p. 113). This “shadow side” is a hidden quality of a character’s psychology that drives the story and the character. Seger suggests that the character may not know this “shadow side”. The author should know it. Also, this “shadow side” can be a positive or a negative characteristic. For Seger (p.114) the writer uses the “triangle to exploit the characteristics of the participants. The writer juggles the situation and plot elements simply by playing-out the most observable traits, flows, ambitions, and shadow sides of people the audience is interested in watching.

According to Ballon (2005) the weakest link for most writers is creating character (p.39). She identifies cliché, one-dimensional and weak or boring portrayals as the most pressing problems for screenwriters (p. 39). Ballon describes a “journey” for making character (p. 40-44). Ballon’s “journey” takes the screenwriter through a series of character development questions. The process involves asking for a specific goal for the main character, whether the main character is active through the story and whether the character changes or is transformed in the climax (p.40). For Ballon the evolution of a main character begins with how the character became who they are in the screenplay. She describes the need for a biography, an “in depth scrutiny of them by creating their past life” (p41). The traits, make-up and personality for this area include “social, physical and emotional categories” (p 41-43). Once your characters possess a history she recommends making the main and important characters realistic by adding motivation that will drive the character’s point-of-view while enabling a character’s emotional growth and transformation. This, she says, leads to “the blueprint for your main character” (p. 44). Without motivation and traits the characters function in visual space without reason. As a consequence the characters exist for the author but not the audience.

Axelrod (2004) like Hilliard (2004) writes about developing character as a “layering effect” (p.1). He explains, “I use the word layering as a foundational device, that is, one aspect of a character’s character laid on top of another until, in the end, there is a complete picture of the entire character.” Axelrod states what I believe deprives confidence in novice scriptwriters. The actual act of creating an entire character for the screen is more than what is necessary for screen action. I believe what the screenwriter needs is to see the character he or she is writing for the audience. The screenwriter must see and use only those layers necessary to the telling or story exposition. That exposition is what the audience will see and experience. The screenwriter must deal with the contrast between writing a novel and writing for the screen. For a screenwriter the so-called “layers of character” are seen by the audience through action caused by situation rather than revealed to the audience through exposition like reading a novel or short story. Despite his definition of character, Axelrod writes about characters as being “cinelogs – characters that are real only by virtue of the fact that they exist on the screen; nothing more, nothing less” (p.1). His approach to telling a writer to create the whole character, I believe, leads to a character development confidence crisis for novice screenwriters.

Axelrod (2004) gives two guides for individualizing characters. His guides address Ibsen's commentary on characters as "leading points of their character and their little peculiarities" (p.1). His guideline for individualizing character rests in creating categories – not limited to – heredity, social milieu and psychological milieu (p. 2-3). The screenwriter then develops the character. So, my question when developing a plan to teach students how to write character is to determine whether a character for television or film arrives on the scene or whether the character evolves on the screen? What follows is my approach to teaching students to know the essence of their characters (because they know just enough about their screen characters) and then practicing how they can create fun for the audience by writing how their story characters will respond when confronted with situation driving the action.

## **METHODS**

### **Participants**

Undergraduates enrolled in a Radio and Television Continuity Writing class were participants in this study. The class consisted of twelve students, 5 males and 6 females. All of the students were aspiring media writers. Participants responded to the activities of the experiment as part of a writing unit on writing characters for television and radio.

### **Design**

The unit on writing characters for radio and television took place in the sixth week of a sixteen-week semester. Students participating in the class had previous experience writing characters for their literature classes and writing characters for earlier in-class and homework assignments. This unit focused on writing characters that come alive on the screen.

Students were given a pre-assessment ([Appendix 1](#)) regarding their confidence writing characters for radio and television. The assessment was administered the class meeting before the beginning of the unit on writing characters for radio and television. The same set of questions ([Appendix 1](#)) was administered as a post-assessment the day after the close of the class unit. The questionnaire was identical except for the "pre" or "post" notation on the questionnaire.

Students were instructed on the development of characters for radio and television using a concept of *relevant aspects of character* instead of a *complete history of character* in order to make the characters come alive for the audience. The students were given a template ([Appendix 2](#)) for developing their characters. The components of the template were explained so students could use the template to keep their focus on how the character would act or react to situations presented during the screenplay. They were instructed that, "character comes first" and that, "situation drives the action." During the class the instructional focus is placed upon the defined elements of character ([Appendix 2](#)) and the relationship to making action for the screen. Characters. By working with their character opportunities and situations each student experiences, through in class practice and discussion, how the character, the situation and other characters contribute to the reactions audiences come to expect on the screen. In essence the students work with getting suggested character characteristics to actually further the story. We work with one element from the defined character elements ([Appendix 2](#)) and propose what would happen under different situations. As students manage the discrete elements of character and relate the character elements to a chang-



ing situation they engage the experience of creating characters with purpose. For their assignment students were required to use a 4x6 inch index card to detail 5 characters. The characters could be anyone they chose. The student could use both sides of the card, but no more. The students were told that they would present their characters the next day.

The students used their character profiles in the next class meeting. Samples actually used in class are provided in [Appendix 3](#). Students were asked to place all five of their character profiles in front of them. The first card to the left was designated as card one and the card furthest to the right was card five. While the students arranged their cards in front of them, the teacher drew on the chalkboard an overhead scene depicting a line of checkout registers (4 or 5 lanes) at a grocery store. The overhead included a windowed front of the grocery with the entrance to the grocery store at the upper right of the scene. The teacher drew a circle near the store entrance and labeled it "A" and drew another circle where the cash register would be in the middle check-out lane, labeling it "B." The teacher then drew three additional circles in the isle "C, D, E" lined up at the register. The scene depicted a typical grocery store checkout with only one lane functioning. The teacher selected one student to pick a classmate and designate a number between one and five. The card from that student would be the first character for the scene the teacher would depict next. A new student would tell whether the card selected would be placed as an "A, B, C, D or E" position. This would take place without reading the character information. The person selected by the first student selected by the teacher would then select a second student and call a number between 1 and 5 selecting the second character for the scene. This process would continue until all five of the character positions for the grocery scene were filled.

Once all of the characters are selected we go back to the first character and the student with that character card tells us whom the character is beginning with name, gender and age. Then the student reveals the traits. All of the characters are revealed and their position in line, at the register or at the door is revealed. Who are these people and how might they act? How do they feel about one another? There is usually much discussion about the relationships and what the characters may be doing while checking out. Just as the discussion slows the teacher announces, "Oh, by the way the person entering the store is waving a gun and announcing that this is a robbery!" This situation changes everything and puts the characters into an action sequence we can define as a scene. This enactment usually takes the whole class period. Of course, there are many other scenes the teacher can set-up for the students. The beauty of this scene is that it works with every character and every character order tried so far, 8 trials.

The students are asked to select three cards from their classmates. They may not select any cards from their own pile. The students are then given a new assignment ([Appendix 4](#)) composed of a list of situations. The student is to review their new character cards and outline a scene they pick from the assignment sheet ([Appendix 3](#)). At the next class meeting we share their new scene, talk about how the characters work, note the random assignment and the ability to make characters work by dealing with their inherent character or by modifying character to meet the purpose of the intended situation or action. By the end of the unit the students have had concrete practice working with character, situation and action. We frequently deal with character attitude and motive during our discussions.



At the close of the unit students are given the post inventory for confidence creating character ([Appendix 1](#)). The responses from the pre and post character confidence inventory are tabulated and scored.

## RESULTS

The primary result from the exercise in character is first, an aural depiction of a lively scene created from randomly selected character sketches and a typical scene layout. Second, is the application of randomly selected student written character sketches to one or more scenes. During this exercise students see how attention to character detail does impact the potential for character inclusion and participation in a scene. Also, students demonstrated their ability to write viable characters for radio and television applications.

An analysis of findings revealed that there was overall improvement in confidence for the class when comparing student responses to pre to post test questions regarding confidence writing character for radio and television. The significant finding between pre and posttest was that of determining the flaw of the character. While all post-test question responses showed confidence gains the ability to write and use character “flaws” was most dramatic ([Appendix 5](#)).

When male and female pre and posttest responses were compared showed notable differences in standard deviation between males and females. During the pretest ([Appendix 6](#)) two items showed gender differences in confidence writing characters. Males were clustered tightly as much less confident 0.488 Std. Dev. at a 2.286 writing female characters when compared to female writers 0.837 Std. Dev. at a 1.800 when writing female a female character. The women are less clustered and more confident going into the writing exercise.

When students reported their confidence writing character traits the males reported more confidence 1.857 than the females who reported 2.000 on the pretest. The Standard Deviation showed that the males were more dispersed (0.690) in their confidence while the females were very uniform (0.000) in their confidence level.

A comparison of the same items on the posttest ([Appendix 7](#)) items showed that men (1.600) and women (1.833) made posttest gains in their confidence (mean score) writing female characters. The men and women became more tightly clustered around their mean scores too. Both scores show increased confidence in writing female characters. The posttest also showed change for the writing of character traits. The men improved to a 1.600 compared to the pretest of 1.857. The women improved to a 1.667 compared to a pretest of 2.00 on the same item. The male results of central tendency indicated tighter clustering around the mean 0.548 while the women became more dispersed around their mean 0.816. The data shows that the experiential application of writing and practicing character development and application within situation improved student confidence in their perceived writing abilities between pre and posttest. An important outcome of this study is that men and women improved their confidence levels writing gender specific characters and dealing with character traits.

## DISCUSSION

This experiment allowed for a close look at how teachers can engage students in developing characters that work on a script page. The findings show that students can

gain confidence in their character writing skills for television without having to create an entire history for the characters involved in the story. Writing for television and film requires the screenwriter to have a very secure grasp of the abilities and potential of character, however, the characters have to function using screen action as a primary ingredient for revealing character. Students engage the character writing task with general confidence as indicated by their pre and post test scores, mainly responding in the confident, number 3 and a half to number 1 range on booth tests. The clustering of male and female writing as a standard deviation, however, suggests the direction of confidence change for male and female writers. The responses from students suggest that teaching traits and characteristics important to story telling is more important than teaching character to gender. The results of student work suggest a greater and more immediate success writing characters in story. This simple introduction to character sets the stage for more efficient student performance writing dialogue, refining involved plots and dealing with mood and tone. These are areas worthy of future investigations that would improve the teaching of and application of scriptwriting.

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## APPENDICES

(Requires Adobe Acrobat Reader)

- [Appendix 1: Character Writing Confidence](#)
- [Appendix 2: Character Profile](#)
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## THE GENERIC CHAIR HYPOTHESIS

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I had almost no contact with department chairs during undergraduate and graduate school, and met no one who served as a role model. The chair was something I fell into, an unoccupied piece of furniture, and when it proved comfortable, it was easy to sit in others. During an academic career spanning four decades, I headed four departments in different fields. This led me to view the department chair as a generic role, in this respect similar to positions such as university president, college dean, and department office manager. In recruiting a college president, a candidate's previous departmental affiliation is largely irrelevant. When it comes to appointing a dean, there is usually a desire to recruit from fields represented in the college, but whether an engineering dean candidate has a background in mechanical, electrical, or civil engineering is less significant than personal attributes and experience. An office manager in Chemistry may be brought in from Anthropology, Dramatic Arts, or from the medical school. Often the road to advancement for office staff involves a change in departments.

I do not favor lay administrators for academic units, but prefer faculty with a liberal arts viewpoint emphasizing the connectedness of knowledge and disciplines. A further requirement is good interpersonal skill, including some experience in conflict resolution. Criteria for choosing a chair are broader in departments that cover fields of study than in disciplines. An individual appointed to head Environmental Studies or Community Development may have a degree in a variety of academic fields or perhaps an exemplary record in public service or journalism without a doctorate. Chairs from outside the specific discipline are also common in small colleges and developing campuses, where multiple units are grouped together under a single chair until they reach critical size. For troubled departments, where all eligible faculty have been associated with warring factions, an outside chair may be the best way to bring peace.

Viewed in this larger context, it is the disciplinary department that is unusual in insisting upon a chair from within the discipline or a cognate field. On its surface this criterion seems so logical and obvious that it is rarely codified, discussed, or defended. The primary justification for this unwritten rule is that an internal chair will understand the teaching, research, and

service programs of the unit. Over the years, I have come to question this assumption, and see drawbacks to its implementation.

In an era of extreme specialization, hiring an internal chair is no guarantee of knowledge about the specifics of departmental programs. When I headed a department in my own discipline, I had extensive knowledge in several topical areas but no understanding of others for which I was responsible, such as animal care and research using hazardous materials. When I headed an Environmental Design program, I was responsible for a gallery, a darkroom, and an arboretum.

Certain personal characteristics will be of value to a generic chair. She/he must be flexible, a good listener who is cognizant of context (problems that appear phenotypically similar in two departments may be genotypically different and require different solutions), and a “quick study,” with a steep learning curve in new situations. Good powers of detachment are helpful, as many faculty and staff complaints will cite ancient wrongs and injustices committed before the generic chair arrived on the scene and cannot be remedied.

Like any good hypothesis, the generic chair concept is testable. This is consistent with Donald Campbell’s concept of the university as an Experimenting Society, in which the experimental method is used to evaluate existing and proposed practices. Currently, most program changes and new technologies at universities are introduced *ad hoc*. An administrator hears of a program at another institution and decides that it would be of local benefit. If the implementation is made, there is no systematic evaluation of cost or effectiveness. Often the administrator has moved on to another position or campus, and no longer involved with the program.

I propose testing the hypothesis that department administration involves generic skills more than it does subject matter knowledge. A successful chair in one department knows the campus culture, rules and procedures, and has (or should have) people skills. When I headed a nationally-ranked Department of Art, a field in which I had no professional training, I was responsible for all teaching and budget issues. In writing merit and promotion letters, I looked at exhibition record, published reviews, prizes, awards, fellowships, and commissions. As chair of Environmental Design, I wrote promotion letters for landscape architects. In this field, I focused on the range and significance of their professional work, consultancies, writings, and professional recognition. When I chaired Psychology, I wrote promotion letters for physiological psychologists about whose work I knew little. For them, I reviewed publications, considering such factors as the number of papers, journal stature, and innovativeness of the findings— and yes, I could judge this without expertise in the subject, by relying on assistance from faculty in the subject area who provided written comments during merit review. I could also examine grants, awards, and make citation searches. This was similar to my service on the Personnel Committee of Letters and Science which reviewed faculty in departments ranging from Anthropology to Zoology.

## IMPLEMENTATION

I recognize that the outside chair concept is not original. In most cases, it involves a department riven with conflict, and the chair is seen as a caretaker. What is novel here is the suggestion that the outside chair model should be tested and evaluated in healthy departments. I am *not* suggesting the creation of a new class of non-academic depart-

ment administrators. The generic chair I envision is an academic, but whose specific discipline or field is less important than administrative experience and personal attributes.

The experiment could be done on a modest scale by recruiting volunteers among successful chairs for a two-year exchange of departments. This would involve minimal paperwork or additional resources. Evaluation could be as informal as written journal notes of the two chairs and deans as participant observers or, if funding were available, to hire a program evaluator to conduct formal interviews with the above parties plus faculty, staff, and students in units, and to prepare a written report for dissemination to a wider audience.

Another way to test the hypothesis would be to recruit several successful chairs to administer departments in unfamiliar fields. In my case, this would have been a department like Nematology. I have never seen a nematode and have no training or job experience that relates to these microscopic worms. If I could successfully administer such a department, it would support the generic chair hypothesis.

## **BENEFITS OF THIS EXPERIMENT**

The higher education community gains information as to the degree the chair role is generic. If the hypothesis is supported, it will expand the pool of available chair candidates on a given campus.

Generic chairs represent a pool that could be tapped during emergencies. The presence of experienced chairs is critical in difficult budget times, as the chair is the bridge between department stakeholders and the administration. Their presence would enhance institutional memory, as an experienced department head will remember previous budget cuts and class cancellations. When a chair has witnessed previous crises with serious but not fatal outcomes, there is less likelihood of a “sky is falling” mentality.

Being able to administer another department could reduce burnout of competent chairs. The romance disappears after heading a unit for several years. It is time to move on, hopefully without wasting years of hard-earned experience. I believe there are chairs of History or Biochemistry who would enjoy chairing an English or Art Department. Although the problems will be familiar, at least the names and faces will have changed.

It will reduce parochialism and aim toward universality of knowledge, which are important considerations in a rapidly changing economy and technology. Imagine the intellectual implications of a physicist heading a History Department or a musicologist as chair of Economics. Such exchanges would be excellent training for higher administrative office.

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## A CONDENSED BOOK OF REVELATIONS: PUBLIC RADIO'S FUTURE

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I am not a prophet and, therefore, am fully unqualified to write anything resembling a Book of Revelations as it might apply to radio. Nonetheless, fools have rushed in many times where angels feared to tread so it's time to hit the water but with this preface. Professionally and personally I've been known as an optimist, finding opportunity where many saw disaster. My natural tendency toward optimism is unsustainable as I reflect on the future of our business.

When my career in radio began as a sophomore in high school I was hooked on radio. I visualized a medium free to innovate, have fun, take chances, not take itself too seriously, and serve our owners, the public. It has been my good fortune to work in and help grow that kind of radio philosophy.

That was, happily, my first vision of radio. Now, fast forward to 2003 and a very different and profoundly discouraging view has emerged. We might as well cut to the chase and state the case: I'm convinced that satellite radio will largely make radio as we know it irrelevant if not extinct by 2015. One can call it Doomsday Thinking or a reality check. It matters little since events will play themselves out regardless of what we say about them today. Many will vigorously disagree with what I predict but, as Stuart Smiley would note... "That's OK."

As of the moment, the FCC has licensed XM and Sirius, two purveyors of satellite radio, each capable of 100+ channels of digital audio. Both vendors offer several unprecedented bonuses which can never be available to those of us in the terrestrial radio business.

First, and by far the most significant advantage, is the ability to beam all program channels across the entire country without fading or serious signal interruption. Those of us in radio who operate Class A, B, or C stations and even repeater or translator networks cannot begin to match the ease of operation and coverage spread of XM or Sirius. Honestly, now, how many times have you been listening to a program on radio and, at a particularly interesting moment, found the signal fading out? Not gonna happen with XM and Sirius!

Second, XM and Sirius both have the capacity to offer a minimum of 100 and more channels of digital audio and text-

screen based information that none of us as individual broadcasters can do, even with HD Radio. Before long, XM and Sirius may well be offering local news, weather, and traffic to their services as full integration of global positioning systems are integrated into local satellite repeater cells. Sure, we can offer text information and, with NPR's *Tomorrow Radio*, might be able to offer two channels, but that's a far cry from what either of these giants in the sky can provide. Score: XM-Sirius, 1: Terrestrial Radio, 0.

Third, and not insignificant, is the pricing structure of XM and Sirius. For \$10-\$13 a month listeners have open access to a full menu of satellite offerings on XM or Sirius. Some will say: "But *not* NPR and other major radio programs." Ah...but NPR, PRI, APM, and select public radio stations are already peddling their programs to Sirius and XM. To be sure, we've been told that NPR has drawn a line in the sand with respect to not offering key-anchor NPR programs via satellite but reason and history dictate that this is wishful thinking worthy of Pollyanna, herself. For the sake of argument, let's take each of these points and apply them to a hypothetical public radio listener.

The first notion of signal coverage is a no-brainer. None of our stations can remotely compare with the satellite's near-universal signal coverage. Score (1) for XM and Sirius and (0) for terrestrial radio..

Point two, at least to my thinking, is another no-brainer. As individual broadcasters we simply cannot begin to broadcast the capacity and breadth of either Sirius or XM Radio. By virtue of limitations beyond our control, we cannot hope to compete with the breadth of program offerings on satellite radio.

Point three is the killer. The average individual contribution to public radio stations ranges between \$80 and \$120 a year. For roughly the same amount of money, a listener can subscribe to either XM or Sirius. If an average public radio subscriber elects to install either satellite service in the car or home, what possible incentives exist to pay another \$80-\$120 to support the local public station? What do we have to offer that is not or will not be available on the satellite?

Beginning with automobile model year, 2005, the majority of high-end cars will have either XM or Sirius as standard options. The major rental car agencies are already lining up with either XM or Sirius to have these services as options in their fleets. It would be reasonable to assume that anyone renting an XM or Sirius equipped car would be highly motivated to install the system in their own cars once they've experienced satellite radio. I have a good friend, employed in public radio, who recently purchased a vehicle equipped with XM. My friend admits, with some embarrassment, that his radio seldom leaves XM's programming and he is someone earning a living in our business!

Auto manufacturers are already discussing promotions that would provide several months of free service to XM or Sirius as part of various buyer incentive packages. In model year 2006 projections indicate that mid-priced cars will have XM or Sirius available as standard options. Respected trade projections are talking about satellite radio penetration in excess of 50 percent of the driving population by the year 2012 if not earlier. Between now and then, our regular sources of public radio income (underwriting and membership) will most likely decline at the same time our operational costs increase. This curve cannot be sustained indefinitely.

Returning to the hypothetical radio listener, imagine now that he/she is paying \$13 a month or less for satellite service. Remember that this new gadget will receive,



at the touch of a button, some NPR programming (more to follow), CNN, ESPN, Bloomberg, classic radio, six to eight classical channels, three to five jazz channels, modern country, classic country, soft rock, oldies, new age programs, and all the rest. What, in the name of heaven, would induce this customer who *must* cough up the \$10-\$13 a month for the service to migrate back to the local terrestrial public station (and also support it) when nearly everything offered is available by satellite with national coverage. Plus, the subscriber won't be assaulted with fund drives and loads of sponsorship or underwriting credits. One might argue that local news could be the hook that draws listeners back. This is a worthy argument except for the stark reality that the majority of public stations have long since dropped their local news departments that *are* indeed incredibly expensive to operate. What, then, do we, as local terrestrial stations, have to offer the customer that satellite radio can't do better and with more customized choices for the consumer?

Do I like any of this? Absolutely not! I did, though, purchase stock in both Sirius and XM to hedge my bets. XM, in particular, has grown from \$5 a share just a year or so ago to over \$30 a share today. This reality alone should be conveying a powerful message to all of us.

The last two lines of a well-known Dylan Thomas poem invariably come to mind when I reflect on all of this:

Do not go gentle into that good night.

Rage, rage against the dying of the light.

I fear that we can rage against the dying of the light until our energy is spent but the dynamics of the situation won't change one whit. I'm probably too old to devise a solution but, perhaps, someone else out there can. No matter how it plays out, it's been a terrific 35 year ride in radio, true to my first vision so many years ago. The times they are a 'changing but that's been the history of our business, hasn't it?

## THE PARADOX OF COLLEGE RADIO

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Writing about modern college radio is a complex and challenging task. Perhaps the greatest issue facing those who study and write about college radio is understanding exactly what it is.

Tremblay (2003) defined college radio stations as “federally licensed broadcast station[s] operated and programmed primarily by students for student audiences” yet acknowledged this definition excluded many NPR or “institutionally programmed stations” even though they were operated by students (p. 185). Baur (2002) defined “true college radio” as those stations that are “staffed by students,” noting also that all “non-commercial” radio stations are often classified as “college.” “Although not technically accurate, this designation is part of the popular vernacular” (p. 36).

The fact is that college radio stations come in all shapes, sizes, and wattages. There are stations on college campuses that are totally student-run but have tremendous differences in their signal distribution, reaching anywhere from ten feet to a hundred miles. [KASC](#) (formerly KASR) at Arizona State University once used the slogan “the station that rocks four blocks” indicating the limitations of their signal ([Milanovich, 2004](#)). Some don’t even reach that far. Carrier current, that restricts signals to *individual buildings* by sending the broadcast signal over the building’s electrical system, is in use at [KAPU](#), Azusa Pacific University. Other college radio stations are broadcasting powerhouses, with up to 100,000 watts. [KNAU](#), on the campus of Northern Arizona University, broadcasts NPR programming at 88.7 FM (and on four translators) with 100,000 watts, but they are staffed by radio professionals, only employing students as interns. Student-run [WZIP](#), University of Akron, broadcasts 7,500 watts with a primary signal that covers over 4,200 square miles. However, with their block programming that includes polka music, one would be hard pressed to say their station exclusively serves the University of Akron student body.

It is also difficult to define college stations by programming philosophy. A February 27, 2003 post to the [Collegiate Broadcasters, Inc.](#) listserv illustrates the dilemma of defining college radio stating: “What is college radio? Now that’s a real can of worms. Is [Z89](#) in Syracuse, which is CHR, a college radio station or [WBSU](#) which also has a CHR format? They are operated by students and would fit the bill, but many would say they

are not, as they are not ‘alternative.’ If a station uses Selector [a song rotation software package], does that make them no longer a college station?”<sup>1</sup>

Sauls’ (2000) volume *The Culture of American College Radio* attempts to wrestle with the nature and function of college radio. In it, Sauls defined college radio stations broadly as “stations operating on college and university campuses, including two-year colleges” (p. 9). While Sauls is to be commended for wrestling with an often imprecise, sundry subject, his text falls victim to a parsimonious mentality, primarily in the keystone issue of the text’s title—culture.

Sauls sees college radio culture as a reflection of each individual campus (p. 3). The difficulty I have with this approach is that it becomes possible for the culture of college radio to be unique for every station. It is true that individual stations will have their own organizational culture but in the end, it becomes very difficult using Sauls’ scheme to develop a general understanding of college radio. Sauls espouses a scenario where a college radio station’s culture is dependent on some entity outside of the radio station itself—the college or university. While that approach may be fair enough in describing individual stations, trying to understand college radio *as a whole* using this schema becomes untenable. I want to respond to Sauls’ work by offering a different way of looking at the culture of college radio. I advocate a broader idea—the culture of college radio is a culture of paradox. The term ‘paradox’ can be defined as “a situation that seems inconsistent and full of contradictions” (Guralnik, 1976, p. 693). I believe the subject and practice of college radio is rife with contradictory tensions.

In looking at college radio, defined here as stations on college campuses that serve student audiences and are run exclusively by students, one finds great variety not only in tangible things like station size and signal strength, but there are also polar opposites in almost every aspect of station operation and practice. It is these contradictions, I believe, that give college radio its defining qualities. It is my hope that this examination will reveal a complex cultural understanding that is applicable to all college stations and perhaps more importantly, draws from the act of doing radio itself. There are at least three ways this paradoxical culture is manifested at college radio stations: through their workers, through their programming, and by the technology they employ. In each case, there are polemical views and divergent arguments for how to approach and do college radio. It is these diverse approaches I believe that create the real culture, the true system of meaning, for college radio stations.

## **THE PARADOX OF THE COLLEGE RADIO DJ**

It is well documented that broadcasting departments at universities exist largely to prepare students for the professional workforce (Pesha, 1997; Teitelman, 2001; Thompson, 1992; McGuire, 2005). Sauls skillfully summarizes the historical relationship between broadcasting and education in chapter two of his text concluding, “college stations are [normally] housed within an academic department of a school or college dealing with some form of communication studies” (2000, p. 101). While most college stations struggle with limited distribution of their signals, the act of doing radio—being a disc jockey, doing play-by-play of sports, writing and presenting newscasts, and creating commercials—can be a significant step for students in gaining future employment in the industry. Part of the paradox of the college radio DJ is that not everyone who spends time at a college radio station wants to work in the radio industry after gradua-

tion and that has rippling effects on the whole organization.

Thompson wrote, “Students, faculty, and administration all bring their own agendas to bear on the station; this mix of goals can be inharmonious, detracting from the educational experiences the station has to offer” (1992, p. 12). On the issue of music, not all students will agree about what to do. Station staff members and volunteer DJs often clash over what to play on the air and when. Student disc jockeys may take it upon themselves to ignore the proscribed format and play their own favorite songs. Every college station program manager has probably had to reprimand a DJ for not following the rules or the format.

Ertling (2002) noted how the freedom afforded by college radio (read=less restrictive regulations) often leads to on-air problems. Such lackadaisical attitudes of college radio DJs have created the impression that college radio can be, at times, unprofessional despite student managers’ (and advisors’) best efforts. Those students who do not wish to pursue radio vocationally after graduation usually have a hard time understanding why rules such as formatting and scheduled breaks are necessary. At a professional convention in 2002, one radio advisor noted how a station’s workforce dropped from over 50 to only 3 when they announced they were going to a scheduled format (Lovato, 2002).

While individual stations struggle to reconcile the occasional DJ breaking from format or not following it all together, college radio as a whole is mired in a debate about its programming philosophy. Collegiate Broadcasters, Inc. devoted an entire panel session at their 2003 conference to debate the value of free-form radio (with no restrictions on musical choices) versus formatted radio (Yoder, Newton, & Knieper, 2003). Station advisors are often put into a precarious position of having to decide between one approach and the other. Each position offers its own set of concerns. If an advisor tries to regulate the format, students may rebel. Thompson noted, “Any attempts by the faculty advisor to place controls on programming can be seen as acts of censorship” (1992, p. 13). Conversely, Pesha likened free-form radio to “cheating” students out of an educational opportunity (1997, p. 2). To allow free-form radio at a college station can deny the student worker a “real world” experience and may negatively impact their employability following graduation.

Free-form or not, the college radio worker remains one of the more visible signs that college radio is a paradoxical culture. Those students who take on management level responsibilities will always take the task of doing radio more seriously than their volunteer counterparts. Yet, without volunteer DJs complimenting the daily schedule, it is likely that the broadcast day of many stations would be half as long as they actually are. At my university’s station, non-communication majors make up at least half the DJs on-air. In an almost cruel twist, for all its posturing as an educational experience that promises to develop and further one’s broadcast prowess, college radio is often dependent upon those who could care less about furthering their broadcast prowess for its daily broadcast operation.

## **THE PARADOX OF ALTERNATIVE PROGRAMMING**

College radio stations are often viewed as alternatives to mainstream radio. Generally, this distinction of being “alternative” comes from the music played on the station. Typically, college stations play artists and songs that won’t get airplay on larger broad-

cast stations. “Many [college stations],” Teitelman stated, “fill their niche by playing true alternative music—artists on smaller labels that won’t receive commercial airplay and sub-genres of music such as metal, electronica, jazz, and underground hip-hop” (2001, p. 30). This anti-mainstream philosophy has made heroes out of free-form advocates DJ Vin Scelsa and radio station WFMU (Hageman, 2001; Winter, 2002).

Despite college radio’s resistance to mainstream music, the recording industry has learned to utilize stations for their betterment. Sauls (1998) described how record labels have formed a type of farm system for new music product using college radio stations. Unsigned bands and new groups performing as-of-yet untested musical styles are marketed heavily to college stations, affording these musicians a sort of trial run. After gaining popularity on college stations, mainstream labels are then ready to market those groups to a larger audience.

The paradox here is that these programming methods, employed by many (but not all) college stations, violate almost every convention in broadcast programming. Thompsen observed, “This [alternative programming] philosophy is, by design, diametrically opposed to the prevalent philosophy of nearly every commercial radio station” (1992, p. 13). The rationale for such an approach seems to rest on college radio programmers’ zeal in wanting to do something “no one else has done before.” Weary of repetitive mainstream formats, young music programmers seek to play undiscovered music. However, all music formats depend on one vital component for their success—familiarity. An alternative music format, that relies upon new, unsigned, and unheard bands, inherently excludes this component.

Repetition of familiar music is a staple of most every music radio format in America, but it is most often seen in the Top 40 format. In the text *Listening In*, Douglas (1999) recalled how recent research has uncovered that listening to familiar sounds, i.e., songs over and over again, creates neurological and physiological pleasure in certain portions of the brain:

The more we listen to certain kinds of music, the more we learn to like it. While the brain seems to like the surprise that comes when musical expectations are violated—such as through syncopation, dissonance, or unusual melodies—evidence suggests that predictability produces more pleasure. (p. 32)

College stations, by playing only new and unfamiliar music, violate this prime tenant. By largely eliminating the concept of familiarity through repetition of known songs by known artists, college stations run the risk of alienating all but the most dedicated of music junkies.

While Sauls in 2000 believed the future looked bright for alternative programming, the format has failed to completely blossom. Some “mainstream alternative” stations that play established groups have maintained an average quarter hour share of roughly 4.0 for the last several years, but the album alternative format that plays unfamiliar songs and goes deeper into an album’s song list (typical of college stations), has struggled to score above a [1.0 share](#).<sup>2</sup> Despite its weaknesses, album alternative continues to be the format of choice for college radio.

## THE PARADOX OF EQUIPMENT AND TECHNOLOGY

*The Chronicle of Higher Education* in early 2001 told the story of Professor Douglas

Rowlett from Houston Community College-Southwest. Rowlett had set up an Internet radio station in his office to serve as an outlet for his creative writing course. Of considerable interest was the cost of the whole project. “‘This whole thing cost about \$500 to put together,’ he says. ‘We have a \$79 Radio Shack mixer and a \$100 microphone’” (Online, 2001, p. 41). *The Chronicle* concluded their profile with this salient observation:

Many college stations, as well as commercial ones, have begun setting up Internet sites to put their existing programming online. As the technology to run Internet radio stations continues to become cheaper, more professors may take to the virtual airwaves. (p. 41)

The web became an attractive means of signal distribution for college stations after actions by Congress in early 2000 made low power FM less affordable (Hartill, 2000). Broadcast licenses can cost millions to obtain and it is often just as costly to upgrade an existing signal. These costs, combined with the already limited broadcast spectrum, means newer college stations often have to seek alternative means to get their voices heard. The web seemed to fit that need quite perfectly. That was until the rulings of the [Digital Millennium Copyright Act of 1998](#) (DMCA) and [Copyright Arbitration Royalty Panel of 2002](#) (CARP) significantly changed the Internet radio landscape.

The combined effect of these rulings turned the Internet from an ally of college radio into a multi-headed, expensive Hydra by demanding per-performance royalties for use of copyrighted music. For all but the wealthiest corporate broadcasters, these rates stood to bankrupt web casting and college radio on the web. When the initial CARP rates were announced in 2002, it didn't take long for the shockwave to be felt in college radio. Belmont University, Nashville, had just launched its Internet radio station, five days before the rates were initially made public. The university pulled the plug on it the day rates were announced (R. Tiner, personal communication, April 4, 2003). More stations followed suit. A study presented at the 2003 Broadcast Education Association conference revealed 41.5 percent of stations surveyed had ceased streaming completely or partially due to the restrictive and costly regulations (Hayner).

The Recording Industry Association of America and college broadcasters have since come to a somewhat more [affordable agreement](#) about copyright royalties that are owed due to streaming activity of college stations. Still, this episode reveals the paradoxical nature of college radio and its technology—the technology needed to do college radio on the web is widely available, but costs and federal regulations are hampering college stations' efforts to get and keep their signals on the web.

Sauls spends considerable time discussing the funding it takes to make college radio possible. Of particular interest here is his observation that “New equipment is sometimes the hardest to be funded. At times, requesting a new piece of equipment a few years in a row is necessary to convince the funding authorities that it is really needed” (2002, p. 136). College radio stations have probably never faced the need for new equipment more than they do now. With digital technologies, from simple editors to full automation/live assist/on-air systems, becoming the norm at commercial radio stations, the need for new and modern equipment at college stations becomes critical. Remember that radio stations exist at colleges in order to prepare students for the workforce. A student who spends four years working with antiquated or outdated technol-

ogy may be in for a rude awakening when searching for a job following graduation.

Esposito's survey of 96 broadcast education programs in 2002 revealed a mean budget of \$17,500. Considering the cost of general upkeep, promotional items, and possibly student salaries, there is not much left for equipment upgrades. Top of the line digital automation systems can exceed a station's total budget. New analog consoles can cost upwards of \$7,000. Digital consoles cost more. A single microphone can cost up to \$1,000.

What might be the most ironic aspect of this paradox is that current regulations may, in fact, require college stations using web casting technology to upgrade their equipment in spite of stations' limited ability to pay. One of the regulations in the DMCA of 1998 stipulates that any web caster streaming music must display the [artist, song title, and album title](#) on their web page as the song is being streamed in real time. To do so and thus be fully compliant with the law necessitates having some type of digital automation, or at least computer database capabilities that can collect and stream the necessary data immediately. These requirements, coupled with the sparse funds available, may lead many college station advisors and students to their administrations in search of additional support for their operations, which can be another paradox in itself.

#### The Passion of College Radio

Writing about modern college radio is a complex and challenging task. As we have seen, it operates largely in a culture of paradox. The paradoxes I have named are likely not foreign to anyone who has spent time in college radio. Those who become student managers and directors, working their way up from volunteer DJs, come to be well aware of these issues that confront college radio broadcasting everyday. So, why do they do it? Why would any student manager willingly submit themselves to the repeated tortures of DJs who break format, the audio console that doesn't ever work quite right, and a signal that often times, almost no one can hear? Why do advisors do it, who often have to put up with all of these problems at once and who are usually more aware of these issues than students? The answer, I believe, lies in the passion we bring to doing radio.

In the act of doing radio, we find something that drives us. It is much more, I believe, than the passion that Bloom (1987) confers upon music and youth. It is something wholly other. Radio is a medium that traffics in personal connections. It is known for its ability to forge general camaraderie and companionship among its audience members (Keith, 2001; Troidahl and Skolnik, 1967-8; Weintraub, 1971). Douglas (1999) skillfully documented how the invention of radio centralized national values, but also built and cohered racial and gender identities. Radio, time and time again, has demonstrated its ability to construct, fortify, and otherwise influence human relationships and communities.

In doing college radio, there is joy (read=passion) in working with others to overcome the paradoxes listed above. Success for the college radio station rings loud and clear when that new piece of equipment arrives and it works. Having hundreds of students stop at your booth during a campus event makes for a satisfied staff. If the request line rings once, it can change the student DJ forever. Working through promotional events together brings cohesion to an often diversified student crew. Part of what makes college radio such a vibrant use of the medium is the excitement its people bring to the act of doing radio in community with others who are just as passionate as they are.



It is important for those who work at and guide college radio stations to recognize these intangible factors. It can be an invaluable lesson to those just learning the art of radio that the best rewards come from those immediately around them and from overcoming obstacles. If college radio's purpose is largely educational, those who teach radio owe it to those just learning the ropes to instruct them not only in the basics of technique, but also in the paradoxes of the medium and how to find satisfaction in it. After all, if those who are just learning the art of doing radio are instilled with the passion to work with others now, how much better will the medium be when they reach the professional ranks?

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## ENDNOTES

<sup>1</sup> Black, M. (2003, February 23). East Bay Express: Has CMJ Become the Monster That Are College Radio? Message posted to [Collegiate Broadcasters, Inc. Listserv](#). Available by contacting the author.

<sup>2</sup> See the "Format Trends Report," [Arbitron, Summer 2005](#), for the latest format ratings. The distinction between various "alternative formats" needs to be clarified. The college stations under consideration here generally avoid music heard on mainstream commercial broadcast stations. Thus, their formats are likely described best as "album alternative" (Arbitron symbol: AAA) and remain distinct from modern "mainstream alternative" stations (Arbitron symbol: ALTERN). See Gillispie, G., (1994, May 2). What's so Alternative about Alternative Anyway? [The Approach](#), n.p. for more discussion of format distinctions. [Reprinted in Lynch, J, & Gillispie, G. (1998). [Process and practice of radio programming](#). Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 41-42.]

# BRIEF HISTORY OF THE UNIVERSITY ASSOCIATE FOR PROFESSIONAL RADIO EDUCATION

Prepared by  
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November 1952

*Feedback Editor's  
Note: This material  
was sent to Feedback  
anonymously. Feedback  
welcomes any historical  
data, writings and  
documentation related  
to BEA including  
photos.*

During the winter of 1947-48 a group of broadcasters and educators was appointed by Judge Justine Miller as a committee to study the status of training standards for radio in the various schools and colleges of the United States. I cannot give you the membership of this committee for I was not in that original group. It is my recollection that it included such people as Judith Waller, Hazel Market, Armand Hunter, and Ken Bartlett amount others. This committee studies the curricula of more than 500 schools that were then offering training in radio. They decided that only ten schools were offering the kind of training that would benefit the broadcasting industry so they recommended to NAB that these ten schools should form an accrediting organization.

The next step was to arrange a meeting of the representatives of the ten schools. These schools were the Universities of Alabama, Denver, Nebraska, Northwestern, Southern California, Syracuse, Temple, Texas, Tulsa, and the Texas School of Mines. This meeting was held in Denver in March of 1948. We discussed the need for the formation of a permanent group and proceeded to appoint committees for writing a constitution and bylaws, and for the purpose of establishing ourselves as an accrediting organization. We listened to opinions from leading educators at Denver University regarding the process of achieving status and recognition from established educational accrediting groups. The feeling was unanimous that such an organization was long overdue in view of the lack of uniformity regarding even minimum standards in training for the broadcasting industry. The meeting adjourned after setting a date for a future meeting not later than the end of the school year, 1948, at such time a permanent organization would be adopted.

The group of ten representatives from the various colleges and universities met for permanent organization in St. Louis June 6, 1948, and adopted a permanent constitution and set of bylaws. It was voted to accept the ten schools present as charter members of the organization named the University Association for

Professional Radio Education (UAPRE). Procedure was established for the investigation of other schools that would make application for membership. Minimum standards pertaining to curriculum, staff, equipment, and laboratory facilities were approved. (I am enclosing copies of the constitution and bylaws, minimum standards, and the questionnaire to be answered by schools making application.)

There was considerable reaction from educational circles after the announcement of the establishment of our organization. Some applications were received immediately and we had letters of inquiry from other schools that were interested but took a cautious approach. Nine of the ten schools approved the organization officially through acceptance by the presidents of the respective institutions. The president of the University of Nebraska refused to approve membership for that university. The organization was then duly constituted with the charter membership of nine.

The first annual meeting was held in conjunction with the NAB in Chicago April of 1949. The chief business of that meeting consisted of the approval of six additional schools and an open hearing concerning the objectives and the accrediting aspects of UAPRE. The schools that were admitted were Baylor, Boston University, College of the Pacific, Michigan State, the University of Oklahoma, and the University of Miami-Florida. By the time this meeting had been called it was almost certain that the group could not operate as an accrediting organization. The block that had been thrown by the president of the University of Nebraska resulted in a blanket announcement that no further accrediting organizations would be recognized by the American Association of Schools and Colleges. This meant that educators did not recognize our group and an organization empowered with the accrediting function. Hence, the discussion in the open meeting resolved itself along two lines: 1) what to do with the organization that had already been established, and 2) whether the function of UAPRE would have sufficient appeal to attract an increasing number of members. It was decided at the meeting, attended by an overflow audience of representatives from various schools and colleges particularly in the Midwest, that UAPRE could exert an important influence if it were to operate as a standard-setting group and that its influence would be important in the elevation of the training aspects of radio in schools throughout the United States. Most of the audience felt that it would be important to their respective department to become members of the UAPRE and they agreed they should try to meet the minimum standards of the organization, and then apply for membership. This was important to us because we believed that UAPRE should embrace more and more schools in order to achieve its proper function for which it was originally established.

The fact that we were blocked in terms of passing on accreditation took most of the enthusiasm out of the organization. Between the 1949 meeting and the second annual meeting, very few activities were carried on, and there were just a few nibbles at information concerning membership. The second annual meeting was again held in conjunction with the NARTB at the Stevens Hotel in Chicago, April 1950. In order to generate a renewed interest in UAPRE, an elaborate program was built featuring important names from the broadcast industry. With the exception of two-closed business sessions, the rest of the meeting was open to representatives from schools that were non-members and an announcement of the meeting was made to them. There was a fair turnout

to hear such people as Maurice Mitchell, Ken Baker, Ralph Hardy, and G. Emerson Markham. There were only two applications for membership, and neither was approved at this meeting since neither school could meet the requirements of the organization. These schools were the University of South Dakota and the College of Music of the University of Cincinnati. The meeting adjourned in much confusion and the feeling that all of the efforts had been directed toward a losing cause since UAPRE was not able to make significant progress toward the achievement of its goals. It was voted to hold the third annual meeting in conjunction with the Institute for Education by Radio in Columbus, Ohio the following spring.

The third annual meeting was held in April of 1951 and included a talk by Foy Kohler, then Director of Voice of America. The business session was devoted to a discussion of what activities could be undertaken by UAPRE. These were discussed without much enthusiasm. It was the feeling of the group that most of the prestige of the organization had been lost and there was no way to get much accomplished without outside assistance. Three more schools were granted membership. These were the University of Kentucky, University of Illinois, and University of Washington.

No significant progress has been made by UAPRE since that meeting of 1951. A fourth annual meeting was held in Columbus April of 1952, and resulted only in the election of officers. Only a bare majority of the membership was present. I was among those who were absent from the meeting and discovered later that I had been elected president. Now it seems to me that we need to make UAPRE a vital organization or we should dissolve it at the next annual meeting that has been set for April 1953 in Columbus, Ohio. I am also enclosing a list of the schools that are new members of UAPRE and the designated representative from each school. I think that you will agree that the list is an imposing one in terms of the amount of influence these member schools can have. The list is well distributed geographically and it also includes most of the leading radio and TV educational centers. Although our group has thus far been concerned only with radio, it is evident that any future activities should also include television.

The matter of educational programming is covered by the NAEB and the matter of in-school evaluation is a function of the Association for Education by Radio. We are not primarily concerned with either of these two areas. Our interest lies chiefly in the upgrading of educational training of students who will later become important additions to the commercial broadcasting industry, both radio and television.

Milestones—UAPRE, APBE, BEA

1947 NAP President Justin Miller appointed a committee to study the status of training for radio in various colleges and universities and to formulate accreditation criteria.

1948 Ten schools formed an accrediting organization to be known as the University Association for Professional Radio Education (UAPRE).

1949 The National Commission on Accreditation announced it would recognize no more accrediting organization. This decision halted the growth of UAPRE.

1955 Members of UAPRE ratified a Constitution and Bylaws prepared by NAB creating the Association for Professional Broadcasting Education (APBE). First APBE meeting of Board of Director held in Chicago. Sydney Head elected President of APBE at this meeting. NARTB (NAB) provides office space and a part-time executive. Fred Garrigus names APBE Executive Secretary.

1956 First Annual APBE meeting held in Chicago.

1957 *Journal of Broadcasting* published by APBE. Bob Summers, USC, services as first editor. Ken Harwood elected president.

1958 Plans presented at annual meeting for a joint NAB/APBE Broadcasting Employment Study. Glenn Starlin elected APBE president. *Feedback* established to be edited by Art Weld.

1959 Mike Kittross appointed the editor of the *Journal of Broadcasting*. Individual and two-year schools membership categories established.

1960 Bruce Linton elected president of APBE. Howard Bell becomes the APBE executive secretary.

1961 NAB presents plan of the Harold E. Fellows Scholarship. Bruce Linton participates in the NAB fall conference to tell the APBE story. A broadcasting seminar was held as part of the annual meeting. Method of electing board members changed from an at-large election to elections by districts.

1962 NAB/APBE employment study published, *People in Broadcasting*. Harold Niven elected APBE president.

1963 Corinthian Broadcasting Company establishes summer faculty internships. Earl Dougherty elected president of BEA. Harold Niven becomes APBE executive secretary.

1964 RAB and TvB announce special membership rates for APBE schools. Hugh Cordier elected APBE president.

1965 President Cordier participates in NAB fall conference discussing APBE and training personnel for the industry.

1966 NAB starts research grant program for faculty and graduate students. Roy Morgan elected president of APBE.

1967 Bruce Linton prepares a syllabus on *Self Regulation in Broadcasting* for APBE members. John Pennybacker appointed editor of *Feedback*.

1968 Art Hungerford elected APBE president. Volume I of *Composite Course Outlines* published and distributed to APBE schools.

1969 Worth McDougald hosts and APBE faculty seminar at the University of Georgia about broadcast education facilities. APBE supports a summer workshop for minority students at American University. Marianne Campbell elected president of APBE. A broadcast regulations faculty seminar held at NAB headquarters.

1970 Tom Bolger elected APBE president. Chris Sterling starts publication of *Broadcast Bibliophile*, now called *Communication Booknotes*. Copies distributed in APBE kit. An international broadcasting faculty seminar held at NAB. Proceedings published and distributed to APBE members. APBE publishes *Free & Fair* edited by Mike Kittross and Ken Harwood. Bob Crawford prepares a study on *Graduate Programs in the Communications Media*. APBE publishes *Organizational Patterns of Broadcast Instructional Programs in American Colleges and Universities* prepared by Clair Tettermer. Volume II of *Composite Course Outlines* published and distributed to APBE schools.

1971 Larry Lichty prepares a *World and International Broadcasting: A Bibliography* published by APBE. Chris Sterling named editor of the *Journal of Broadcasting*. John Pennybacker elected APBE president. Broadcast Management Faculty Seminar held at NAB headquarters. Proceeding published and distributed to APBE members. An APBE student seminar is held at the University of Montana.

1972 Broadcast Regulation Seminar held at NAB headquarters for APBE faculty members. Proceedings to be published as a broadcast monograph.

1973 Name change. APBE becomes BEA (Broadcasting Education Association). Bob Smith named editor of *Feedback*. Clark Pollock elected BEA President. Regional faculty seminars held in Chicago, San Francisco, and Atlanta. Subject: Programming and research.

1974 Broadcast Monographs, Number 1, *Issues in Broadcast Regulation* published by BEA, edited by Don Le Duc. Publication composed of papers and transcripts presented at the 1969 broadcast regulation seminars. International broadcasting seminars are held at NAB.

1975 Regional faculty seminars are held in Hollywood and Washington to consider regulations and programming. Rod Rightmire elected president of BEA.

1976 Broadcast Monographs Number 2, *Issues in International Broadcasting* published by BEA, edited by Chuck Sherman and Don Browne. Bob Finnelly and Alan Neckowitz names co-editors of *Feedback*. Broadcast Regulation Faculty Seminar held at NAB headquarters. BEA papers competition started and first papers presented at the annual meeting. Wallie Dunlap elected BEA president.



1977 Joe Dominick named editor of the *Journal of Broadcasting*. Internship booklet published in *Feedback* and distributed to BEA and NAB members. BEA assisted in the establishment of the Canadian BEA.

1978 *A Bibliography of Theses and Dissertations in Broadcasting: 1920-1973* compiled by Mike Kittross published by BEA. *Communications and the United States Congress, a Selectively Annotated Bibliography of Committee Hearing, 1870-1976* edited by George Brightbill and published by BEA. A management/sales/finance faculty seminar was held at NAB. Pat Cranston elected BEA president.

1979 Thom McCain named editor of the *Journal of Broadcasting*. Don Godfrey prepared a brief history of BEA to be published in Volume XXI of *Feedback*. BEA futures committee presents their report on the status and future direction of BEA.

1980 Clint Formby elected president of BEA. Programming and research faculty seminary held at NAB headquarters. BEA participated in selection of NATPE faculty summer internships.

1981 BEA board of directors meet with Canadian BEA board of directors in Vancouver. Broadcast regulation seminar held at NAB. Individual composite course outlines published in *Feedback* on a continuing basis.

1982 Ray Carroll appointed editor of *Feedback*. Texas BEA hosts a reception during the annual meeting. Don Kirkley elected BEA president. First annual Distinguished Education Service Award presented at annual meeting to Harold Niven.

1983 BEA publishes *A Directory of Broadcast Archives* compiled by Don Godfrey. Faculty internship started at WTNH-TV, WATE-TV, KOMO-TV, and the Voice of America. Programming faculty seminar held at Paramount Studios in Hollywood. Sydney Head presented the 1983 BEA DESA at the annual meeting. Peter Orne elected BEA president.

1984 *Journal of Broadcasting* name changed to *Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media*. Alan Rubin appointed editor of the journal. *Political Broadcasting: The 1984 Elections* faculty seminar held at NAB headquarters. Two Walter Paterson Trust Scholarships awarded in addition to the four NAB scholarships. Broadcast Pioneers underwrite awards for the history papers competition. Vince Wasilewski presented the 1984 BEA DESA at the annual meeting. Faculty internships held at WTNH-TV, KOMO-TV, and the Voice of America. James Lawrence Fly Scholarship established by Fly, Shuebruk, Gaguine, Boros, Schulking, and Bruan Law Firm. To be presented in 1985. The position of a full-time BEA executive established with headquarters at NAB. Bob Smith elected president of BEA.

1987 BEA launched full-time office at NAB headquarters and transitions from volunteer staff to two full-time staff. Louisa Nielsen hired at BEA executive director.

## PROFESSIONAL HONOR & BLIND REVIEW

**Thomas A. Mascaro**  
Documentary  
Division Chair

As the co-author of original research submitted to this year's (2006) BEA paper competition, I received the following typed comment from one reviewer:

*The best part of this paper is the exposition of the topic; it is clearly set-out [sic]. The rest of the paper appears to be a tendentious, angry, warmed-over Marxist screed against capitalism and free choice. If a student of mine submitted this paper it would have been returned without a grade and the student instructed to start over with a clear head and equable state-of-mind. The author of this paper should not be allowed anywhere near impressionable students. This is one of the most intellectually lazy works I have ever come across.*

I have had papers rejected before and survived with my self-esteem intact, so the fact that the paper was not accepted has zero impact on what I am about to say. In fact I used these silly remarks to illustrate to my graduate students how capricious the review process can be and to forewarn them about letting such responses distract them from their research. Because I am tenured, I feel I have a responsibility to probationary scholars to ensure that our business is objective, intellectual, and constructive.

It would have been nice to have the research received more favorably; however, I was not completely optimistic. The concept—placing the history of network documentary units in a very broad historical context that includes labor guilds and reaches back across centuries—is emerging. I remain confident it is a worthy historical framework for analyzing this particular aspect of broadcast journalism, which occupies a mere slice of time in the span of media history, and that eventually others will come to understand the value of this approach. My co-author and I had hoped for a more engaged, intellectual review of the contents and viewed the paper competition as an opportunity to share innovation and enjoy a constructive dialogue with peers. The two other reviewers' comments at least indicate an effort to come to terms with the paper.

I also value the anonymity of peer-review. This reviewer may be a friend, a valued colleague, someone I've shared meals with, even someone whose opinion I respect. Her/his identity is irrelevant—what *is* relevant is the professional character of the Broadcast Education Association's paper competition. Here is my *Feedback*:

This kind of response has no place in BEA or in academe. It is an abuse of the blind peer-review process. It adds nothing to the collegial dialogue of the field. It does nothing to improve the literature. It should have been returned to the reviewer with a note indicating: "The review process is meant to focus on the quality of the scholarship, not the personal opinions of the reviewer or the author. If you choose to volunteer to review submissions to the BEA paper competition, kindly focus your remarks on a critical review of the evidence, writing, and methodology. Otherwise your offer to review this or future papers for this division will be declined."

As the chair of the Documentary Division, I will propose this as policy for our future paper competitions and recommend the division adopts language in the by-laws to set out decorum for blind, peer review. I suggest other divisions do the same.

The comments section of a peer review in an academic association's paper competition is not a chat room or a personal web page for issuing anonymous blogs. Blind review is not intended to be a forum for self-important rants. [There is nothing "angry" in the paper and I am not a Marxist. I'm held in high esteem by my colleagues and students, including graduate students. The only evidence of "laziness" in this entire process is apparent from the reviewer's disingenuous treatment of this scholarship, which resulted from considerable effort and thought.] I would hate to think that any of my colleagues or graduate students would have their research dismissed in such a cavalier manner. And I worry that phrases like "warmed-over Marxist screed" and "impressionable students" derive from the playbooks of critics of Academe who are sowing the seeds of discontent at a time when the world so desperately needs to hear voices of reason.

At an AEJMC conference a few years ago, I attended the History Division paper competition where Dr. Craig Allen (Ariz. St. U) was the respondent. At the conclusion of the presentations, Craig, a longtime BEA member, rose and gave a thoughtful, erudite response to each of the several papers, including a summary of what we learned, where each author had succeeded, and which areas the authors would need to revisit to improve the papers. I marveled then at Craig's poise and professionalism and his approach has become my model for an effective collegial peer review. My hope is that I too deliver that kind of measured, constructive response to the research I'm asked to review and that it remains the single standard for all of us in Academe.

Thomas A. Mascaro  
Documentary Division Chair

**LOCKMAN, B., & SARVEY, D. (2005).**  
*PIONEERS OF CABLE TELEVISION.*  
**JEFFERSON, NC: MCFARLAND &  
 COMPANY.**

It's almost inconceivable that a cable system could exist with just one channel available for its subscribers. In the earliest days of cable television, just to receive one television channel, with clear reception, would have been considered a small miracle for viewers in the isolated rural valley areas of America. With its mountainous terrain, the authors claim that Pennsylvania was "the cradle of cable television" or, as it was known its formative years, Community Antenna Television (CATV). Originally, cable was considered a method to re-transmit the early broadcast television signals and was welcomed by broadcasters who profited from the extended signal coverage.

Each chapter contains a biographical sketch of one of these cable pioneers interwoven with information about how they built their rudimentary systems. These individuals came from various backgrounds—engineers, business entrepreneurs and even television dealers. Most were from small cities and towns. The authors describe them as "regular Joes." They became well known and respected in the industry. Some entered the cable business to "make a buck" and several had a more noble pursuit, such as the promoting educational television. Most started out with a "shoestring" operation and faced numerous challenges and obstacles.

The authors give adequate detail of the technical difficulties of launching a cable system. It is wonder any of the systems even existed after a period of time. Most antennas had to be placed on mountain tops and were subject to icing conditions and power losses. Cable lines had a tendency to break, thus disrupting all service to subscribers. These systems were built in the day where they were no microwave or satellite relays. Besides the many technical difficulties, it was not unusual for early operators to be faced with apathy from both financiers and the local community for this new service.

These pioneers had a significant impact in the growth of the cable industry. They became founders, members and directors of the National Cable Television Association and the Pennsylvania Cable Television Association, which was one of the first state cable organizations in the United States. Several individuals became famous beyond the cable industry. Milton Shapp, who was an early distributor of cable equipment for Jerrold Electronics in Philadelphia, became a two-term governor of the state of Pennsylvania. John Rigas established his Adelphia cable system in Coudersport, providing significant employment to a economically-depressed community in northern Pennsylvania. Adelphia became the nation's fifth-largest cable operator and expanded into other areas of telecommunications. Tragically, Rigas was eventually convicted for his role in a multi-billion dollar fraud that led to the collapse of Adelphia and was sentenced to 15 years in prison.

The book is important to the study electronic media history, not only because it covers the "roots" of what is now a multi-billion dollar industry, but that cable was

unique from its inception. Unlike radio and television, cable originally was a rural or small town phenomenon which eventually spread to urban areas, shaped by the entrepreneurial spirit of these individuals.

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**QUINN, S., & FILAK, V.F. (EDS.). (2005).**  
***CONVERGENT JOURNALISM: AN***  
***INTRODUCTION. BURLINGTON, MA.:***  
**FOCAL PRESS.**

If it is true that university journalism programs need to offer convergence skills, then *Convergent Journalism: An Introduction* is a text that deserves consideration for adoption.

This book answers the 5Ws and H of media convergence. Between Chapter One, where five forms of convergence are defined and Chapter 13 where the author “crystal-balls” the future of convergence, *Convergent Journalism* covers writing, graphics, photography, videography – even advertising and public relations. Chapters 2-12 tell readers how to *do* convergent journalism for print, broadcast and the Web.

The notes on the book’s back cover promise it will teach you how to “deliver news in any and all media.” Focus on the verb “deliver.” This book is about delivering the news, *not* reporting the news. *Convergent Journalism* tells you what to do with the information, once you have gathered it. Consider this text for an advanced reporting course, once the students have mastered some solid reporting skills.

The notes on the back cover also promise you will “master all the skills to be a converged journalist.” Not really. The title of the book: “*Convergent Journalism: An Introduction*” is accurate. This book is an introduction – a well-written, competently edited and thoughtfully designed introduction to convergent journalism.

The 11 authors – two of them the book’s editors – are all affiliated with Ball State University. Several authors are directly responsible for the success of NewsLink Indiana (<http://www.newslinkindiana.com>), which covers news for eight counties in East Central Indiana. Partners include Ball State Daily News, Indiana Public Radio and WIPB-TV. The service, created in 2003, is produced on the Ball State University campus in Muncie, Ind. It makes sense that the team responsible for making convergence happen at a major j-school came together to write a text for other j-schools to use.

Different authors wrote different chapters, each featuring the author’s expertise. For instance, Chapter Six: “Converged Graphics Across All Media” is written by Jennifer George-Palilonis, journalism instructor and Graphic Sequence coordinator at Ball State University – and the only female author in the book.

Each chapter is organized in the same easy-to-read, easy-to-teach format. Each chapter opens with a full-page photo, focusing the reader’s attention on the chapter’s topic. Printed in justified text in classic fonts, the chapter’s content is adequately researched, clearly written and punctuated with frequent-enough subheads (in most chapters) to make this text reader-friendly.

The occasional graphic or photo also breaks up the type. Of course, in the “Graphics” and “Photography” chapters, there are many graphics and photos to illustrate lessons taught in the narrative.

Chapter 10: “Multimedia Journalism,” written by one of the books editors Professor Stephen Quinn, has no graphics or photos and few subheads, making it a chore to read.

Each chapter ends with two important elements in any textbook: a reference or source list and at least two exercises that could be assigned as homework or used to prompt class discussion.

As is the problem with so many journalism texts, there is the danger that technical information in *Convergent Journalism* may already be dated. For instance, Chapter 9: “Editing for Motion Pictures” says: “You will learn even more” if you use the chapter “in connection with the Final Cut Pro editing system.” Today, yes...but the chapter is so much a how-to manual, that when the next version of the software is release, much of the chapter’s text may be rendered obsolete.

Although the chapters of this book are researched and citations are provided, each chapter is written from the point of view of its author. Each author incorporates his or her own analysis of how the industry is practicing convergence. Each author is “well versed on the theory of convergence,” the book states, and “many also practice their craft with media organizations.” So, the authors’ analyses are grounded in knowledge and experience.

*Convergent Journalism: An Introduction* gathers between its covers a thorough compilation of information about convergence as it is practiced in our industry today. It provides a comfortable mix of theory and practice. The book is written by authors who know what they are talking about – they practice what they preach. The book is designed by people who know what it is to teach a semester-long course to undergraduates.

Supplementing *Convergent Journalism* with readings from current periodicals, Web sources, TV and radio broadcasts and guest presenters could be a good way to prepare j-students to thrive in today’s media market.

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## THE IRTS BROADCAST SALES ASSOCIATE PROGRAM

A Diversity Initiative Designed to Give Graduating Seniors a Jumpstart on the Television and Radio Management Track

June 5 – August 4, 2006

The IRTS Foundation, which has long been devoted to increasing diversity in the media and entertainment industry, is seeking outstanding minority students in their senior year to participate in a nine-week summer sales training program. Those selected will receive travel to and from New York, housing, and a living allowance.

Held in tandem with the prestigious IRTS Summer Fellowship Program, IRTS Sales Associates will have an exclusive opportunity to participate in a sales training program traditionally reserved for actual station group employees.

The IRTS Sales Associate Program was initiated by IRTS elected Chairman Tom Kane, President and CEO of CBS Television Stations Group. According to Kane, “In order to achieve true diversity in our business, we must get more minorities into management, and sales continues to be a favored track to get there. We plan to put the IRTS Sales Associates through the same training program our employees compete to get into. The program will provide a truly unique opportunity to get a competitive edge in one of the most rewarding areas of our business.”

Because the majority of universities do not offer courses in broadcast sales, previous experience in broadcast sales is not necessary.

IRTS asks professionals in academe and business to encourage graduating seniors with the potential for success in broadcast sales to apply. IRTS Director of Academic Programs and Communications Amy Peloso explains, “We’re looking for Minority Men and Women who graduate in May or June of 2006, who seem to be well-suited for a career in sales. What exactly does that mean? Typically, those are individuals who are energetic, savvy, highly-motivated, self-starting, creative, outgoing and entrepreneurial.”

Interested individuals should be directed to the IRTS website <http://www.irts.org> for general information on the Summer Fellowship Program and email Amy Peloso at [apply@irts.org](mailto:apply@irts.org) for an application.

Should you have any questions or concerns, please contact Amy Peloso.



## **NAB/BEA ANNOUNCE FUTURE CONFERENCE DATES**

<u>Year</u>	<u>NAB Show</u>	<u>BEA Show</u>
2007	April 16-19	April 19-21
2008	April 14-17	April 17-29
2009	April 20-23	April 23-25
2010	April 12-15	April 15-17
2011	April 11-14	April 14-16
2012	April 16-19	April 19- 21
2013	April 8-11	April 11-13
2014	April 7-10	April 10-12
2015	April 13-16	April 16-18
2016	April 18-21	April 21-23
2017	April 24-27	April 27-29
2018	April 9-12	April 12-14
2019	April 15-18	April 18-20
2020	April 20-23	April 23-25

## **DSA WINNERS ANNOUNCED**

The Distinguish Scholar Award selection committee would like to announce that it has chosen 4 distinguished BEA members to be recognized this year. This is a list of some of America's most distinguished scholars in the field of mass media. The Awards will be given Thursday evening. They are:

Joseph Dominick - University of Georgia  
Susan Tyler Eastman - University of Indiana (Emeritus)  
Jennings Bryant - University of Alabama  
Joanne Cantor - University of Wisconsin (Emeritus)

Fritz Messere, Chair

## **WMA TO NAME BEST UNIVERSITY WEB SITE**

The Web Marketing Association has hosted the annual WebAward competition for Web site development for the past 10 years and we need your help in make college and universities aware that the call for entry deadline is May 31st. Participation in the WebAwards can help all types of higher education organizations benchmark their Web development efforts and provide a valuable marketing opportunity. Please consider this as a news item or as part of a larger trend story for Feedback.

If you have any questions please give me a call at 860-558-5423 or email President Bill Rice at [wrice@webaward.org](mailto:wrice@webaward.org)

## [ FEEDBACK INDEX ]

Ball State University graduate student Michelle Calka compiled this list of authors for past Feedback issues.

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- Buck, Christine.  
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# [ DIRECTORY ]

## [ COMMITTEES & TASK FORCES ]

---

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Doug Boyd, 5th year

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Cable Connect (Cable In the Classroom)	<a href="http://www.ciconline.com/default.htm">http://www.ciconline.com/default.htm</a>
Cablevision	<a href="http://www.reedtelevision.com/">http://www.reedtelevision.com/</a>
College Music Journal (CMJ)	<a href="http://www.cmj.com/">http://www.cmj.com/</a>
Editor & Publisher	<a href="http://www.editorandpublisher.com/eandp/index.jsp">http://www.editorandpublisher.com/eandp/index.jsp</a>
EQ Magazine	<a href="http://www.eqmag.com/">http://www.eqmag.com/</a>
Mix Magazine	<a href="http://www.mixonline.com/">http://www.mixonline.com/</a>
Multichannel News	<a href="http://www.multichannel.com/">http://www.multichannel.com/</a>
Production Weekly	<a href="http://www.productionweekly.com/site.html">http://www.productionweekly.com/site.html</a>
Pro Sound News	<a href="http://www.prosoundnews.com/">http://www.prosoundnews.com/</a>
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