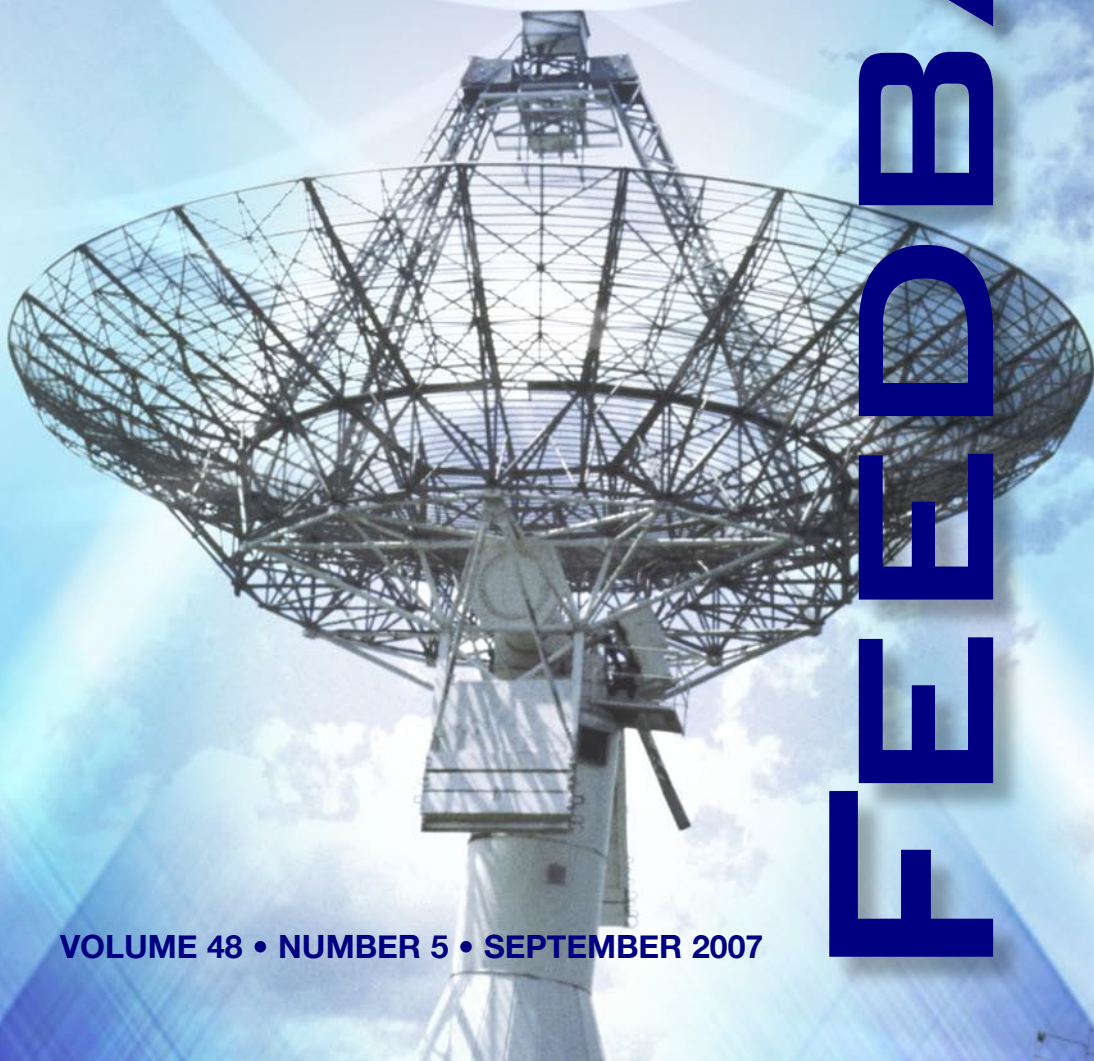


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# FEEDBACK

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## September 2007 (Vol. 48, No. 5)

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.

All communication regarding business, membership questions, information about past issues of Feedback and changes of address should be sent to the Executive Director, 1771 N. Street NW, Washington D.C. 20036.

### 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.
6. The editor will acknowledge receipt of documents within 48 hours and provide a response within four weeks.

### REVIEW GUIDELINES

1. Potential instructional materials that can be reviewed include books, computer software, CD-ROMs, guides, manuals, video program, audio programs and Web sites.
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3. Reviews must be 350-500 words in length.
4. The review must provide a full APA citation of the reviewed work.
5. The review must provide the reviewer's name, employer, professional rank and/or title, email address and complete mailing address.

### SUBMISSION DEADLINES

*Feedback* is scheduled, depending on submissions and additional material, to be posted on the BEA Web site the first day of January, March, May, July, September and November. To be considered, submissions should be submitted 60 days prior to posting date for that issue.

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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# HOOKING UP WITH MY FIVE BEST FRIENDS FROM WEST BEV: AN ANALYSIS OF SOAPNET PROMOTIONAL ACQUISITION, RETENTION, AND RECYCLING STRATEGIES

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## INTRODUCTION/GROUNDING

I figured I had just cause to worry when I heard the *Beverly Hills 90210* gang was moving. For six years, Brandon, Brenda, Steve, Dylan, and Kelly had made their home on the Fox-owned FX Network. However, this exclusive off-network syndication arrangement came to an end in 2004, and by January 2005 the show landed on Disney/ABC owned SoapNet.

Knowing a bit about SoapNet's agenda and reputation, I figured I was messing with a potentially fearsome time bandit that would cause me to adopt even more programming into my valuable viewing schedule. As such, I decided to do some investigating about this new network so I could see what I was getting myself into.

## NETWORK BACKGROUND

SoapNet was launched by the Disney-owned ABC Capital Cities in 2000 (Chunovic, 2002), with the primary goal of multiplexing same-day ABC daytime soaps in prime time. According to Sean Bratches, president of affiliate sales and marketing for sister stations Disney and ESPN Networks, SoapNet was "a concept that is easy to articulate to our affiliates and has clearly resonated with soap fans" (Edry, 2005, p. 4). Indeed, this has proved to be the case, as by 2005 the New York-based network had grown from its initial million subscribers (Oei, 2003, p. 11) to being available in more than 40 million homes and was ranked sixth among cable networks by Nielson Media Research and first in frequency among women viewers aged 18 to 49, averaging almost seven hours per month (Helmes, 2005, p. 7).

Over this time the network augmented its core primetime offerings of three ABC soaps (*All My Children*, *General Hospital*, and *One Life to Live*) with broadcast competitor NBC's *Days of*

*Our Lives* and original productions that reflect SoapNet's unique niche.

Three of the most interesting of these original offerings are

- *I Wanna Be a Soap Star*, a reality show in which the winner receives a thirteen-week contract to appear on a daytime soap.
- *Soap Talk*, a one-hour talk show hosted by former *Days of Our Lives* star Lisa Rinna and *One Life to Live*'s Ty Treadway, provides a venue of exposure for current soap actors (Carter Talk, 2005).
- *Soapography*, a program focusing on industry-specific actors, modeled off A&E cornerstone *Biography* (Carter Formula, 2005).

## PROMOTIONAL ANALYSIS

Having garnered a clearer picture of the foe I was facing in my quest to follow my parasocial pals I carefully began taping *90210* episodes so could I examine how the network lured in viewers with its image and offerings.

The first thing I noticed in my examination of their promotional collateral was the station promotions. I found two distinct styles of station image promotions that SoapNet used. Live action spots used extremely quick editing techniques (one seven-second promo featured ten cuts while a shorter five-second one used seven) to reinforce the transition from life's hectic pace to demonstrating the relaxation and escape one could find watching SoapNet.

Both spots reinforced the network's tagline of "SoapNet: A new way to watch soaps" via a visual title and a male voiceover. In both of these promos, a television was shown in the background, ostensibly airing SoapNet. However, due to my admitted lack of knowledge about specific soap operas (apart from *90210*), I was unable to tell if the promos were also promoting a specific program or even an actually existing one.

Although these promotions were by example targeted toward women, they seemed to target two distinct age demographics: women in their twenties (career women) and women in their forties (child care). From a strict benefit analysis, these promotions were moderately successful.

In comparison, the second type of station image promotions, a series of ten-second animated spots, were interesting if not as effective. Grouped as "SoapNet Presents: Crescent Valley," each featured a minimalist vignette involving the common soap opera theme of sex. Each vignette involved at one level or another an ostensibly hunky male named Rick (Rick in bed with one woman, Rick being invited to rub lotion on another woman's back, and a woman talking on the phone to Rick). These situations all end with a cliffhanger customary to the genre, and appear to be episodic in nature, geared toward reinforcing the image of the network and its overarching themes rather than providing resolution.

In regard to acquisitional promotions – introducing and enticing viewers to sample a new program – SoapNet faced the challenge of having to introduce characters in such a way to pique viewer interest in the new program. The most innovative example I found of this was a fifteen-second promo that appeared on the surface to be a promotion for SoapNet's reality program, *I Wanna Be a Soap Star*. Here, the promo details the contest from thousands of entrants to the dozen who were chosen to participate. However, when the promotion finally focuses on Alec, the ultimate winner of the contest, it abruptly shifts to promoting *All My Children*, the soap he received a contract

for. Arguably, this promotion works well not only for viewers who had followed Alec on *I Wanna Be a Soap Star* but also as a means for introducing a character who could act as an emissary for introducing new viewers to the inhabitants of Pine Valley.

SoapNet also attempts to entice new viewers via detailing the backstory of individual characters. An example of this appears in a twenty-second promotion focusing on *General Hospital* villainess Helena Cassadine. Compared to the bait-and-switch example provided in the *Who Wants To Be A Soap Star/All My Children* promo, the design here is very straightforward, featuring animated character trait titles (vengeful, murderous, etc.) that are reiterated with a male voiceover and reinforced with a short clip depicting Helena demonstrating the stated trait “God’s wrath will pale in comparison to mine,” or “I could have had her killed many times.” The male voiceover then concludes the introduction with the warning “Helena Cassadine. Watch her or watch your back.” The promo concludes with an aural and CG title invitation to watch *General Hospital* and the time it is on.

While introducing character history may prove to be effective in limited doses, some examples of this type of promo go way overboard, incurring viewer overload. A good example of this was found in the depiction of *One Life to Live*’s Buchanan family. This animated thirty-second promo, voiced over with a fast-paced aural track, traces the tangled and intertwining storylines of eight characters, including how family patriarch Asa Buchanan ended up marrying a former love interests of one of his two sons, or something like that. After multiple viewings, that was the best I could make out. Moreover, the complexity of the promotion is such that it leaves the new viewer unsure of what the program is. Although this promotion ostensibly can be classified in the acquisitional category, I feel it would be more directly effective for current or lapsed viewers, reminding them of the backstory rather than enticing and hooking new viewers.

Retention promotions tended to be more straightforward, consisting of thematically organized clips and voiceovers giving viewers reason to stay tuned to the next offering. Occasionally, these promos were dual branded for purpose of viewer maintenance as well as recycling. An example of this was demonstrated in a *90210* twenty-second promo that prominently hammered home the show’s primary airtime of five p.m. via an animated clock (gearing it toward recycling), while stating that another episode was coming up next (maintenance as this was aired during the Saturday morning block of the show).

An example of a strict recycling promotion can be found in the 20-second promo for “1 Day With...” in which Wally Kurth (Ned of *General Hospital*) drops in on Kassie DePaiva (Blair on *One Life to Live*) for some off-set conversation and southern-style cooking. The promo consists of cuts with dialogue, along with a voiceover and an animated title screen showing airing time. Ideally, this promo would be of value-added interest to *One Life* or *General Hospital* fans who wished more information on one of the characters. However, given the priority of SoapNet to plug its own specialty programming, the promo is being actively and deliberately aired outside of these two programs (as shown through the voiceover tag of “today at 6:30.”)

SoapNet’s promotion of its website appeared in two different ways. In some promotions, a crawl or CG appeared, plugging the website as a source of additional information. An example of this occurred in the acquisitional bait-and-switch *I Wanna Be a*

*Soap Star/All My Children* promo as viewers were encouraged to visit SoapNet.com to view the blog ostensibly kept by the show's winner. However, SoapNet is the first network to my knowledge to make the concerted jump from promoting its website as a value-added information resource for viewers to that of an exclusive source for selling SoapNet-branded items. Conducted through a twenty-second animated promo, this direct address promo entices viewers to channel their inner soap star" by logging onto the network's website and purchasing SoapNet garb emblazoned with thematically related slogans such as "Never underestimate the importance of a well planned alibi," "Don't Blame Me, My Evil Twin Did It" and a fetching number depicting a bride in groom with "I don't" written underneath and "Wedding Interruptus" on the back.

A visit to SoapNet.com reveals a very complex and fast-paced website. Here, visitors can find detailed information about any of the network's offerings, with primary visual emphasis placed on the network's original offerings, while textual attention emphasizes current multiplexed ABC offerings. Multiple crawls provide information about items ostensibly of interest to soap fans and some pages feature prominent use of streamed promos as well as ads for non-related products such as shampoo and lip gloss.

Being a person of advancing age, I found the default font size too small to read without the aid of glasses. Furthermore, while the site performed quickly enough via a broadband connection, I suspect visitors using a dial-up connection would soon find it to be less nimble given the loading time of all of its attached bells and whistles.

A final note of concern about the site stems from the fact that although they solicit user comments via an electronic contact us box, a query to them about their promotional agendas and philosophies written at the onset of this analysis went unanswered.

## CONCLUSIONS

I fully admit that I am not an audience member SoapNet has targeted for capture. This is, however, less about my gender or age than my lack of utility and knowledge about the product the network offers. However, my analysis of a sampling of the network's promotional collateral seems to allay my initial fears that one program would lead to an unbridled adoption of other soap operas. Rather my findings seem to demonstrate the network's promotions are strongly geared toward retaining current viewers of shows and reintroducing lapsed viewers to the programs they were once familiar with. Although many of the soap operas on SoapNet share common themes and even aesthetic production similarities, each exists as its own discrete universe, making attempts to introduce characters and plotlines falling outside of viewer knowledge bases to other soap operas ineffectual.

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# SUMMERTIME NEWS – A CASE STUDY: DEVELOPING A CURE FOR THE DEARTH OF DAILY DEADLINES IN BROADCAST EDUCATION TO MEET AN UNMET COMMUNITY NEED

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This work has not  
been presented at a  
prior venue

This case study outlines one college's effort to extend its regular daily student newscast into the summer by offering an institute to broadcast journalism and meteorology students at schools that do not produce a daily newscast. Goals for the program included giving qualified students the experience and responsibility of a broadcast news job within an academic setting and providing additional local news coverage to fourteen Vermont towns surrounding the campus.

## DAILY DEADLINES: A MISSING CURRICULAR COMPONENT?

Graduates of broadcast journalism education programs who find work in their field immediately face daily deadlines. Yet very few have faced that performance pressure during their undergraduate studies.

There are roughly 460 journalism and mass communications programs in the United States. The University of Georgia's Grady College of Journalism & Mass Communication enrollment survey found that 5.6 percent of the 48,764 undergraduate degrees handed out in 2005 were telecommunications related, but the exact number of broadcast journalism degrees/programs remains shrouded in the statistics.<sup>1</sup>

A review of the AEJMC 2006-2007 Journalism & Mass Communication Directory finds about 231 of the college and university listings include mention of some form of broadcast journalism training—that training covers basic newsgathering and video storytelling techniques. Student productions in these programs are wide-ranging; from a newsmagazine show produced periodically to newscasts of various lengths on various broadcast schedules. In nearly every case the undergraduate program will include some type of internship at a professional broadcast outlet to give students a taste of the real world.

A June 2002 review of membership rosters of the Broadcast

Education Association (BEA), the Accrediting Council for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication (ACEJMC), the Society of Professional Journalists (SPJ), the National Student Television Association, as well as listings of mass communications schools on Google and TVRadioWorld websites identified two hundred ninety-nine colleges and universities with some form of broadcast education. A survey of those schools' websites that summer found only thirty appeared to have a student-produced local newscast originating from their campus at least four times a week. At the time, that student broadcast schedule met the definition of "daily newscast" for the SPJ Mark of Excellence awards.<sup>2</sup>

The daily newscasts uncovered in the 2002 website review came in many different forms. Some were student clubs. Some only covered campus news. Some did not broadcast to the surrounding community. Some were going dark due to curricular changes spurred by "convergence." Only about a dozen were using the live daily local newscast and its unforgiving deadline pressure as a component of their curriculum. One of those was Lyndon State College.

## THE LYNDON EXPERIENCE

Since 1979, nearly nine-thousand cable subscribers in 14 Vermont towns have to come to expect a live, local television news report from Lyndon State College students on a daily basis. The coverage area is two hours away from major media centers in Manchester, New Hampshire (Nielsen Market #7), Burlington, Vermont (Nielsen Market #90) and Montreal, Quebec (Canada) so the LSC students are *the* local television news outlet for the towns ranging in size from 621 to 7,560 residents.

This community information service provides a capstone experiential learning experience for students enrolled in the television studies and meteorology programs at Lyndon State. While the newscasts are "on-air for twelve to thirteen weeks in the fall and spring semesters, the newscasts do not air during the summer. Long-time viewers who help evaluate student performance through Lyndon's unique community ratings project frequently wish for more coverage. "I watch everyday and record you on my VCR," wrote a female viewer (age 35-54.) "I will miss you all over the summer." Another female viewer (age 65-plus) said simply, "We miss them during vacations."

Other programs with daily student newscasts have had similar requests. The Dean of the College of Mass Communications and Information Studies at the University of South Carolina Charles Bierbauer says the state's educational television network was interested in broadcasting the USC students' newscast statewide but required it be on the air year-round. Bierbauer says the school's two semester academic calendar just couldn't provide the number of students necessary to produce the newscast.<sup>3</sup> On-going staffing concerns helped ground Ball State's ambitious 2003 plan to launch a student-produced 30-minute nightly newscast in the wake of a \$ 21-million dollar grant from the Lilly Endowment.<sup>4</sup>

Over the years, Lyndon State faculty discussed what it might take to extend student newscasts into the summer to serve the community. A brain storming exercise in early 2006 seemed to yield a potential solution. A solution that would offer upper level broadcast journalism students at schools without a daily newscast a chance to experience the reality of their first news job within the friendly confines of a college program.

## THE LSC-TV MODEL

Lyndon State College is a liberal arts college located in the upper Connecticut River valley a little more than an hour north of Dartmouth College. Approximately twelve hundred students are enrolled. Television Studies majors make up about 10 percent of the student body. The television studies and meteorology programs are considered signature programs when it comes to recruitment, retention, and marketing within the Vermont State Colleges' system.

Lyndon State is literally grounded in telecommunications history. The campus is built on the former Speedwell Estates – the Vermont summer home of Theodore N. Vail, president of American Telephone & Telegraph who oversaw construction of the first coast-to-coast telephone system.

The television studies program began as a media specialization component of teacher training at the school in 1972. Tape recorded student productions began appearing on the local cable system in the mid-1970s about the same time the meteorology program arrived on campus as a refugee from Belknap College in New Hampshire.

Live broadcasts by student newscasters and meteorologists began in fall of 1979 thanks to a \$70-thousand dollar federal grant underwriting a microwave link to the head-end of the local cable system. Live broadcasts have been part of the curriculum ever since.

These days, the LSC-TV capstone experience involves nine different courses<sup>5</sup> taught by six faculty and staff in two departments. In addition, three courses occurring every other semester<sup>6</sup> contribute stories to the *News 7* newscast.

The live newscast begins at 5:30pm and is 30-minutes long. The use of CNN feed pieces is discouraged unless students are able to “localize” the CNN stories. Campus-based stories are also discouraged unless they have relevance to off-campus viewers. The student meteorologists create their own weather forecasts. The “mets” are graded on their forecasting ability as well as their presentation.

The live 5:30 p.m. newscast is broadcast on the local public access channel, streamed on the web, and recorded for replay at 10 p.m. Students produce a live two-minute *Newsbreak* at 3 p.m. The cable system reaches more than twice as many households as the smallest Nielsen DMA of Glendive, Montana.

The student newsroom opens at 8 a.m. weekdays and closes at 9:30 p.m. Monday through Thursday. Students in the practicum courses are assigned three shifts a week at the start of each semester.<sup>7</sup> The shifts are scheduled so as not to conflict with other courses. Upper level students must also provide weekend coverage. Practica students attend one class each week and have one-on-one sessions with instructors. Typically between 35 and 50 students work at *News 7* each semester. The newscast has won over sixty regional and national awards since 1995. The program was named best student television newscast in the nation by the Society of Professional Journalists in 1997 and the Academy of Television Arts & Sciences Foundation in 2004.<sup>8</sup>

## ALTERING THE MODEL FOR A SUMMER 7

In modifying the successful LSC-TV model for a potential summer institute, the first question to answer is, “What is the minimum number of students required to produce the current line-up of *News 7* newscasts in the summer?”

By dividing the news day into two shifts (8 a.m. to 6 p.m. and 1 p.m. to 9:30 p.m.)

instead of three, and then assigning reporters and photographers to existing ENG kits, rotating people through all of the existing producing, anchoring, master control, pre-production and studio positions, the answer was ten reporters, ten photographers, and one meteorologist.

On-campus housing dictated the maximum number of participants. The summer institute students would live on a single floor of a new dorm, so maximum enrollment was set at twelve reporters, twelve photographers, and three meteorologists.

Three days of orientation to the LSC-TV newsroom, its non-linear editing facilities, studio configuration and coverage area followed by five weeks of newscasts would result in 300 hours of work for each student. Using Lyndon's ratio of internship work hours to college credit awarded meant participating students would be eligible for up to six credits at the discretion of their home institution. Five members of the existing TVS/Met instructional team would oversee the program.

To help provide continuity with the Lyndon State undergraduate program, three teaching assistants selected from the regular *News 7* team would help *Summer 7* students meet their daily deadlines and negotiate residence hall life: one representing the editorial side of the house, one from the production side of the house, and one to be the resident assistant in the dorm. In addition to explaining how the Lyndon system works, the student teaching assistants would have a vested interest in making sure equipment and facilities were being properly used by the *News 7* short-timers.

Existing Vermont State Colleges' tuition, room and board rates put the package price for the summer institute at \$4,251 for a non-Vermont resident student and \$3,465 total for in-state students. Participants would have to underwrite transportation to LSC, but mileage would be reimbursed for students using personal cars to cover stories. Instructor payment rates were set to guarantee college overhead was covered and a small profit would accrue to the television studies department budget.

## **FLOATING THE CONCEPT**

Armed with a preliminary okay from the academic dean, a TVS department member handed out nearly thirty brochures to people from local broadcast outlets, news associations and twenty-five colleges and universities at the AEJMC Convention in San Francisco in August of 2006.

The brochure touted an "Ultra-Internship Summer Program for 24 students ready to take total responsibility for live local news coverage on a daily basis..." with an estimated cost of \$4500 per student. The brochure stressed the concept was designed for third-year college students with basic competency in writing, reporting, performance, photography, and editing (as well as non-traditional students and journalists early in their broadcast career.) Those seeking to enroll would have to submit a resume reel with a job-like application to get in the program, and their most recent broadcast journalism professor must be listed as a reference.

Nearly everyone who received a brochure at the AEJMC convention declared a favorable interest in this type of program. The Lyndon faculty member was unable to determine how much of this was professional kindness as opposed to a clear interest.

Initial contacts in other venues during the spring of 2006 with colleagues and students at schools like Emerson, Keene State, Quinnipiac, and the University of Connecticut did indicate students in those programs would find such a summer

program attractive as it would let them further refine their broadcast journalism skills and create material for a high-quality resume tape for use in finding the first job.

## **MAKING THE PITCH**

The favorable reaction to the summer institute trial balloon prompted the Lyndon administration to give the green light to proceed. Armed with a \$500 promotion budget, the TVS Department attempted a guerilla-marketing campaign. A postcard and poster were designed. One thousand cards were printed professionally. Posters were printed in-house on a college color copier as the design and card printing had decimated the promotions budget.

In March 2007, postcards were mailed to 276 schools identified as having some form of broadcast journalism program. A letter with three postcards for distribution was mailed to 65 contacts made while floating the summer institute concept the prior spring and summer. Finally, thirty posters with some postcards were sent to 30 schools in the northeast that were thought to be most likely to provide participants.

As the direct mail effort commenced, a summer institute webpage was established off the LSC-TV *News 7* streaming website. It listed answers to frequently asked questions about the program and had buttons to download the universal application and a meteorology specific question page for applicants. A download counter was installed to track application requests.

TVS faculty and students took posters and postcards to conventions and conferences in March and April 2007 for distribution.<sup>9</sup> A blurb was placed in the SPJ Leads e-newsletter. Emails were sent to student television news operations in New England, student chapters of SPJ Region 1, and members of the BEA Media Advisors group.

## **INFORMAL RESPONSE TO MARKETING**

Nine of the 371 promotional pieces mailed were returned to sender. 153 applications were downloaded by the April 30<sup>th</sup> deadline for submittal indicating a return rate of over 15 percent on the one thousand postcards distributed. In the direct-mail business this rate would be considered extraordinary as 3 percent is considered very good.<sup>10</sup>

Two students from Wisconsin & Georgia sought more information about the Institute via e-mail after reading the SPJ Leads newsletter. The institute dates were added to the events calendar at the Center for Integration and Improvement of Journalism's homepage thanks to a mailing to the website editor.<sup>11</sup>

Face-to-face meetings at conferences produced a number of interesting reactions; a lead on a possible alliance with a Massachusetts community college program; an assistant dean of a communications department expressing interest, but needing to clear distribution of materials with her higher-ups; a student at a school without a daily newscast noting the summer package price was \$500 less than he pays for just six credits at his institution; a professor from a Michigan program seeking answers to questions posed by his students who were intrigued by earlier mailings; and a request to submit the case study you are reading now for publication.

Two posters were removed from tables in the Las Vegas convention center either by competitors or for souvenirs, as the posters were very colorful in a sea of blah.

## ACTUAL RESPONSE TO MARKETING

The planned Summer Institute (June 27 - August 2, 2007) did not occur. Only one application was received and while the meteorology candidate would have qualified for the program, there were no applications for the reporter and photographer positions.

Email inquiries to the two student reporters who had sought further information as to why they did not apply went unanswered.

Theories as to why the lack of applicants included the institute being a first-year start-up; difficulty in arranging transportation to and during the session; and the time commitment (38 precious summer days.)

However, the program design and price-point seem to be appropriate in light of curricular goals to be achieved and other summer institutes and internships offered to broadcast journalism students.

## DISCUSSION AND NEXT STEPS

The failure to launch the institute was a big disappointment to the faculty who were looking forward to working with *Summer 7* students without the distraction of other classes. It was also a disappointment to some *News 7* students who had hoped to have teaching assistant jobs over the summer. LSC-TV's broadcast technician was not as downcast. The lack of a summer newscast schedule took the pressure off plans to continue the TVS program's analog to digital conversion by replacing the classic Grass Valley 110 switcher with a new Kayak board over the summer. *News 7* viewers were not disappointed because they were not alerted to the effort to bring them an additional five weeks of local coverage.

The administration took heart in the fact the Lyndon State College television studies and meteorology departments now have higher visibility and name recognition within the academy among programs offering similar educational opportunities. The Dean has asked that the Institute be offered for enrollment again in 2008 (25 June to 1 August tentative.)

It appears the summer institute concept outlined here is attractive to many,<sup>12</sup> but the 2007 promotional effort was unable to entice the minimum ten reporters and ten photographers needed to launch. The TVS Department will be refining existing mailing lists and researching other avenues so that promotional materials next year might go directly to students who would benefit from the program.

It also appears more colleges and universities are taking a look at integrating a daily



Fig. 1 – Basic postcard & poster art for 2007 *Summer 7* Institute promotional materials. Art will be modified for proposed 2008 session to run from June 25<sup>th</sup> to August 1<sup>st</sup>.

newscast into their curriculum. In the wake of the *Summer 7* promotional effort, a number of broadcast journalism programs<sup>13</sup> have contacted the Lyndon State TVS department asking how LSC-TV works and expressing a desire to add daily deadlines to their broadcast journalism curriculum to help students better prepare for the rigors of their profession.

## MORE BACKGROUND

You can see more information about the Lyndon State College Television Studies Department program and staff on the web at...

<http://www.lsc.vsc.edu/tvs/index.swf>

You can view past student LSC-TV newscasts on the web at...

[www.lyndonstate.edu/news7](http://www.lyndonstate.edu/news7)

You can contact the author at...

[Timothy.Lewis@lyndonstate.edu](mailto:Timothy.Lewis@lyndonstate.edu)

<sup>1</sup> Becker, L. B., Vlad, T., Tucker, M., & Pelton, R. (2006). *2005 Annual Survey of Journalism & Mass Communication Graduates*. Athens, Georgia: University of Georgia. Presentation handout at AEJMC Convention, San Francisco, California - August 2006

<sup>2</sup> The SPJ Mark of Excellence Awards dropped the "Daily Newscast" television category in 2005. [www.spj.org/a-moe.asp](http://www.spj.org/a-moe.asp)

<sup>3</sup> Conversation with author at AEJMC Convention, San Antonio, Texas - August 2005

<sup>4</sup> Miller, A. (11 Jan 2005, 2/1/06). *NewsLink Indiana ends in May: University does not plan to renew 4 faculty contracts*. Retrieved 17 June, 2007, from [http://www.bsudailynews.com/home/index.cfm?event=displayArticle&ustory\\_id=0f26cae0-d2ee-4fd5-ba6f-3be467b40477](http://www.bsudailynews.com/home/index.cfm?event=displayArticle&ustory_id=0f26cae0-d2ee-4fd5-ba6f-3be467b40477); Koch, G. (2005, January 11). Ball State pulls plug on NewsLink Indiana. *The Star Press*. <http://www.thestarpress.com/articles/5/032287-3335-004.html>

<sup>5</sup> The LSC-TV capstone experience is made up sophomore, junior and senior practica in the broadcast news and production & design concentrations; two performance courses, and the broadcast meteorology class within Lyndon's meteorology department.

<sup>6</sup> The every other semester courses include a one-person band course, a video journalism course, and an I-Team special projects course.

<sup>7</sup> Sophomore and Junior practicum students on the broadcast news concentration must do three shifts a week in the newsroom selecting from the 8a-1p, 1p-6p, or 5p-9:30p slots for the 3 credit courses. The Senior practicum students in the 6 to 9 credit courses must do three full days in the newsroom. On one of those days, the student will produce the newscast. Students in the production and design concentration crew the studio in the Sophomore practicum; shoot and edit nightside stories in the Junior practicum; and in the Senior practicum they do pre-production graphics work, are dayside photographers and editors as well as directors and tech directors during the newscasts.

<sup>8</sup> [www.emmys.com/foundation/collegewinners/2005collegetv.php](http://www.emmys.com/foundation/collegewinners/2005collegetv.php) - the national student Emmy award for LSC-TV *News 7* came after a third place finish in the competition the year before [www.emmys.com/foundation/collegewinners/2004collegetv.php](http://www.emmys.com/foundation/collegewinners/2004collegetv.php)

<sup>9</sup> Northeastern Storm Conference in Springfield, MA; NPPA Northern Short Course, Warwick, RI; CMA/CBI Conference in NYC; AP/RTNDA/Emerson Conference, Boston MA; New England Educational Assessment Network meeting

at UMass-Amherst; SPJ Region 1 Convention at Hofstra, Uniondale, NY; BEA Convention, Las Vegas, NV

<sup>10</sup> The Summer Institute webpage link was taken off the *News 7* streaming website on May 1<sup>st</sup> but the downloads from the hidden page continued. Another ten were recorded in the next six days and they continued into the summer (181 as of 6/12/07) leading us to believe that some form of automated scanning program may have been clicking on the application button and thus distorting the return rate calculation.

<sup>11</sup> [www.cijj.org](http://www.cijj.org)

<sup>12</sup> Faculty at the University of South Carolina are closely watching Lyndon's efforts with an eye to offering a similar summer institute at their campus.

<sup>13</sup> St. Bonaventure, Ithaca, and Utica have all sought advice about daily student newscasts from the LSC TVS Department. Representatives from SUNY Plattsburgh and Hofstra have also indicated a desire to join the small group of undergraduate programs with daily deadlines.

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# PODCASTING VS. BROADCASTING: AN ANALYSIS OF LISTENER PERVASIVENESS, ADVERTISING REVENUE, AND REGULATORY CONSIDERATIONS

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Media Division  
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## INTRODUCTION

In contrast to podcasting, the modern broadcasting industry has been in existence since the 1920s. In 2001, technological advancements allowed for audio files to be transferred from web pages to computers and this eventually became known as “podcasting.” In 2005, the editors of the *New Oxford American Dictionary* named “podcast” the word of the year due to the rapid adoption of podcasting technology. The word “podcast” is a combination of the word “iPod,” which is a popular device that downloads audio files from the Internet, and the word “broadcasting” since many of the audio files downloaded from the Internet are similar to programs heard on radio.

A podcast, or an MP3 file, is simply an audio file that has been placed on web pages for consumers to access and listen to at a convenient time. These audio files can range from small files that are songs to larger files that are actual programs similar to radio programming. As Kantor (2006) noted, what makes MP3 files unique is that the audio files are included in RSS, or Really Simple Syndication, feeds that allow consumers to be automatically notified when new audio files have been posted to a web site of interest to the consumer.

As a result of this technology, consumers can listen to podcasts at their convenience. Traditional terrestrial broadcasting does not offer consumers this flexibility, or time shifting. If a listener misses a favorite radio show, then he must wait until the following day or week when the show is programmed. Podcasts significantly change this listening paradigm by offering consumers the ability to access programming and listen to it at a time that is convenient to their schedules.

Unlike traditional broadcasting, podcasting expands programming possibilities and provides opportunities for individuals, not

just radio stations owned by large corporations, to produce and distribute programming to be consumed by the masses. Kantor (2006) noted anyone “with a microphone and a PC can create [a podcast], and there are plenty of great shows. After all, it’s a world full of talent but only so many time slots on the airwaves” (p. 2). Moreover, Kantor suggested “podcasting is another step towards the Internet being the great equalizer... It’s another way that the idea of ‘watch-when-we-tell-you-to’ broadcasting is going away, being replaced by the ‘watch-when-you-want’ model” (p. 2).

## **LISTENER PERVASIVENESS**

The iPod’s range of consumer appeal spans from children to adults and from average individuals to celebrities such as U.S. President George W. Bush and the United Kingdom’s Queen Elizabeth II (Wilkinson, 2005; Angell, 2005). In 2006, in the annual Student Monitor’s Lifestyle and Media Study survey, it was revealed that “iPods” were ranked by college students as the number one “in” thing on campuses with 73 percent of college students mentioning the device. The study revealed that iPods were more popular among Hispanics and women. Only once in the history of the survey, in 1997, was “beer” displaced as the number one “in” thing on college campuses by the “Internet” (Snider, 2006).

Holahan (2006) asserted: “No doubt about it, podcasting is growing in popularity. More people than ever are downloading audio files for listening on music players and other electronic devices” (p. 1). Studies indicate that more than a billion songs have been downloaded for iPod use worldwide (Smith, 2006). In 2005, the Pew Internet and American Life Project found that 11 percent of Americans, or about 22 million people, own iPods. The report found that 6 million Americans have listened to podcasts (Rainie & Madden, 2005). It is predicted that by 2010 more than 12.3 million households will regularly download podcasts to iPods and other MP3 players as broadband Internet access reaches 62 percent of American households (Schadler, 2005). By the end of 2007, the Diffusion Group predicts that 21.7 million Americans, or 10 percent of those using the internet, will download podcasts.

Podcasting is even being marketed to teens and pre-teens. From Disney’s “High School Musical” to Nickelodeon’s “Zoey 101,” children are finding more and more podcast content available to them. Bulik (2006) stated iPods “started out as a must-have for 20- and 30-something hipsters [but] is today most popular with teens and even pre-teens” (p. 3). Good (2005) asserted that any “new kid born today will never select to listen to radio over accessing her own MP3 playlist or personalized streaming radio station on the net. There is just no comparison” (p. 2). Bridge Ratings Analysis (2007) found that radio listenership declined slightly since the introduction of iPods and MP3 technology among 12-21 year olds and 18-34 year olds.

Although a slight decline in listenership has been experienced, the broadcasting industry continues to maintain a robust audience with 99% of American homes having radios, 95% of American cars having radios, and 40% of Americans listening to the radio at some point each day between the hours of 6:00 a.m. and midnight (Biagi, 2005). Nonetheless, broadcasters have embraced podcast technology by offering podcast programs that are not copyright protected. Radio stations WREK, KOMO, and WGBH became the first to offer podcasts on a regular basis for its listeners and many more have followed.

## **ADVERTISING REVENUE**

To advertisers, demographics are important and podcasts offer advertisers a key demographic. Carnegie (2006) noted that younger demographics are more likely to embrace new technology, such as podcasting, than older demographics. Carnegie found:

Web users between the ages 18-24 are nearly twice as likely as the average Web user to download audio podcasts, followed by users in the 25-34 and 35-44 age groups, who were also more likely than the average Web user to do audio podcasting...Web users above the age of 45 were less likely than average to engage in podcasting of either sort (p. 1).

The demographics least likely to engage in downloading podcasts are the demographics that traditional broadcasters easily attract and maintain as a listener base.

Perhaps as a result of podcasting primarily attracting a younger demographic, Shields (2007) asserted that podcasting is “poised for a major growth spurt in ad dollars, despite the fact that the young medium’s usage has failed to match the recent proliferation of Apple’s iPod and other MP3 playing devices” (p. 6). Furthermore, Shields (2007) stated “spending on podcasting advertising will quintuple over the next five years, from a paltry \$80 million base in 2006 to a \$400 million market in 2011” (p. 6). Reports indicate that advertising revenues for radio have declined. In the first quarter of 2007, radio advertising spending declined 2.1% while internet advertising increased 7.7% in the first quarter (TNS Media Intelligence, 2007).

Additionally, Shields (2007) suggested new software developed by Google, which will allow average podcasters to easily integrate advertising into their podcasts, will help to further increase advertising spending on podcasts. Advertisers will have plenty of programming to choose from as it is estimated that there are nearly 90,000 podcasts available to consumers. There are nearly 90 million iPods in the hands of American consumers. In contrast, there are only about 12,000 radio stations nationally (Biagi, 2005).

Targeted messages are desirable to advertisers when trying to persuade consumers. Accordingly, podcasts offer an attractive avenue for advertisers to reach consumers. Anderson (2005) noted that advertisers “like the fact that listeners must elect to receive the content; it means they are engaged in the topic of the podcast. Plus, there are the added benefits of on-demand and portability” (p. 18). Another attractive aspect of podcasting for advertisers is that Podtrac is one of several companies that attempts to accurately measure the amount of listeners podcasts receive to determine advertising reach and effectiveness. This is similar to broadcasting’s Arbitron and Nielsen ratings that measure audience levels.

## **REGULATORY CONSIDERATIONS**

The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) has regulatory powers over broadcasting because of the limited number of frequencies on the electromagnetic spectrum. Broadcasting frequencies are a scarce commodity. In contrast, the same reasoning cannot be applied to the Internet and podcasting. Koehne (2007) noted that this “situation can mean much more freedom and flexibility in who can broadcast and what kinds of content becomes available” via podcasting as opposed to broadcasting.

In recent years, the FCC has levied exorbitant fines against broadcasters for allegedly

airing what the regulatory agency deemed indecent and/or obscene. Although the FCC has set aside a time for indecent material known as safe harbor hours, when children are least likely to be listening, broadcasters suggest the fines have a chilling effect on first amendment rights. In contrast, podcasts are not regulated by the FCC or any other regulatory agency. Listeners are attracted to podcasts because of the diverse programming, including programming deemed indecent on radio stations. Thus, the unregulated world of podcasting is pulling audiences away from traditional broadcasters.

Noting a lack of federal regulation with the podcasting industry, Anderson (2005) stated “programming comes largely from amateurs and is unregulated by the FCC. Think of it as the combination of blogs (freedom of expression), MP3s (digital and portable files) and TiVo (time shifting)” (p. 18). This lack of regulation may soon change. Some industry observers speculate that the Internet and podcasting are likely to become regulated. Koehne (2007) suggested:

Analogous to the way the government had difficulties regulating the airwaves in the early 1900s, currently they are faced with the same regulation challenges for content on the Internet. But also like in radio broadcasting, some fear that the government regulation of the Internet is inevitable and will end up hurting the Internet. (p. 1)

Also, Searls (2005) believes that there “will be efforts to bring podcasting into the regulatory regime...” (p. 1).

## **CONCLUSION**

The debate has begun as to whether podcasting is simply a fad that will soon pass or a rapidly proliferating new mass medium that will rival modern broadcasting. Those who assert that podcasting is a fad point to an interesting fact that Adam Curry, the individual considered to be the founder of podcasting, has a “traditional” radio show on Sirius satellite radio that can be listened to with traditional radio receivers versus an MP3 player. In this regard, Greenlee (2005) stated “podcasting is more about the grass-roots creation of audio content and listener control than about being a technological revolution” (p. 1).

As podcasting generates more advertising revenue and the podcasting technology matures, Greenlee (2005) asserted that “all the same issues of distribution and advertising placement will come back into play and the model that made broadcast radio successful will make podcasting a commercial success” (p. 2). The podcasting listener base should remain steady as young consumers age and remain loyal. Also, it is possible that technological advancements will continue to attract new and younger listeners to podcasting or some other Internet-based interface, thus creating the possibility that broadcasting listenership will continue to decline.

To maintain its listener base and effectively compete in the marketplace, traditional broadcasting must do a better job at competing with not only podcasts, but also new media and all of the advantages it offers consumers. Podcasting offers several advantages that are unduplicated by broadcasting: 1) the popularity for podcasts illustrates consumers’ desires for niche programming, 2) podcasts can be archived for later use, or time shifted, 3) audiences are attracted to the less intrusive advertising used in podcasts versus the commercial breaks that interrupt programming in traditional broadcasting, and 4) podcast programming is unregulated. Despite the strengths of podcasting, traditional broadcasting still maintains the advantage of being “live.” In sum, traditional

broadcasting remains strong but the industry must stay alert as emerging technologies offer listeners more programming options.

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## **BOOK REVIEW: COMMUNICATING ETHICALLY: CHARACTER, DUTIES, CONSEQUENCES, AND RELATIONSHIPS**

By William W. Neher and Paul J. Sandin  
 Copyright 2007 Pearson Education, Inc.  
 ISBN: #0-205-39363-2

Communicating Ethically is a comprehensive text spanning everything from explanations of classical and rhetorical roots of ethical thought, to modern scenarios which may be interpreted by applied ethics. Authors William N. Neher and Paul J. Sandin lay out the philosophical foundations of communication ethics clearly enough for students new to the field to gain a foothold in the topic. The language is succinct and engaging, so that descriptions of scholarship are not bogged down or inaccessible. The text lays out in coherent order chapters built around a descriptive overview of the various schools of thought, such as dialogical ethics, discourse ethics and the feminist-inspired ethics of care. In each case the authors effectively boil down the progression of thought which has resulted in various models. For example, a description of how Coordinated Management of Meaning Theory developed over time reviews how CMM relates both to interpersonal and intercultural communication. In the case of old theories, the text points out where more modern ethical interpretations pose a challenge to or depart from the original models. Once the fundamentals are described at the start of each chapter, more space is dedicated to examining ethical principles in modern contexts which are more immediately recognizable to the reader. For instance, a chapter devoted to “Ethics and the Communication of Diversity” jumps immediately into an actual news report about how the term “minority” will no longer apply to many parts of the United States because non-Anglo “minorities” in fact constitute numerical majorities in states like California and Texas. The chapter then lays out various real-world interpretations and even conflicts surrounding the ideals of diversity. Then comes a description of intercultural communication as a sub-discipline within communication ethics, followed by relatable renderings of familiar concepts like politically correct, multi-culturalism and hate speech. This tight linking of theory with application is the text’s main strength because it allows recognition of how communication ethics play out in the world students inhabit.

Communicating Ethically is a facile yet complete primary text for interpersonal and mass media ethics. For courses more focused on ethics in the context of news media or journalism, however, this best serves as a supplementary text. Communicating Ethically condenses the entire sub field into a single chapter titled “Ethical Issues in Mass Communication,” which the authors point out is intended only as a basic overview. However, used together with a more focused study on news media ethics (Media Ethics: Issues and Cases by Philip Patterson and Lee Wilkins comes to mind,) Communicating Ethically can give a greater depth and frame of reference to media coverage case scenarios. For instance, both texts describe the ethics of Oskar Schindler, a complex and ethically ambiguous Nazi collaborator who saves hundred of Jews during World War II

initially out of self interest as much as high moral character. Media Ethics bases a set of exercise questions around the relatively non-academic theme of what sort of media should take on such a heavy topic. Is this the type of thing that news or documentary makers alone should be trusted with, or can artistic interpretation do an adequate job? By contrast, Communicating Ethically delves into how deontology (the study of the nature of duty and obligation) and Kantian analysis may be applied to the motivations and decision making of Oskar Schindler. Here the line of questioning goes straight to an application of the root ethical principles involved, and so in that sense is what I consider to be more academic. Although the chapter order of Communicating Ethically is sequentially designed to build on previously introduced concepts, I might suggest for a news media ethics course beginning with Chapter 10: “Ethical Issues in Mass Communication,” and then combining this with the introductory chapter of Media Ethics, or another case scenario driven media ethics text. Moving forward through a syllabus, I would use a news media focused book as the primary text combined with selected chapters from Communicating Ethically to provide depth and perspective.

Reviewer:

Lisa Rose Weaver

Director, Professional Communications Program

Chatham College, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

## **NATIONAL BROADCASTING SOCIETY DEADLINES**

I'm writing to inform you about the National Broadcasting Society (NBS) and its annual National Scholarly Paper Competition. The deadline for submissions into the Paper Competition is October 31, 2007.

This competition is an excellent opportunity to receive recognition for your scholarship. NBS offers presentation opportunities for both refereed and invited scholarly papers at our 66th annual NBS National Convention, to be held March 11-16, 2008 at the Disneyland Paradise Pier Hotel in Anaheim, California. Papers relating to all aspects of electronic media communication are welcome.

In addition to the Scholarly Paper competition, the NBS National Convention also features panel sessions and Professional Audio Production / Professional Video Production Competitions.

The Call for Entries and information about the Scholarly Paper / Panel Sessions and the Audio & Video Production Competitions are available here or at the NBS website [www.nbs-aerho.org](http://www.nbs-aerho.org).

If you have questions about NBS or any of its activities for academic professionals, I invite you to email me at the address, below.

BTW, I encourage you to forward the attached calls for submissions to department chairs and to your media-instruction colleagues.

Sincerely, and with best wishes for a rejuvenating summer vacation,

Bruce Mims, Ph.D.  
National Vice President for Alumni and Professional Services  
National Broadcasting Society  
[bmims@semo.edu](mailto:bmims@semo.edu)



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<u>Year</u>	<u>NAB Show</u>	<u>BEA Show</u>
2008	April 14-17	April 16-19
2009	April 20-23	April 22-25
2010	April 12-15	April 14-17
2011	April 11-14	April 13-16
2012	April 16-19	April 18- 21
2013	April 8-11	April 10-13
2014	April 7-10	April 9-12
2015	April 13-16	April 15-18
2016	April 18-21	April 20-23
2017	April 24-27	April 26-29
2018	April 9-12	April 11-14
2019	April 15-18	April 17-20
2020	April 20-23	April 22-25

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*Feedback's* index is now in Microsoft Word format. It is available by clicking on the link below:

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## FEEDBACK FORUM

This will be a new feature of Feedback. While not a creative title, colleagues wrestle with various issues throughout the academic year.

We would like to feature various responses to these issues. The goal is to seek "two page double spaced" commentary on a designated topic.

There is no way of estimating responses. There may be no responses, but we feel the need to try and secure information for faculty dealing with these issues.

We will publish responses to our first "FEEDBACK FORUM" in the September issue. Submit your 'two page' max by August 1, 2007.

### SEPTEMBER 2007 FORUM TOPIC

How should faculty deal with laptops in a classroom environment?

Thanks,  
Joe Misiewicz, Editor