Name, PhD

Statement of Research Goals and Expectations

Now that I have successfully defended my qualitative dissertation on video journalism, I am starting the next phase of my research, specifically, quantitative experimental studies of video journalism as a new media form. Thus far I’ve found that video journalism is seen by its practitioners and institutional adopters as a news form that is distinct from conventional television. Beyond its obvious differences in the production & delivery process (singular versus collaborative shooting, broadband versus broadcast), video journalism may have narrative differences that are significant in their service to the public sphere. It’s impossible to know without further inquiry.

I’ve already designed a set of quasi-experiments that can be conducted on-line. The protocol received approval from the University of Pennsylvania’s Institutional Review Board. Alas, it proved “too much” to include in my dissertation, which is a qualitative study of the practice of video journalism in a variety of institutions, such as the Voice of America, the BBC, commercial television stations and newspapers. No overview of this new media form exists; it became essential to write a careful analysis of the form itself before embarking on audience reception studies. I have applied for a small grant from my current department at the Kutztown University of Pennsylvania to start this work.

Briefly, my experiments are designed to measure the degree to which viewers of news images and video detect and process the presence of a photographer. What are the effects when narratives shift from third-person to first-person accounts? What are the effects of symbols or markers that denote the institutional source of an image? Are video stories more understandable and credible when we see and hear from the person who shot the video?

My wish list for institutional support of my research agenda includes 1) a department that supports both qualitative and quantitative methods, 2) an institutional review board that operates in a timely and responsive manner, 3) computer equipment that allows for the delivery of quasi-experimental materials on-line and 4) departmental support for grant-seeking activities.

Finally, I am an active member of two academic organizations, the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication (AEJMC) and the International Communication Association (ICA) and hope to continue my involvement in those organizations, which of course would require university assistance toward travel and service.