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EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION

ARTICLES

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ADAM C. EARNHEARDT

In 2010, Cleveland, Ohio played host to the 4th Summit on Communication and Sport. Representatives from Youngstown State University and Kent State University welcomed seasoned and emerging scholars in the field of communication and sport to share original research and to discuss and debate the changes in our field. One point that emerged from those discussions – a point that continues to resonate in our classrooms, in our research, in the media and beyond – this is a great time to be a sports communication scholar. Evidence of that point is provided on the following pages.

I am excited to present this special issue of the *Journal of Communication Studies*, representing the top papers presented at 4th Summit. The work conducted herein by Baerg, Hartman and O'Rourke, Woo and Kim, McClung and Wright, and Moore, are but the tip of the iceberg in terms of the volume of research being conducted worldwide by sports communication scholars. Thanks, in part, to the *Journal of Communication Studies* and Marquette Books, we provide a glimpse of a bright future for sports communication research. Publishing "homes" like the *Journal of Communication Studies* give credence to research conducted by communication scholars, and to the importance of our findings on society. I urge journal editors to continue to provide homes for this area of inquiry, and for publishers to continue to expand options for sports communication scholars to showcase their work.

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GENETIC METAPHORS, THE BODY AND DIGITAL BASKETBALL: DYNAMIC DNA IN NBA *LIVE '09*

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This article extends both scholarly discussions of the rhetoric of science and the mediation of sport in new media. In this essay, I explore the conjunction of popular representations of genetics and the mediation of the athletic body in the digital sports game by examining Electronic Arts' (hereafter EA) basketball action simulation, NBA Live '09 (2008, hereafter NBAL09). In particular, I focus on how the metaphor of DNA is applied to the athletic body in the game and discuss some of the implications of how the metaphor functions to represent genetics as both determinist and non-determinist.

Key Words: rhetoric of science, metaphor, genetics, video games, basketball

Since the inception of the Human Genome Project, popular culture has been rife with information, exploration, and speculation about genetics. Whether it be movies like *Jurassic Park*, television shows like *C.S.I.* or the numerous stories addressing genetics in newspapers and on websites, discourses on DNA have become increasingly important for the interpretation of the self and the self's activity. Silva (2005) goes so far as to argue that this popular representation has resulted in "the hegemony of genetics" (p. 101) such that the results of genetic research possess unparalleled explanatory power. This hegemony of genetics has also recently manifested itself in the medium of the digital sports game.

In this essay, I explore the conjunction of popular representations of genetics and the mediation of the athletic body in the digital sports game by examining Electronic Arts' (hereafter EA) basketball action simulation, *NBA Live '09* (2008, hereafter *NBAL09*). In particular, I focus on how the metaphor of DNA is applied to the athletic body in the game and discuss some of the implications of how the metaphor functions. In order to begin to illuminate the implications of this metaphor for an understanding of both athletic ability and genes, the ensuing section surveys some of the scholarship on metaphors and science. More specifically, it addresses research on metaphor and genetics. The essay then returns to *NBAL09* in applying this research to how the DNA metaphor is used in the mediation of the body in the game and some of the consequences that follow from this mediation.

This article extends both scholarly discussions of the rhetoric of science and the mediation of sport in new media. It takes up Condit's (1999) call for scholars to carefully

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analyze "the specific ways in which genetic knowledge and technologies are being embedded in social knowledge structures" (p. 177) while also heeding Leonard's (2006) call for sports media scholars to research the untapped field of digital sports games. As a consequence, this paper also illustrates how genetic discourses are not self-contained, but travel to and shape other discursive fields (Silva, 2005, Turner, 2005).

METAPHORS AND SCIENCE

Metaphor has been a thoroughly traveled area in rhetorical studies. Burke (1969) perceived metaphor as one of four master tropes and defined it as "a device for seeing something *in terms* of something else" (p. 503). He argued for metaphor as a perspective device in which A is perceived from perspective B and B is perceived from perspective A. Lakoff and Johnson (1980) echoed Burke's definition of metaphor while extending the discussion into a consideration of how metaphors have the potential to shape our conceptual systems. In shaping conceptual systems, metaphors subsequently influence our perceptions of the world and move us to think and act in new ways. Sheehan Johnson (1999) indirectly affirmed these ideas by arguing that speakers employ metaphors to move audiences to attend to different conceptualizations of reality. As speakers present these different conceptualizations, metaphors subsequently possess the capacity to potentially alter, direct, preserve or change an audience's perspective on the terms in the exchange.

The concept-changing, reality-altering nature of metaphor has influenced scholarly discussion of the relationship between science and metaphor. Some of this work has engaged scientists' attitudes toward metaphors. Brown (1986) argued that positivist scientists, going back to the seventeenth century, have traditionally deemed the integration of metaphors into their writing as discrediting their research even as metaphors have been indispensable to the scientific project. Other work has addressed how scientists employ metaphor to conceptualize reality in new and productive ways (Sheehan Johnson, 1999). As if echoing Brown's and Sheehan Johnson's studies, Baake's (2003) book on the scientific use of metaphor at the Santa Fe Institute revealed scientists' ambivalent relationship to this linguistic device. While recognizing that many scientists employ metaphor as a way to make their research more attractive to various audiences, those Baake interviewed also demonstrated a suspicion of metaphor as a potential distortion of scientific findings. Knudsen (2005) furthered an understanding of the constitutive work of scientific metaphors by tracing how these metaphors, and the strategies used to present them, shifted and changed as they gained traction in scientific communities and in popular scientific discourses. Whether these shifts have worked productively or fomented problems, metaphors in science have shaped the trajectory of cognition and have been constitutive of theory.

Some of the recent research on science and metaphor has been specifically focused on the subfield of genetics. From the time James Watson and Bernard Crick announced its discovery, DNA was and continues to be understood in metaphorical terms as code, as a system of information in need of deciphering (Knudsen, 2005; Thomas, 2008). Knudsen explained how the code metaphor implied that DNA was composed of

information or messages. This metaphor derived from a World War II/Cold War context in which cryptography and the early computer were playing an important role in information processing. The code metaphor would influence genetic research for the better part of the ensuing half century.   In establishing what she terms "*a rhetoric of cells*" (p. 59, italics in original), Sidler (2006) critiques the notion of genetic code by examining the implications of code as metaphor. The rhetoric of cells is designed to move geneticists to a self-conscious awareness of how the metaphors chosen to represent their work shape its ensuing development in theory and application. Sidler argues that this awareness is especially important in molecular biology where the objects of study cannot be seen by the naked eye. The molecules are only accessible through information technologies; subsequently, geneticists frequently use metaphors in representing their work to both specialists and non-specialist publics.

The aforementioned scholarship filters into discussions of how scientific ideas come to be understood through metaphor by non-specialist public audiences. Scientists are not always speaking only to one another, but in many instances, also present their work or have their research represented to a broader audience. Given this popular communication of genetic experiments, scholars have been interested in how genetic research has been represented in media reporting on its findings. These media reports have been rife with metaphors. Liakopoulos (2002) examined the recent history of the representation of biotechnology in the late twentieth century. His study analyzed the British print media over a twenty-four year period to categorize the types of metaphors used to discuss genetic research. Leydesdorff and Hellsten's (2005) content analysis examined how metaphors used to discuss stem cell research traveled from the scientific to lay discourse communities while Rovira's (2008) content analysis located the types of metaphors appearing in mass media. In her examination of popular British sports media sources, Ryall (2008) expressed suspicion about the distorting effects of metaphors used to discuss genetics in the context of popular media reports on athletic performance. Maeselle and Schuurman (2008) noted the diversity of discursive metaphoric frames appearing in popular Belgian print media on biotechnology. Musolff's (2009) qualitative analysis of stem cell metaphors in British and German print media noted how cultural differences influenced the types of metaphors used to represent genetic research and the controversies which surround it.   Other studies have concentrated on the reception of this media representation of genetic research (Bates, Lynch, et.al., 2005; Condit, 1999; Condit, Parrott, et.al., 2004; Singer, Corning, et. al., 1998).

In spite of the fact that scholarly attention has been devoted to examining how various media sources represent genetics, it appears that most of this attention has been directed toward formal news sources. However, as Silva (2005) indicates, the public often experiences discourses of DNA outside of these more formal journalistic contexts. This article builds on this claim by contributing to knowledge about the ways in which genetics and its associated conceptualizations are mediated in popular culture outside of explicitly journalistic contexts. Instead of looking at how scientists employ metaphor to convey their ideas or how these metaphors are then employed in popular news media sources to explain scientific concepts, the essay examines how a scientific concept itself can serve as a metaphor filtering into and shaping the understanding of discourse in other

social and cultural domains. The specific social and cultural domain examined here is that of sport, the body and its mediation in the digital sports game.

To this point, little scholarly attention has been devoted to the digital sports game. Crawford (2005a, 2005b, 2006) has focused primarily on the digital sports gamer and the ways in which the sports game furthers social interaction. Crawford (2008) has also examined how an intertextuality between digital sport and real world sport enables players to create narratives deriving from controlling their favorite teams and athletes in digital games. Additional studies on sports gamers have focused on how they have understood a sports game's realism (Baerg, 2008) and responded to in-game advertisements (Cianfrone, Zhang, et. al., 2008).

Studies of the games themselves have also been similarly limited. Kayali and Purgathofer (2008) categorized sports games on a continuum of simulation and abstraction. Baerg (2007) and Conway (2009) have both studied how the representation of boxing and soccer, respectively, position gamers to understand the sports being mediated. Cree Plymire (2009) has addressed this positioning more abstractly by arguing that digital sports games invite players to adopt a posthuman subjectivity.

This essay extends scholarship on science and metaphor and situates it in the context of this recent research on the digital sports game. The following section explains the Dynamic DNA system and how gamers engage it in Electronic Arts' basketball simulation, *NBAL09*. The article then addresses how the DNA metaphor conceptualizes the athletic body in and through the game and suggests some of ways in which this metaphor shapes understandings of DNA and the body.

DYNAMIC DNA IN NBA LIVE '09

One of EA's more recent iterations of its digital basketball franchise, *NBAL09,* employs a system called Dynamic DNA. Upon the announcement of the Dynamic DNA system at the 2008 Electronics Entertainment Expo, G4TV gave *NBAL09* the "Best Innovation" award (G4TV.com, 2008). Given that every digital game presented at the show was eligible for the award, the game's reception of "Best Innovation" was high praise indeed. The Dynamic DNA system subsequently became the centerpiece of EA's summer promotional push for the game's impending release in the fall of 2008.

In order to provide a context for understanding how this system works, a brief explanation of prior basketball games is necessary. Up until Dynamic DNA, gamers would experience a given basketball player's digital performance through the filter of numeric ratings attached to specific attributes mediating his talent. Members of the game design team would assign these attribute ratings based on a previous season's statistics, their own perceptions of an athlete's quality and the potential that athlete might have ahead of the upcoming season. Among the many attributes that have mediated athletic performance in the *NBA Live* series of games include: maximum speed, acceleration, agility, vertical jump, conditioning, strength, first step, offensive rebounding, dunk ability, layup in traffic, free throw ability, drawing offensive foul, dribbling skill,

awareness and many others. Typically, this rating system would operate on a one to 100 scale. For example, a star guard like Kobe Bryant might be rated at 75 for his outside shooting attribute while a post player like Dwight Howard might be rated at 25 in the same attribute. The speedy Chris Paul might be given a 95 for his stealing attribute while the much slower Zydrunas Ilgauskas might only be assigned a 35. Each player would be assigned a number in each of these categories and the numbers would become the primary means of mediating that athlete's performance when he took to the virtual court. In past games in the series, these attributes would remain stable until the next version of the software would be released one year later. However, EA has recently taken increasing advantage of the growth of online gaming to update these ratings on a much more regular basis. Gamers with internet connections can now receive up to date player data that more accurately reflects roster moves and potential ratings changes.

These frequent updates appear to have reached their zenith with EA's Dynamic DNA system and its component DNA Scouting Reports. In order to produce daily DNA Scouting Reports, EA partnered with a company called Synergy Sports Technology (hereafter SST). SST takes video from every NBA game and indexes it into various data categories. In the same way that Google indexes websites using textual markers, SST indexes video using visual markers. The company uses artificial intelligence to tag various events within video streams of televised NBA games and then aggregates these events for analysis. Examples of what the company calls "ontology-based tagging" might include things like shots made and shots missed (Synergy Sports, 2008b). SST's Digital DNA product allows for the tracking of "over 1000 data points per player (and growing)" (Synergy Sports, 2008a) such that this DNA "contains 1000+ virtual chromosomes per player or team" (Synergy Sports, 2008a). The company claims that these chromosomes prove to be "better than MRI of [sic] real player" (Synergy Sports, 2008a). In 2007, David Griffin, then assistant general manager for the Phoenix Suns and one of SST's customers, expressed excitement about integrating statistics, video and their combination into a scouting database. Griffin stated that, "We're able to dissect a player like never before" (Technology to Dissect, 2007, para.22). SST has been used to track not only professional, but college basketball players as well.

With *NBAL09,* EA builds on this claim that NBA teams have taken tracking data from SST and then implements this data into the company's basketball simulation. Now gamers have access to this data through *NBAL09* and its Dynamic DNA system. The Dynamic DNA system plays a central role in how gamers interact with the game on multiple levels. The very first time the game is played, an introductory video explains how Dynamic DNA functions. Where many sports game introductory sequences feature flashy animations, loud fast-paced music and video clips from the real world sport being mediated, *NBAL09's* initial introduction focuses on the DNA feature. This emphasis on DNA continues throughout the rest of the gamer's experience. In the base menu of game options, Dynamic DNA sits prominently as the second possible selection directly under the 'Play Now' exhibition game option. As such, gamers have quick access to the data each and every time they play the game. Each DNA Scouting Report provides a quantitative and graphical representation of an athlete's ratings and the types of plays an individual player tends to execute. Gamers see two vertical bars comprised of different

colored sections that correspond to an athlete's tendency to perform common basketball plays like post ups, pick and rolls or cuts to the basket. EA calls these vertical bars DNA strands. The larger the percentage of a given action, the larger the respective colored sections on the DNA bars and the more likely it will be that the player will perform the corresponding action in ensuing games.

Dynamic DNA drives how virtual hoopsters respond in several aspects of gameplay. Dynamic DNA is used to simulate each athlete's tendencies and decision-making processes. Individual player DNA is composed of seven types of plays that athlete is typically involved in executing. For example, Tim Duncan might be involved in isolation plays five percent of the time, pick and rolls forty-five percent of the time and post ups for thirty percent of the time. A second aspect of Dynamic DNA reveals which direction a given athlete will move in executing specific moves from various places on the floor. Dirk Nowitzki might like to drive left from the top of the key while Shaquille O'Neal might like to spin into the key from the left block. The frequency with which each these tendencies occur is reflected on a screen devoted to presenting this information. A third aspect of Dynamic DNA provides data about a player's shooting effectiveness from fourteen different areas of the floor. The player is rated from each of these areas as cold, neutral or hot. Finally, Dynamic DNA also updates a given player's overall level of 'hotness' and 'coldness' such that those players who are playing well in real life will also be those who play well when a gamer boots up the game. As the season unfolds, gamers can compare a player's current DNA with his DNA from previous days, weeks or months. These individual player tendencies are then aggregated into Team DNA, a given team's ratings and tendencies, so gamers can replay a real world game that had occurred the night before with updated attributes and the tendencies these real world teams had actually used. The individual and team DNA Scouting Reports are constantly updated such that EA can claim that *NBAL09* "is the first sports video game to be made fresh daily" (introductory video).

Gamers are exposed to this DNA data throughout their interaction with the game. Team DNA appears each time gamers select teams for exhibition games and league games. The ensuing screen then gives gamers the starting lineups for each team and provides the individual player DNA of the respective starters. As gamers prepare for the actual playing of each game, the starting lineups appear again accompanied by player-specific data from Dynamic DNA. In this pregame sequence, each player's two favorite places on the floor and the directions he prefers to move to get to that space are presented with the percentage of time that player shoots from that position and moves in that direction. For example, Dynamic DNA might demonstrate that Kobe Bryant might spot up for a jump shot at the perimeter on the right side fifty-five percent of the time. During the actual playing of a given contest, Dynamic DNA positions gamers to know their team and its composition well enough to call plays that put their players in position for success. As the ball is played into the point guard, gamers can bring up a play-calling menu that lists a set of potential plays to execute. Next to these plays is the DNA percentage attached to the running of a given play. After each shot is taken, a message appears detailing the type of shot taken, the location from which the shot was taken and the percentage of time that play is typically executed. The DNA data guides the gamer to a

deeper understanding of how victory might be achieved with their chosen squad. Similarly, the gamer can also examine the opposing team's Player and Team DNA to focus on preventing opposing players from getting to their favorite places on the floor and from executing their most successful plays. Conceivably, if a gamer watches her favorite NBA team perform well in a given real world game, she can then take this knowledge to her playing of *NBAL09* and replicate this offensive and defensive success in the game.

In reiterating the ongoing quest for realism, *NBAL09's* introductory video crows that this data tracking will be constantly updated. As a result, the game claims that players will play just like they do in real world games with the subsequent outcome that "your game will never be out of date again" (introductory video). If Kevin Durant runs a pick-and-roll for the Oklahoma City Thunder thirty five out of the seventy-five times he has possession of the ball on a given Wednesday night, that tendency will be reflected in the aggregated DNA Scouting Report that gamers will encounter in playing the game Thursday morning. If the Lakers run Kobe Bryan in isolation for half of their possessions, that tendency will be reflected in the team's and the player's DNA Scouting Report the next day. These player tendencies are also supplemented by graphs depicting real world hot and cold streaks that also find their way into the game through Dynamic DNA. Should Kevin Garnett have a series of games where he scores a lot of points, his solid play will be reflected in a hot streak indicator on his individual DNA Scouting Report and the gamer who plays with the Celtics will experience Garnett's success. A similar thing occurs in an inverted manner with poor real world performances as well. Given this constant data updating, gamers who employ the DNA Scouting Report feature subsequently have what is promised as the most realistic and accurate experience of simulated basketball available.

Clearly, EA's decision to label their system, Dynamic DNA, and its respective components, DNA Scouting Reports, forges a link between potential virtual basketball performance and broader understandings of genetics. DNA effectively serves as a metaphor in the system. The following section traces some of the implications of this metaphor for the mediation of the athletic body in the digital sports game.

DYNAMIC DNA IN NBA LIVE '09

The existing player rating system in previous *NBA Live* games already had the appearance of being scientific. The quantitative player attribute ratings layered a scientific veneer over an alleged measurement of expected athletic performance. The attribute ratings appeared as sets of data gamers were required to engage to achieve virtual success. However, *NBAL09* makes this connection to scientific discourse explicit with the Dynamic DNA metaphor. This metaphor functions as a didactic metaphor, one that is intentionally "used to convey a concept, such that there is an explicit comparison of analogous components" (Condit, Bates, et. al., 2002, p. 321). If metaphor is constitutive of knowledge and theory (Baake, 2003; Johnson Sheehan, 1999; Lakoff & Johnson, 1980), an analysis of Dynamic DNA as a didactic metaphor reveals how DNA is used to convey the tensions of both a determinist and ever changing understanding of

the athletic body. Interestingly, the very nature of the term used to describe the system, Dynamic DNA, speaks to the tensions that appear in popular understandings of genetic science. These tensions express themselves in how the metaphor operates in the game. Dynamic DNA effectively serves as a popular riff on bioinformatics, what Sidler (2006) defines as "the computerization of biology" (p. 59). To bring sport and its measurement of the body together with DNA's existing connection to information processing systems and the computer makes perfect sense for the digital sports game. By examining how Dynamic DNA functions in the game, it becomes possible to engage some of the implications following from this design decision.

THE GENETICALLY DETERMINED BODY

First, the DNA Scouting Report serves as a metaphor for the genetically determined body. Sidler (2006) explains how mid twentieth century scientists' comparison of DNA to code forged a deterministic paradigm in which DNA was understood to be the sovereign determinant of life at the expense of environmental factors. This deterministic paradigm filtered into the application of genetic theory as other scientists perceived the decoding of the human genome as a potential lynchpin for evolutionary theory. Genetic determinism has also found its way into public discourse about DNA as well. Media reports employing this metaphor have often depicted people as being programmed by their genes. Liakopoulos (2002) argued that this media representation implies that "genes equal people, people equal genes" (p. 24). In this construction, the entirety of a person is reduced to one physical characteristic, a characteristic dictated by a gene. The genotype that is the genetic code constructs the phenotype that is the body. This category of metaphor would also be applied to behavior as well. Media sources would relate, for example, how homosexuals possessed 'the gay gene' or how thieves possessed 'the criminal gene'. In this case, genes not only determine physical traits, but also behavior. Metaphors associated with the gene person imply that "people equal genes that look and behave in a certain way, and genes equal people who also look and behave in a certain way" (p. 24).

In much the same way that DNA has been popularly represented as the determinist core of human identity (Silva, 2005), so too is the DNA Scouting Report in *NBAL09* the determinist core of a player's basketball identity. Dynamic DNA demonstrates the essential basketball subject for *NBAL09* in the same way that a person's DNA demonstrates the essential biological subject. Given this report, the real and the virtual Kobe Bryants are not subjects in and of themselves, but configurations and combinations of quantitative variables and tendencies. Within the game, Kobe Bryant is fifty-five percent isolation, forty-four percent in the mid-range quadrant on the left side of the floor and sixty-two percent driving to the basket. Differences between players are reduced to differences in percentages of tendencies. In making this move, *NBAL09* echoes a genetic reductionism in which the truth of the subject can be found in DNA data comprised of statistics measuring tendencies and production. A perspective that interprets DNA as a biological determinant of action is mirrored in a game where the numbers derived from Dynamic DNA determine what a given virtual athlete will do.

Although it is difficult to get a precise account of how the game's developers conceptualize the metaphor of DNA, their blog entries and interviews on digital game websites provide some insight into their determinist understanding of Dynamic DNA in the game. In a blog entry published right before the 2009 NBA draft, a developer for the upcoming sequel to *NBAL09, NBA Live '10* (2009, hereafter *NBAL10*) asserted that, "Dynamic DNA completely takes the subjectivity of ratings out of the picture. What you see in real life, is what you get in-game. From now on, if a player's rating is causing you stress, don't "hate the game, hate the playa [sic]"!" (EA_kathryn, 2009, para. 1). In an article for ESPN.com, this claim was reiterated by *NBAL10* producer, Sean O'Brien, who maintained that "our ultimate goal is to remove all subjectivity from our ratings. I don't want some producer or designer to be the one to make the call on how good Kobe [Bryant] shoots the ball and whether or not a shot should go in" (Robinson, 2009, para. 2). O'Brien went on to relate how the data from SST would be deployed to the fullest extent possible as if to imply that more data entails a more objective simulation.

By suggesting that Dynamic DNA removes the subjectivity from assessing and predicting a given player's performance, *NBAL10's* developers and producers implicitly argued for understanding DNA as a determinant of this performance. If Dwight Howard spent sixty-six percent of his time on the low right block in a given real world game, the developers argue that this tendency will be reflected in his virtual decisions in their game when gamers play with or against Howard's Orlando Magic the next day. Conceivably, if the developers can integrate DNA data from SST to ever greater degrees, virtual basketball players and their teams will perform precisely how they do in real life. The DNA data will determine virtual performance.

These developer insights also reveal another aspect of the deterministic nature of Dynamic DNA, the abdication of developer responsibility. If Dynamic DNA dictates virtual player performance, game developers are no longer responsible for how players in the simulation respond. As mentioned above, with previous iterations of *NBA Live* games, members of the design team would be assigned to providing attribute ratings for each player in the game's database. A considerable degree of subjectivity would be involved in deciding whether or not someone like Carmelo Anthony warranted an eighty for his outside shooting or a seventy-five. The controversies over player ratings in sports games reflect the subjective nature of the process (see Orsborn, 2009; Sando, 2009). With the shift to Dynamic DNA, the developers implicitly suggest that the days of protesting player ratings may be over. As one of the developers mentioned above, "don't hate the game, hate the playa!" If a given basketball player does not perform in keeping with a gamer's expectations, it is now no longer the game's fault, and by extension, the fault of the game's designers. Instead, that poor performance is the fault of the 'playa', the real world athlete whose data has been integrated into the game. A similar sentiment is echoed in O'Brien's comments as well. O'Brien alludes to the days of subjective player ratings where producers and designers would indeed make the call on how well Kobe Bryant might shoot the ball. With Dynamic DNA, that subjective perception submits to the apparently more objective data of the system. The game developers release themselves from influencing the outcomes of their simulation. No human judgment will stand in the way of mediating a virtual basketball player's performances.

The DNA data will be the cause driving simulated players to function the way they do and not the interventions of those programming the simulation or perhaps even those playing the game itself.

The determinist element of the Dynamic DNA metaphor also suggests the potential transparency or even invisibility of the digital game medium. If Dynamic DNA data represents how real world basketball players have acted in a given game and determines how players will respond in the simulation, the medium ostensibly disappears. To see the real game is to increasingly see the virtual game. To see the virtual game is to increasingly see the real game. Graphical verisimilitude may be important, but the integration of DNA data into the simulation blurs the line between the real and the virtual to a new degree. It appears that real world NBA front office personnel are beginning to be comfortable with this elision of the real and the virtual fostered by Dynamic DNA. SST president, Garrick Barr notes the professional value of the convergence between real world and virtual basketball with *NBAL09's* integration of his company's data into its game, "Now you have players who act like they really act, and you have the ability to defend them based on their on-court personality. This is great for gamers but it is also a very viable tool to be used by coaches" (Robinson, 2008b). Houston Rockets' general manager, Daryl Morey recently said that he employs *NBAL09* as part of his job. In an interview with Kotaku.com, Morey declared, "I don't play EA Sports as a game. I use it as a tool" (Good, 2008, para.7). In another interview, Morey said, "We already use Synergy to game-plan. Using Live may help our players visualize the data" (Robinson, 2008a, para. 3). It would be facetious to assume that Morey would use *NBAL09* as the exclusive determinant of his personnel decisions, however, the fact that he attends to the Dynamic DNA in the game suggests the increasing convergence of real world and virtual observation and the invisibility of the medium performing this convergence.

THE DYNAMIC GENETIC BODY

In echoing twentieth century scientific understandings of DNA, the metaphor of DNA as determinant certainly appears in *NBAL09*. However, the determinist paradigm that has been entrenched in genetic research for the better part of the last five decades has recently begun to be challenged. Sidler (2006) addressed how twenty-first century postgenomic research has critiqued the code metaphor for its determinism and consequently challenged the entirety of twentieth century molecular biology. For example, Ridley (2003) argued for the inadequacy of a genetic determinism in the face of how genes interact with the brain and the environment. These more recent findings have begun to understand the genome as a dynamic, rather than static entity, as "one text in a network of communication patterns interacting within and among living cells" (Sidler, 2006, p. 66).

Perhaps even more importantly, even before these more recent findings had come to light, popular perceptions of the role of our genes in human behaviour have not aligned with a determinist paradigm. Focus group studies have revealed that popular perceptions of DNA have not adhered to a determinist position. Rather, the public has tended to possess a more nuanced understanding of DNA than a mere sharply delineated

determinism. Condit's (1999) work suggested that audiences exposed to the popular representation of science through metaphors think in nuanced ways about the potential consequences of these metaphors. Her subjects engaged the 'DNA as blueprint' and 'genetic lottery' metaphors commonly used in popular representations of DNA research. Contrary to those who critiqued these metaphors, her study revealed that audiences did not perceive these metaphors as deterministic and discriminatory. Similar findings resulted from another one of Condit's studies assessing the differences between the 'DNA as blueprint' and 'DNA as recipe' metaphors (Condit, Bates, et. al., 2002). The sophisticated responses to these metaphors echoed Singer, Corning, et. al.'s (1998) earlier conclusions about the public's perspective on genetic engineering, testing and therapy and were reinforced by another study about popular perceptions of the relationship between genetics and race (Condit, Parrott, et.al., 2004).

NBAL09's use of the Dynamic DNA system reflects this more recent and popular, less deterministic understanding of DNA. The system's very label suggests a move away from a genetic determinism. Not only does Dynamic DNA function as a metaphor for various expressions of determinism, but it also operates as a metaphor for the constantly shifting production of the athletic body, its athletic labor. In *NBAL09*, various types of basketball labor become like strands of a person's DNA. What real basketball players have done and what they potentially have the capacity to do is mediated through the DNA Scouting report. The game's lead producer, Brian Ullrich, relates how Dynamic DNA "tracks how a player scores, it also tells you whether he goes left or right and if he likes to post or spot up. Plus, it knows what plays a team will run with a particular lineup on the floor and how that group of players works together" (Robinson, 2008a, para. 1). Should a point guard like Tony Parker tend to run the pick and roll forty percent of the time, that tendency will be reflected visually in Parker's DNA strand. In an interview with gamespot.com, EA Sports', Brent Neilson, revealed how each player's DNA strand could be analyzed to get a better sense of how that player scores (gamespot.com, 2008). As the game aggregates real world player performances and translates it into the game, *NBAL09* uses SST data to organize the individual and collective labor of athletic bodies. Labor and a given player's capacity to be a productive laborer ostensibly becomes a given player's DNA in being mediated into *NBAL09*. The labor and potential labor is never static given the constant updates to the Dynamic DNA database.

The changeable nature of athletic labor in Dynamic DNA effectively extends that which was begun in the context of eighteenth century liberalism and its obsession with quantifying populations. In his discussion of these developments, Foucault (1984) sees, "numerical variables of space and chronology, longevity and health, to emerge not only as a problem but as an object of surveillance, analysis, intervention, modification, etc." (p. 278). These quantitative variables operated in the service of the market, a market that required productive labor in order to maximize capital. This fascination with quantification imposed a grid of visibility onto subjects and measures their relative degree of normality (Rose, 1999). In keeping with this implied numerical norm, these variables organized individual bodies and the collective body by affording the ability to distinguish between "the more or less utilizable, more or less amenable to profitable investment, those with greater or less prospects of survival, death, and illness, and with

more or less capacity for being carefully trained" (Foucault, 1984, p. 279). The biological characteristics of persons and populations become important elements in responsible economic management and the maximization of productive labor.

This concern with quantifying the body for the purposes of profitable investment and increased production capacity found its way into sport as well. Since its inception, professional sport has arguably been preoccupied with quantifying the performance of the body as a measurement of athletic labor, i.e. as a measure of whether the athlete is a profitable investment or capable of increased production capacity (Guttmann, 1978). This measurement of athletic labor not been restricted to professional sport but has also found its way into other recent sports-related developments like sabermetrics in baseball and in the wildly popular fantasy sports. It has also found its way into video games like *NBAL09.* However, the Dynamic DNA system pushes this quantification and the data it generates into new spaces.

Perhaps more importantly, in working from the metaphor of the organic, Dynamic DNA effectively implies an absorption of the ever-changing genetic makeup of the body into the market. The game's representation of DNA shifts its essential nature from being to doing as each virtual hoopster's genetics changes on a nightly basis. The meaning of the real and virtual athletic body is discursively constructed around the constantly shifting numbers that comprise each player's DNA strand. As it is aggregated through numbers, this doing and the capacity of this doing becomes an extension of the market mechanism and an ongoing indicator of the player's capacity for productive labor.

In deploying this genetic metaphor, *NBAL09* illustrates the market's tendency to extend its reach into areas previously untouched. Whereas prior forms of assessing athletic labor would primarily revolve around the quantification of basic statistical performance, the DNA Scouting Report extends this quantification to new areas that include the player tendencies outlined above. Looking at New Orleans' point guard Chris Paul's points, assists and steals is no longer sufficient for gauging his value to his team within the context of *NBALive09.* Paul's productivity involves more than an assessment of these common statistics. Aggregating his tendencies to dribble right or left or to drive to the hoop or settle for three point shots also become part of his place in the market of basketball players. That *NBAL09* should include this information naturalizes this extension of a market rationality beyond the interpretation of conventional statistical data to the body itself.

As DNA becomes the metaphor for labor capacity in *NBAL09,* the changing nature of biological life becomes that which serves the market. Different chromosome combinations represent different capacities for productive labor. To see DNA as a barometer of labor capacity speaks to what have become the indelible links between geneticists, engineers and venture capital, links that have resulted in the biotechnology industry (Thacker, 2001; Turner, 2005). Thacker and Turner have chronicled how genetic research and individual gene sequences have been filtered through various economic networks attached to patents, IPOs, and business start ups. Bodily materiality has been appropriated to generate economic value. With the Dynamic DNA system, a

similar move is made metaphorically. A player's value to the market that is the gamer's team is bound up in his DNA. DNA only has value with respect to its potential contribution to this market.

Combining the game developers' description of Dynamic DNA with the way in which the feature functions reveals the tensions inherent in the DNA metaphor's operation as applied to the athletic body and athletic performance in the game. On the one hand, in their emphasis on how the data from SST will further the erasure of subjectivity in assigning player ratings, the developers appear to have adopted a model of DNA as deterministic genetic code. In much the same way that positivist scientists through much of the twentieth century fostered a determinist link between genetics and physical traits and behavior, so too do the game developers appear to believe that their Dynamic DNA system enables a direct and determinist line between data from SST and the performance of digital basketball players in their game. SST feeds data to EA. EA translates the data into player ratings and tendencies in *NBAL09*. The players in the game then act exactly in accordance with the data and seemingly cannot act outside of it.

On the other hand, the operation of the Dynamic DNA system does not appear to function deterministically. In an interview with gamespot.com, EA Sports' Brent Neilsen acknowledged the fact that the Dynamic DNA system created tendencies for players and did not dictate their behavior (gamespot.com, 2008). In making this concession, Neilsen echoed an understanding of DNA as a combination of determinism and environmental cues. Within this discourse, DNA has agency, but this agency is shared by human activity and human responses to the diversity of environmental contexts (Silva, 2005, Sidler, 2006). For gamers to be familiar with the DNA of their own players and teams and the DNA of their opponents would potentially give them a strategic advantage. Gamers could force opponents to take shots from lower percentage areas on the court and set up high percentage shots for their players. DNA data from SST merely provides the contextual backdrop against which gamers can express their virtual basketball prowess and does not determine their actions or the actions of their virtual opponents.

CONCLUSION

This article has contributed to an understanding of the rhetoric of science, the popular representation of science and to the discursive construction of the athletic body. *NBAL09's* use of the metaphor of DNA in its Dynamic DNA system illustrates how popular perceptions of scientific concepts are expressed in new contexts and how bodies are mediated in the digital sports game. In looking at how the Dynamic DNA metaphor functions in the game, the essay reveals the system's concurrent genetic determinism and its affordance of a non-deterministic perspective on the workings of DNA. The article argues that the Dynamic DNA metaphor in *NBAL09* implies a genetic essentialism, the abdication of developer responsibility for simulation outcomes, a transparent digital game medium and genetic sequence as labor capacity.

To suggest that the DNA metaphor entails these implications must be tempered by the idea that the meanings of metaphors are subject to change. As Knudsen (2005)

suggests, metaphoric meaning and its appropriation in various discourse communities has the potential to become more established and/or change. The fact that EA releases an annual edition of its *NBA Live* game suggests that the meaning of Dynamic DNA, in the current iteration of the game, may become increasingly entrenched or shift and change as well. Dynamic DNA may expand to further metaphors that speak to the athletic body. In addition, these metaphors may travel to other games in the EA stable. Given that EA's development teams often share resources and ideas and EA's status as the dominant digital sports game developer in the world, it is plausible that the Dynamic DNA system and its genetic metaphor could find its way into other EA Sports games. Because EA Sports continues to be the most prominent digital sports game producer on the planet, the reach of this metaphor could stretch far beyond its existing place in *NBAL09*.

Further questions could then be asked about how these entrenchment and expansion processes work and about the implications of these processes for those who play the game. More fully unpacking the meaning of a metaphor like Dynamic DNA may require an investigation into how those who play *NBAL09* activate the metaphor. Condit, Bates, et. al. (2002) found that audiences may respond in different ways to metaphors depending on which facets of the metaphor were applied, how these facets were evaluated and the audiences' degree of familiarity with the connection between the two concepts being compared. As such, gamers may not understand the metaphor in keeping with the analysis provided here. Do gamers see the way the DNA metaphor functions in a deterministic or non-deterministic way? Or do they negotiate the tensions between these two positions as they experience it in gameplay? Gaining additional insight into the reception of Dynamic DNA could legitimate this analysis to a greater degree.

Given the ease with which genetic code has been mediated by computer code, it seems likely that sport and the digital sports game will become increasingly imbricated with a bioinformatic perspective on the body. This essay represents one glimpse into the expression of this perspective and the implications that follow from it.

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REDNECKS, WHITE BALLS, AND BLUE GRASS:
A FANTASY THEME ANALYSIS OF THE 2008 RYDER CUP

KAREN L. HARTMAN AND DANIEL J. O'ROURKE

This research analyzes the 2008 Ryder Cup to explain the message-centered approach to defining a team and creating a fan base. Employing Ernest Bormann's theory of fantasy theme/symbolic convergence, the authors offer two figures to expand Bormann's theory in two ways: firstly, that narratives of a sport team and fans are two distinct symbolic communities that are linked through shared fantasies and secondly, that the media actively creates and sustains fan bases. Through the case study, we argue that the Captain of the Ryder cup team, Paul Azinger, successfully crafted rhetorical themes that created a team through shared fantasy themes and linked the team to the surrounding Kentucky area and those who followed the team in the media. Although Azinger's campaign succeeded, the authors argue that some aspects of the collective consciousness may perpetuate stereotypes and nationalistic themes that might harm future international golf competition.

Keywords: sport, fan, media, fantasy theme analysis, golf

The notion of "golf fans" might seem amusing to followers of more dramatic sports such as football, basketball, or NASCAR. Golf is not a fan-friendly spectator sport. It is impossible for one attending a golf tournament to absorb fully the drama of a competition when the contest is played over 18 holes and miles of terrain (Barkow, 2000). Students of sport communication and even golfers themselves can find it difficult to watch the game on television. "Slow," "stodgy," or "a putting contest" are words that can describe the experience of viewing televised golf. Fortunately, golf is blessed (and cursed) with one of the most charismatic athletes in the world today, Tiger Woods, whose athletic achievements are only slightly more famous than his divorce case. Love him or hate him, Woods draws media attention to himself and the game of golf. Additionally, professional golf associations sponsor an increasingly popular biennial event with a unique competitive format that offers fans a counter experience to traditional golf viewing experiences. This competition is known as the Ryder Cup.

The Ryder Cup began in 1927 as a simple contest between American and British golfers to test the mettle of the newly minted American golf professional. Over the years the competition has grown into a multi-million dollar team event featured on national television with overtones of professional superiority and national pride (Barkow, 2000).

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The 2008 Ryder Cup featured an underdog American team with a new captain challenging the defending champion Europeans.

Analysis suggests that the 2008 competition demonstrates an excellent example of articulating a series of rhetorical messages to construct a fan base. To understand this case study, the authors employ Ernest Bormann's theory of fantasy theme/symbolic convergence to explain the message-centered approach to defining a team and creating a fan base. The authors offer two figures to expand Bormann's theory in two ways: firstly, that narratives of a sport team and fans are two distinct symbolic communities that are linked through shared fantasies and secondly, the role of the media in creating and sustaining fan bases. We argue that the Captain of the Ryder cup team, Paul Azinger, successfully crafted rhetorical themes that created a team through shared fantasy themes and linked the team to the surrounding Kentucky area and those who followed the team in the media. The media used the narratives and biographies of the team to dramatize fantasy themes of "survival," "preparation," and the "joy of playing" to validate the team to the larger American public. Although Azinger's campaign succeeded, the authors argue that some aspects of the collective consciousness may perpetuate stereotypes and nationalistic themes that might harm future international golf competition.

FANTASY THEME/SYMBOLIC CONVERGENCE

In 1972 Ernest G. Bormann linked his studies of rhetoric and public address to one of his teaching areas, small group communication. Bormann (1972) observed that individuals who formed successful groups in the classroom united in a common identity. Group members achieved this shared identity by telling stories, finding commonalities, and uniting behind a task. Bormann's reading of Robert Bales's (1970) *Personality and Interpersonal Behavior* suggested that larger social collectives might also share group fantasies. This led Bormann (1982) to ask: "Could skillful communicators design dramatizing messages with an eye to a target audience and deliver those messages in such a way that others were brought into participation in the fantasy?" (p. 291).

Over the next four decades, the application of the fantasy theme theory offered studies of women's support groups (Kroll, 1981), women's rights (Edwards & Wong-Chen, 2000; Huxman, 2000), political campaigns (Bormann, 1973), religious movements (Bormann, 2001), business corporations (Jackson, 2001; Kendall, 1993), and sport (Mondak, 1989; Wenner, 1989; Zagacki & Grano, 2005). Scholars such as Cragan and Shields (1981) quantified the method to create the social scientific Symbolic Convergence Theory. Over the past 30 years, more than 485 articles and journals have been published as the number of fields utilizing the fantasy theme theory grew (Bormann, Cragan, & Shields, 2003). In this essay, the authors offer a humanistic/rhetorical approach to the study of the fantasy themes and rhetorical visions utilized in the creation of a team and fan base for the 2008 Ryder Cup competition.

To analyze the narrative of a sport team and its fans, critics should realize that they are examining the rhetoric of two distinct symbolic communities that are linked in a shared fantasy. The team and its supporters share stories, yet each group has its own

unique narratives. To envision this symbolic relationship, one might think of the association of a symbolic community and a support group designed to assist them. Common narratives of struggle and survival bind cancer survivors and military veterans with outside support groups in a symbolic community. Bormann would call these "fantasy themes." Only those who have been diagnosed with cancer or have been a member of the military can truly speak to the experience. Family and friends are drawn together in support groups to provide comfort and assistance for their loved ones. Nonetheless, their experiences as "outsiders" deny them access to or understanding of the realities of living with cancer or serving in the military. In turn, members of a support group know the frustration of not being able to speak to their family member with an empathic understanding. Relationships are strained, unique demands are placed on caregivers, and a second symbolic community is created to reflect their experiences and share their stories. A symbiotic relationship is created in which the support group is enjoined with the cancer patients or veterans through shared stories or fantasy themes that chain throughout the groups. The narrative thread that links them results in a shared symbolic reality that Bormann (1972) refers to as a "rhetorical vision." The shared rhetorical vision among group members defines ways to assist the cancer survivor/veteran. (See Figure 1)

Group (Veterans/Cancer Survivors)

Rhetorical Vision

Support Group

Rhetorical Vision
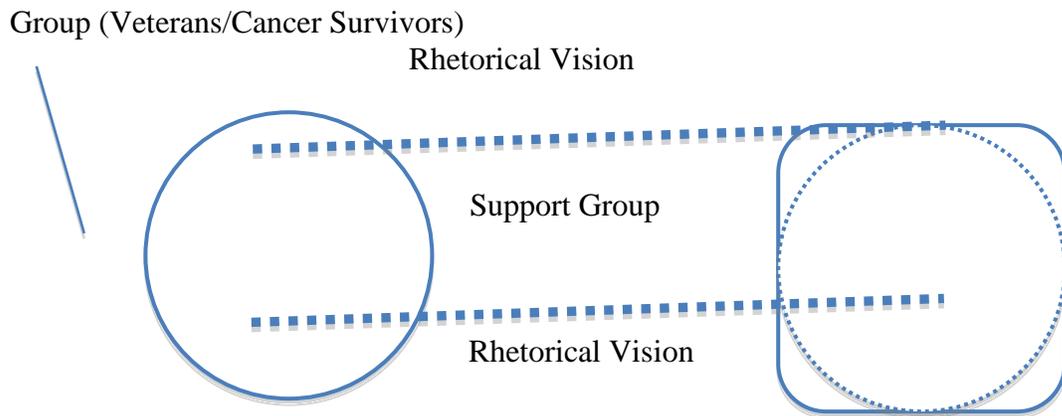
Figure 1

In sport, separate symbolic communities exist between the fan base and the team. A team is united in the vision of the coaching staff, a team philosophy, and the day-to-day struggles of practices and games. Only team members are privy to the discussions of forming and maintaining a squad. The community of fans, however, is not directly related to the team but is linked to it by media reports and game commentary. Mc Laughlin (2008) states that: "One outcome of global media [sport] has been the creation of huge communities of interest, fan groups that may never engage in the practice but only observe it and consume mass media images" (p. 114). Similar to the shared symbolic reality among support group members, in sport, a symbiotic relationship is formed where the fan identifies with media stories of team activities and its success but is divided from the team by a lack of understanding of what it means to be a professional athlete. Zagacki

and Grano (2005) observe, "Fantasy theme is the means through which the shared creative and emotional interpretation of events is accomplished, it usually appears in a word, a phrase, or statement" (p. 48). "The Catch" evokes different meanings in San Francisco and Cleveland (O'Rourke, 2003). The community of fans admires its favorite teams, but the experience of the fan is different from that of the player. Players live in the moment and have little concern for the history or tradition of a franchise. Fans often have longer-term perspectives and associate current squads with great teams and players of the past. Because of the inherent disconnect between the fan base and the team, a satellite relationship is formed between fans and their favorite teams based on shared fantasy themes linked by a rhetorical vision created largely by the media. Nimmo and Combs (1983) made this point when they argued that to understand a "sports-mediated reality" one must analyze the role of the mediator in the communication process. (See Figure 2)

Team   Media   Fan Base
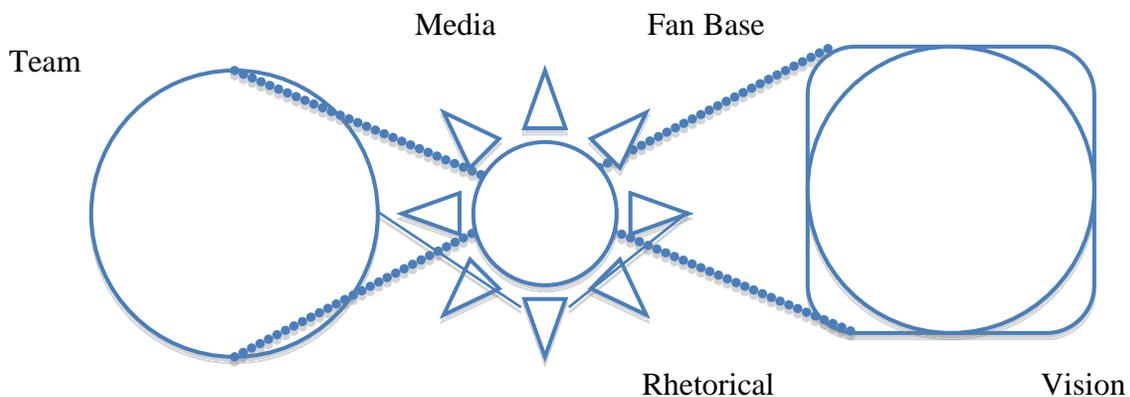
                        Rhetorical   Vision

Figure 2

THE 2008 RYDER CUP TEAM

The 2008 Ryder Cup established new fantasy themes that were articulated in a new rhetorical vision. Bormann (2001) asserts that fantasy themes are drawn from values and beliefs that exist in the culture that can be defined as fantasy types. He writes: "When a number of similar scenarios or outlines of the plot of the fantasies, including particulars of the scenes, characters, and situations have been shared by members of a group or larger community, they form a fantasy type. A fantasy type is a stock scenario repeated again and again by the same characters or similar characters" (2001, p. 7). In the case of the Ryder Cup, the form and style of competition have remained relatively constant for eight decades, but the plot differs from traditional golf competitions. While golf is primarily a solitary game, the Ryder Cup incorporates a team format that is added to the singles competition. Two twelve-person teams drawn from the United States and Europe compete over three days in three formats: Alternate Shot (two golfers playing one ball competing against two other players), Better Ball (two teams of two players posting the best individual score on a hole), and singles competition. The events are contested in a match play format where players compete for each hole rather than an aggregate score.

Ultimately, the unique team format of the Ryder Cup affords different fantasy types than traditional golf competitions because the "stock scenario" changes.

The participants in the 2008 Ryder Cup also affected traditional fantasy types because the "same characters or similar characters" did not play. Azinger requested and was granted a change in selection formats. The time frame for selection was reduced from two years to one and the number of Captain's picks was increased from two to four. In the previous three Ryder Cup competitions, the United States fielded experienced teams that included the two best players in the world, Tiger Woods and Phil Mickelson. In 2008, six of the fourteen players on the team were first time Ryder Cup members. An injury to Tiger Woods and the selection of a largely rookie squad changed media and fan expectations significantly. The prevailing fantasy types in golf and in the media cast the American team in a negative light and gave the squad little chance in the 2008 competition.

Due to the unique format of the competition and the vacancy of Woods, a new rhetorical vision materialized to form a distinctive fan base within the golfing community. Bormann (1983) writes: "When people have an impulse to join together one of the first questions they ask themselves is, 'Who are we?'" (p. 73). He asserts that there are three key points in the development of public consciousness: 1) consciousness creating, 2) consciousness raising, and 3) consciousness sustaining. The Professional Golf Association of America (PGA) had two years to select a Captain and players for the 2008 Ryder Cup team. The choice of Paul Azinger as Captain and the formation of the team served as a critical consciousness creating narrative. Second, Azinger and the media began the process of rallying a fan base in the consciousness raising period. Finally, the team performance and its subsequent interpretation by the media offered a consciousness sustaining rhetorical vision that influenced American golf, its fans, and the fantasy types that await future American Ryder Cup Teams.

CONSCIOUSNESS CREATING

The traditional design for the formation of a Ryder Team is staged in three phases over a two-year period: 1) A ceremonial Captain is named. This title has honored such great American players of the past as Ben Hogan, Jack Nicklaus, and Arnold Palmer. 2) Players accumulate points in the form of dollars won in PGA sanctioned events. The top ten money-earners over the previous two years are selected as members of the team. 3) Shortly before the competition begins, the Captain selects two players to join the squad. Ryder Cup experience and recent tournament success are the two most valuable criteria for selection to the team.

In the initial gestation period, the dramatic fantasy themes offered by the media are reliant on stories about the Captain. A player's future success is uncertain, injuries can remove players from competition, and the Captain makes the final team selections; thus the only Ryder Cup story available is the biography of its leader. Bormann (1983) notes that such dramatizing stories about members of the community are central to consciousness creating. The portrayal of Paul Azinger as "Captain America" (Roberts, 2009) did not disappoint the team or its potential fan base by offering dramatic stories

upholding American ideology and notions of "the underdog" and a "survivor." The son of a military family, Paul Azinger was not destined for golf greatness. In college he struggled with his game, developed a most unconventional swing, yet overcame it all to become the 1987 Player of the Year on the PGA tour. Azinger flourished in Ryder Cup competition battling Spanish superstar Seve Ballesteros in a storied competition that included much gamesmanship and insinuations of cheating. Late in his career Azinger was diagnosed with cancer and suffered the death of his best friend, golfer Payne Stewart, in an airplane crash. Azinger was a survivor in more ways than one (Roberts, 2009). His captaincy was expected to be active and competitive to revive the chances of the American team. He did not disappoint. Azinger requested and received a change in the selection format. The number of Captain's picks was increased from two to four. The reasoning was that this would facilitate the selection of the "hottest" players going into the Ryder Cup rather than reward two year old success. Three players qualified for their first Ryder Cup through their accumulated point earnings. Azinger then surprised observers by using his choices to select three more Ryder Cup rookies, including J.B. Holmes who had placed 81st in the most recent PGA Championship. Bormann argues that the dramatizing messages of fantasy themes spark the fantasy chain. The biography of Azinger featured themes of "tough," "survivor," "competitive," and "planning" in an attempt to initiate a new rhetorical vision for the 2008 Ryder Cup team. Some aspects of this collective consciousness creating and raising, however, may perpetuate stereotypes and nationalistic themes that could prove harmful to the future culture of international golf competition.

CONSCIOUSNESS RAISING

Fantasy Theme/Symbolic Convergence requires that the consciousness raising phase not only seeks potential converts through its rhetorical vision but also shakes loose adherents of competing rhetorical visions (Bormann, 1983). It is in this phase that more attention was paid to the formation of a fan base. The PGA prides itself in its history as a charitable neighbor. In part, this is good business. The Ryder Cup alone has distributed over 13 million dollars to 130 player-designated charities since 1999 (Fields, 2008). Such charities as "Play Golf America," "Take Your Daughter to the Course Week," and "American Express Women's Golf Month" have received PGA funds in an effort to "grow the game."

Charity work done on behalf of the PGA, however, is countered with glaring flaws in its history. Golf immigrated to America in the 1890s and settled in wealthy East Coast country clubs (Barkow, 2000; Klein, 1999). These elitist origins combined with the infamous "Whites Only" clause in the PGA charter fostered an image of exclusion and racism that continues to plague the organization. The PGA only dropped its racist membership clause in 1961, fifteen years after Jackie Robinson broke the color line in baseball and six years after Brown v. The Board of Education desegregated American schools (Barkow, 2000). In 2011, international players from around the globe compete on the PGA tour, but there is still only one player of African-American origin who has earned his playing card. Similarly, private golf clubs across this country still deny women full memberships or limit their access to golf facilities. The growth of minority participation in most other professional sports stands in stark opposition to the makeup of

the PGA. Charity contributions may be good business but they are also needed to change the elitist, stereotypical image of professional golf in America. If professional golf is to "grow the game" and reach a new audience, it must reach beyond its history of privilege, sexism, and racism in the 21st century.

Captain Azinger built a fan base by creating a boisterous rhetorical vision of nationalistic pride with Southern flavor that defied standard golf norms. Golf is traditionally known for its polite and quiet fans. For example, the tournament founded by Bobby Jones, The Masters in Augusta, Georgia, insists that CBS Sports refer those attending the tournament as "patrons" rather than the pejorative title "fans," derivative of fanatics. In golf, a sudden burst of noise can disrupt a player's concentration and interfere with the shot. Flash cameras are prohibited on the course and warnings are printed on tickets about unruly behavior with a threat of removal from the grounds. Azinger, however, encouraged disruptive behavior as a way to rattle the opposing European team, further demonstrated by fan and player interaction. Because golf fans are able to get closer to competitors than nearly any other sport, a wayward drive can take a player literally into the gallery for his next shot. The proximity of players and those attending the tournament requires fans to know and appreciate the traditions of the game. This standard of civility, however, has been losing ground in modern Ryder Cup competition and Azinger promoted this departure while promulgating nationalism and Southern pride. An article in Golf Digest revealed: "Azinger was unapologetic about lighting the fuse of raucousness, seeing it as tit for tat, because European galleries traditionally have shown little pity for American mistakes across the pond where the roars and songs reverberate when European blue goes up on the leader boards" (Fields, 2008, para. 7). European fans have been noted for loudly singing choruses of a soccer club song, "Ole, Ole, Ole." In Kentucky in 2008, American fans responded with chants of "U.S.A." and "Boo S.A.," celebrating American golfer Boo Weekly.

Departing from golfing norms and drawing from team sport lingo, Azinger crafted a rhetorical vision to recruit "The 13th man." In Kentucky in September, a sport fan's attention can turn to football. On the Thursday night before the Ryder Cup, Azinger and the 2008 team held a rally for 4,000 fans in downtown Louisville. T-shirts with the logo "13th Man" were distributed and speeches offered to fire up the crowd. Azinger was asked on Friday what he had said the night before, "I think I said, 'You can cheer when they miss. … Essentially we go over there, they cheer when we miss. I don't think American fans are really into what the Ryder Cup is all about. … I was just making sure that they understood if we win a hole, they can cheer, and even if somebody misses a putt for us to win a hole" (Fields, 2008, para. 6). Azinger also requested that fans wear blue shirts on Saturday and red on Sunday to show their patriotic pride and support for the American team (Frakes, 2008). The Captain was calling for uniform support from the fans in a manner that emphasized teamwork and nationalism. He was not, however, going to ignore the southern location of the competition.

The second component of Azinger's campaign for public support was the inclusion of three southern golfers on the team. The media recognized this story line and utilized it to create a "hometown angle" for the Ryder Cup story. It also served as a

rhetorical vision to have fans identify with the 2008 Ryder Cup team. Kenny Perry who grew up and still lives in nearby Franklin, Kentucky, declared: "This is a week I will never forget. It's the greatest experience of my life" (Newberry, 2008, para. 8). The story line for Perry was that he so valued the opportunity to play the Ryder Cup in his home state that he skipped two major tournaments, the British Open and the U.S. Open, to accumulate enough points to make the Ryder Cup team.

J.B. Holmes was the second player chosen. Raised in Campbellsville, Kentucky, Holmes played junior golf in the state and earned a reputation for long and powerful drives. European team member Soren Hansen said of Holmes, "He hit it quite long. But quite long is probably an understatement. He hit it *really* long" (Forde, 2008, para. 23). The power game in golf is one of its most attractive features to fans. Bigger, faster, stronger has always been an appeal of any professional sport. Holmes is the longest driver on the PGA tour and his length can be intimidating to rival players. Holmes's golf game was suited to both the course and to the alternate shot format, as well as satisfying the American sporting public's desire for power. Captain Azinger chose Holmes for these very reasons and the player's record in the Ryder Cup vindicated that choice.

The third Southern player was the most popular story and character at the 2008 Ryder Cup. Boo Weekley is from Florida, not Kentucky, but this was the "good old boy" that stole the show. Paul Azinger said at the closing ceremonies, "We wanted to build strong relationships within the team. In the infamous words of Boo Weekley, we wanted to 'Com-pat-i-bate'" (Fields, 2008, p. 3). Weekley was the "Court Jester" of the American team. On Saturday night before the final round, Weekley entertained his colleagues with the story of how he was "cold-cocked by an orangutan at the county fair when he was 16" (Fields, 2008, p. 3). Besides his colorful stories, he saved his best performance for the golf course. On Sunday morning, Weekley was paired with Lee Westwood in singles competition. Following their drives, Weekley picked up his tee and began riding his driver down the fairway like a child on an imaginary horse. Senior PGA correspondent Dave Shedloski (2008) wrote of the event, "Boo was a happy place unto himself, and his teammates reveled in his child-like enthusiasm and good ol' boy sense of humor. […] The picture of Weekley galloping, a la Happy Gilmore, down the first fairway Sunday with his driver between his legs like a Kentucky Derby stallion, said everything you need to know about America's new team" (para. 11-12). Captain Azinger echoed,"That's one of the great things I've seen in my life. [… F]or him to gallop off that first tee, I'm telling you what, the whole place just cracked up and embraced that guy, embraced him all day. That was an amazing moment, never to be duplicated or equaled" (Shedloski, 2008, para.14). Weekley brought a sense of joy back to the Ryder Cup that entertained and engaged fans. Crowds at the Valhalla Country Club began cheering "Boo-S-A" in support of their new hero. Weekley's humor and personal story created a rhetorical vision that spoke to an American audience particularly those in Kentucky and the Southern region of the United States. Kentucky governor Steve Beshar confirmed his state's affection for Weekley when he said: "I've already drawn up the adoption papers on Boo. He's going to be one of us" (Frakes, 2008, para. 9).

CONSCIOUSNESS SUSTAINING

The life cycle of a championship team can be a short one. Bormann notes, "Once a rhetorical community emerges with a clear coherent rhetorical vision and clear symbolic boundaries to discriminate the insider from the outsider, the members must face more or less severe rhetorical problems of holding the group together" (Bormann, 1983, p. 84). One season ends, a victor is crowned, and preparation begins for the next campaign. Teams change from year-to-year. Economic concerns force contract renegotiations, new players are drafted to address perceived weaknesses in the squad, and older players retire or succumb to injuries. Paul Azinger and the 2008 Ryder Cup realized their rhetorical vision by defeating the European squad 16 ½ points to 11 ½ points. Fans cheered, champagne flowed, and Azinger saluted the "13th Man." In the closing ceremony Azinger told the crowd, "You were unbelievable. You made the difference this week, you really did" (Fields, 2008, p. 4). One and one half years of preparation were successfully implemented in one weekend of golf. Soon, a new Captain was named, Corey Pavin, and preparation began for the 2010 Ryder Cup. The question became: could such an effort be replicated at the 2010 Ryder Cup on the foreign shores of Wales?

First, the 2010 Ryder Cup was certainly different from its predecessor. Captain Corey Pavin offered his own "bulldog" vision of leadership but the European team recaptured the Cup 14 ½ points to 13 ½ points. Tiger Woods returned to golf in 2010 after a twenty-week hiatus following a scandal in his marriage. Woods did not qualify for the team since he had not won a tournament in over a year. Nonetheless, Pavin selected the former number one player in the world as a Captain's pick. Woods performed well winning three matches and losing one, but the European media was as interested in the scandal as the golf played by Woods and an air of distraction enveloped the entire United States team. The 2008 victory fashioned by Azinger was the first successful team effort in four Cup competitions. Six rookies to the Ryder Cup competition accepted Azinger's rhetorical vision and scored an unprecedented American victory. It seems unlikely that a team as young as the 2008 American Ryder Cup squad could have survived the added scrutiny wrought by the return of Woods and the heightened media interest in the scandal.

Second, the 2010 competition was partisan, but some observers believed that Wales was less accessible to fans and thus did not breed the fervor one would experience in England or Ireland. In 2008, two European players complained about the behavior of the American team and fans ("Lee Westwood," 2008; Smith, 2008) while the English press blasted Nick Faldo, the European Captain, for his lack of leadership (Corrigan, 2008; Millward, 2008). Nationalistic fervor has been a disruptive force in previous competitions. The media dubbed the 1991 Ryder Cup at Kiawah Island the "War by the Shore" (Barkow, 2000). In 1991, player and future Captain, Corey Pavin, wore a camouflage cap in the competition. Pavin said the cap was meant to honor American soldiers fighting in the first Gulf War. Critics thought it was a psychological ploy to unnerve his opponents. The hope would be that in future Ryder competitions gamesmanship by captains or players does not undermine the history or spirit of the competition. If European players, fans, or the media unleash a wave of nationalism

directed at the American in the future, a chain of events could exacerbate the cultural divide and undermine the spirit of the Ryder Cup. One concern would be that Azinger's heightened appeals to nationalism could echo when the competition returns to America in 2012.

Third, the performance of Thomas "Boo" Weekley at the 2008 Ryder Cup was a highlight of the event. Weekley became a celebrity and earned extensive media coverage and a host of new endorsement contracts (Reeves, 2009). However, some golf fans were concerned about the use of Southern stereotypes in the portrayal of team members. The perceived elitism of the PGA with its history of economic privilege, racism, and sexism make some followers uncomfortable with any stereotypical characterizations of players. Long time fans of golf recognize that two narratives have been dominant in the stories about Southern golfers. These fantasy types still influence media depictions of players from the South today. The first is the Southern gentleman, embodied by the legendary amateur Bobby Jones. Jones was the golfing ideal in the 1920s – a man of letters who played for the love of the game. Jones grew up in Georgia, earned an undergraduate degree in literature, passed the Georgia state bar exam, and won 13 national amateur championships before the age of 28. In 1930, Jones won all four major amateur championships – the U.S. Amateur, the U.S. Open, the British Amateur, and the British Open – for what was called "the Grand Slam" of golf. Jones retired and founded the Augusta National Golf Course that became the home The Masters (Frost, 2004). In 2008, Kenny Perry earned the role of the Southern gentleman at the Ryder Cup. A senior member of the team at age 48, Perry earned the right to represent his country by skipping two major professional championships, the U.S. Open and the British Open. He did not attend the U.S. Open qualifier to earn more Ryder Cup points. Perry was exempt for the British Open but honored a commitment to a smaller tournament in the states that same weekend (Shipnuck, 2008). Perry declared the Ryder Cup to be the highlight of his professional career, an event that honored him, his family, and his home state of Kentucky.

The second Southern stereotype that has appeared in the rhetoric of the PGA promotion is that of the "good ol' boy." The personification of this narrative is Sam Snead. Snead grew up in rural Virginia and learned to play the game of golf barefoot with a stick for a club. Snead was a tremendous athlete and excelled in several sports. Early promotional campaigns for "Slammin' Sammy" would picture him barefoot or in overalls (Barkow, 2000). Snead went on to win 82 tournaments and become a senior spokesperson for the game. Still, portraits of the barefoot young man with colorful expressions persisted in golf lore. The portrait of Boo Weekley at the Ryder Cup clearly fits in this vein. Weekley is a tobacco-chewing, tractor riding, camouflage wearing hunter who has offered the media folksy stories and malapropisms. The fear is that this genuinely rural character will be parodied and caricatured by urban media. The BBC radio feed characterized Weekley as the archetypal American, clearly someone who had more than a few beers (Ford, 2008). An American writer countered by writing an entire column in "Boo-speak." A sample of the story follows: "Truth is, Mr. Nick and them European Rooskies ain't a bad bunch of fellas. Some of 'em thought I acted out a bit, but we got it squared away. They's good people. Now the job's done, it's time to paint your

hind end white and run with the antelope. Y'all come back here soon, hear?" (Moriarty, 2008, para. 8). The media's depiction of Weekley illustrates the media perpetuation and public perception of him as a stereotypical "good ol' boy."

The difficulties of conscious sustaining, as Bormann (1983) notes, complicates future Ryder competitions and overall perceptions of the PGA. The PGA must be sensitive to its history and past fantasy themes. The PGA actively attempts to shape its public perception through charity work and events that encourage female and minority participation. The rhetorical themes and vision created through the 2008 Ryder cup, however, ultimately conflict with the effort by the PGA to appear tolerant, equitable, and empathetic. A stereotypical portrait of a "good ol' boy" and southern patriotism may be less appropriate for the 21st century than it was in the century just ended. The PGA does not want to exploit a genuine talent like Weekley or potentially contradict the image it portrays through its community work with stereotypes and simplifications. One need only think of the media circus that surrounds John Daly to see the potential consequences of stereotyping a Southern athlete who has risen from humble beginnings.

CONCLUSION

The 2008 Ryder Cup can be viewed as a successful rhetorical campaign. Captain Paul Azinger crafted a rhetorical vision that created a team through shared fantasy themes. He extended those fantasy themes to win the support of the "13th Man," the fans. Azinger linked the fantasy themes that built the Ryder Cup team to the community of fans in the Kentucky area and those following the team in the media. A symbiotic relationship was created in which the players created fan enthusiasm through their performance and fans re-energized the players for future competition. The American media picked up on these narratives and used personal biographies of Azinger and the team to dramatize fantasy themes of "survival," "preparation," and "the joy of playing" to sell the squad to the larger American public. The 16 ½ to 11 ½ victory, active fan participation, and media narratives realized the rhetorical vision articulated by Azinger.

Students of rhetoric and sport communication could benefit from this view of a team and a fan base enjoined by the rhetorical vision of a captain or coach. Sport seasons may be relatively short in duration and subject to dramatic upheavals such as coaching changes or injuries to key players. Nonetheless, teams and their fans share history, hope, and a degree of character in the fantasy themes that unite them. Fans have been lifted up by the success of a team. Communities have come together across racial, economic, and religious divides to support their hometown heroes. Communication like sport has a mystical quality that transcends quantification and commodification. The joy of sharing a victory with a community larger than yourself is indeed a fantasy worth having.

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CASE STUDY OF THE FAILURE OF NFL EUROPE: PUBLICS AND POWER RELATIONS OF SPORTS ORGANIZATIONS IN AN INTERNATIONAL SETTING

CHANG WAN WOO AND JUNG KYU KIM

With the apparent purpose of globalizing professional American football, the National Football League (NFL) launched the World League of American Football in Europe in 1991. However, after the league resulted in a $400 million loss for the NFL over 16 years it was eventually cancelled. The purpose of this study is to look at the NFL's failure in Europe from a public relations (PR) point of view. After reviewing 490 news and industry trade press articles in the U.S. and Europe from 1987 to 2009, we found that power over relations relying upon the NFL's economic and capitalistic hegemony prevented creating healthy relationships with publics. Theoretical and methodological implications are also discussed.

Key Words: NFL Europe, public relations, capitalism, international sport

The National Football League (NFL) has been one of the dominant professional sports organizations in the United States. In terms of market revenue value, the NFL teams' value ranks very high in the professional sports world. Specifically, Badenhausen (2011) said all 32 NFL teams were included in the list of world's 50 most valuable sports teams led by Dallas Cowboys, worth $1.81 billion. Manchester United was the only team surpassing Dallas Cowboys, worth $1.86 billion. The Business and Company Resource Center issued *Sports Clubs and Promoters* (2007) and said NFL had the most professional sports revenue in the U.S. with $5.3 billion, compared with $4.3 billion for Major League Baseball and $2.2 billion for the National Basketball Association in 2004. Even though soccer remains the most popular sport in the world, the NFL's combined revenue ($5.3 billion) is worth more than the combined revenue of the top 25 European soccer clubs ($4.2 billion). Manchester United, one of the world's most popular professional soccer teams with a fan base of more than 75 million throughout the world, had only $1.25 billion of revenue. The Washington Redskins, the highest marketing value team in the NFL, marked $1.1 billion in revenue.

Much earlier, seeing the possibility of globalization, the NFL had a pilot trial in 1989, two years prior to the WLAF's birth, hosting some football games in Europe, especially in London. The pilot brought about reasonable marketing success (Anderson, 2001). Then, NFL opened a league in Europe in 1991 called the World League of

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American Football (WLAF). However, the NFL's attempt to globalize American football resulted in a massive loss of money, approximately $400 million over 16 years (Wilbon, 2007), and was finally discontinued. The reason for the failure, however, is little investigated although it could yield valuable information.

In the current study, we were seeking to analyze the failure from the perspective of Public Relations (PR). Publics such as customers, media, the community, financial institutions, and the government should be carefully considered by organizations because they can affect organizations' performance and vice versa (Grunig & Repper, 1992). System theory, developed by Grunig, Grunig, and Dozier (2002), provides a useful way of thinking about relationships among publics by suggesting that interdependence of organizations with their internal and external environments is crucial for their products and services. In addition, PR is not functional or intentional, but rather ideological (Berger, 1999). Heath (2000) suggested that PR research should focus on multiple publics and complex interactions. In the case of the NFL's attempt to establish their league in Europe, the interactions and relationships were not straightforward at all.

Within this context, we aim to 1) analyze relationships among publics in the case of NFL Europe and 2) examine the ideologies possibly existing within the organization and between the NFL and its publics in media for explaining the failure of the globalization.

LITERATURE REVIEW

PUBLICS AND RELATIONSHIPS IN A GLOBAL SETTING

Grunig and Repper (1992) described three types of publics in their situational theory. Publics can communicate actively (*active publics*) or merely be aware of an issue (*aware publics*). There are also individuals or groups who do not think the issue is problematic for them (*latent publics*) and who do not face the issues (*non-publics*). This situational theory was expended by Hallahan (2000), who explained that latent publics can be further broken down into *inactive publics*, who do not recognize their involvement with an issue, and *aroused publics*, who are beginning to seek information after recognizing a potential problem.

Rawlins (2006) described publics by integrating situational theory with the types of stakeholders, suggesting three types of publics based on Wilson's (2005) categorization of publics by communication strategies: *priority publics*, *intervening publics*, and *influential publics*. Priority publics possess the highest level of power, dependency, and influence. They feel the urgency of the issue and want to be involved. Intervening publics do not act directly, but pass on information to priority publics. These publics become opinion leaders. Rawlins stated that the media represent intervening publics. Influential publics may support or work against an organization. They may not be stakeholders, but they still influence the organization.

In the twenty-first century, it has become more apparent that successful organizations have to expand their territory around the world (Taylor, 2000); therefore,

building relationships with publics worldwide should be highlighted. As early as 1989, the top ten multinational companies earned 24 to 72 percent of their total revenue from foreign sales (Martin & Chaney, 1992). Globalization has changed the world today (Gower, 2006), and more PR scholars should engage in more cultural/critical research in the global era because it is important for practitioners to build communication strategies whether they standardize (globalize) or customize (localize) in an international PR setting, where differences and similarities coexist (Coombs, Holladay, & Hasenauer, 1994). In other words, globalization for international PR implies that practitioners should be aware of intercultural and international aspects of PR to make their organization successful. High-quality PR practice creates, changes, and maintains relationships with publics. However, this is always challenging because international publics are mostly new and do not always possess cultural and societal variety (Taylor, 2000).

Grunig and Grunig (1989) identified four typical models of PR: *press agentry*, *public information*, *two-way asymmetrical*, and *two-way symmetrical*. These four typical models, especially the two-way symmetrical model, have been studied since the models were developed. Grunig, Grunig, Sriramesh, Huang, and Lyra (1995) also examined four typical models of PR in international settings. Their findings suggest organizations' practice is inclined to a certain model, though some organizations practice all four typical models. The press agentry model is practiced most often in many organizations, and it supports marketing and an image-building function. Grunig et al. concluded that symmetrical PR can be considered a generic principle in all cultures, with specific manifestations differing from culture to culture. Based on this body of literature about publics, the first and second research questions are posited here:

RQ1: What kind of publics could be identified in the NFL Europe league case?

RQ2: Which of the four typical models of PR were practiced in the NFL Europe league case?

RELATIONSHIP MANAGEMENT

Relationship building research in PR mostly emphasizes "mutual" benefit and understanding (Cutlip, Center, & Broom, 1994; Grunig & Hunt, 1984; Ledingham & Bruning, 2001; Littlejohn, 1995). In other words, PR practice should aim to balance the interests or organizations and publics by managing the organization-public relationship (Ledingham, 2003). Grunig, Grunig, and Ehling (1992) suggested reciprocity, trust, mutual legitimacy, openness, mutual satisfaction, and mutual understanding as virtues of organization-publics relationship. Ledingham and Bruning (2001) listed trust, openness, involvement, investment, and commitment as dimensions of relationship building. Hon and Grunig (1999) also proposed that strategies such as access, positiveness, openness, assurance, networking, and the sharing of tasks would lead to mutuality, trust, satisfaction, and commitment to build relationships between organizations and publics. Ledingham (2003) finally suggested that, among many other functions of PR, communication functions as a strategic tool to build and maintain organization-public relationships. International PR researchers are also more likely to consider communication functions in PR as interpersonal communication (e.g., Huang, 2001;

Toth, 2000; Wu, 2005). Wu, in contrast, indicated that American PR research and education focus more attention on mass media communications.

Grunig et al. (1995) introduced two other models which are frequently used in international PR research: the *personal influence model* and the *hospitality relations model*. These models lead into a discussion of the *relationship management model*. The personal influence model has been discussed as a relationship management perspective in international PR research. Interpersonal relationship-building, however, could be the most important skill in PR in some cultures (Wu, 2005). Huang (2001) created a cross-cultural, multi-item scale called the Organization-Public Relationship Assessment (OPRA) to measure organization-publics relations. OPRA includes four dimensions (trust, control mutuality, commitment, and satisfaction) based on Western PR literature, with one added dimension (face and favor) that reflects organization-publics relationship in Chinese society and includes *guanxi* (interpersonal relationship), *renqing* (favors), and *mianzi* (face). Wu introduced Huang's scale as a new relationship theory and desired to see the influence of Huang's scale to American PR research.

American researchers insist that communication is no longer a foundation for PR and relationship-building can supplement the communication (van Ruler & Verčič, 2004). However, in Europe, particularly, it is not easy to distinguish "communication" from "relationship." van Ruler and Verčič did not deny American PR researchers' view about relationship building, but in a Delphi study to examine European PR practitioners' view of PR they found four aspects: 1) reflective: adjusting organizational standards and values through discussion among members; 2) managerial: developing plans to communicate with publics and gain their trust; 3) operational: preparing meanings to facilitate communication within organizations; and 4) educational: aiding members in becoming communicatively competent. Their Delphi study shows the complexity of PR concepts in Europe; nonetheless, European PR's four aspects also reflect relational and communicative approaches. This relational view includes agency, structure, networks, and discourse as mutually influential public factors which determine overall *power* dynamics in society (Bourdieu, 1990). Based on the literature about the relationship-building model, the third research question is posited here:

RQ3: How did NFL and NFL Europe officials build relationships with publics in Europe?

POWER RELATIONS AND HEGEMONIC IDEOLOGY

Power studies in PR have been done. As Berger (1999) stated, PR is ideological rather than functional or symmetrical. Especially from a critical/cultural perspective, the major role of PR is to shape the meanings of social, cultural, political, and economic experiences to maintain an organization's position of power, which ultimately benefits the organization (Motion & Weaver, 2005). Berger (2005) mainly focused on power relations of PR practitioners within organizations to do a "right" thing. He suggested three forms of power relations in dominant coalitions within organizations: 1) *power over* relations, which represent the traditional dominant model with control, instrumentalism, and self-interest; 2) *power with* relations, which represent the empowerment model in

which dialogue, inclusion, negotiation, and shared power lead decision making; and 3) *power to* relations, which reflect resistance when practitioners pursue their intention to do "right" things against the dominant coalition.

Berger (1999) also elucidated organizational power, which is an ideological, especially, "hegemonic" relationship. Roper (2005) defined *hegemony* as "domination without physical coercion through the widespread acceptance of particular ideologies and consent to the practices associated with those ideologies" (p. 70). Roper posed a question about the two-way symmetrical model, arguing that symmetrical communication is done by organizations to maintain their existing hegemony. Sometimes this hegemony stands within an organization, but it may also determine the organization's relationship with other power blocs. In order to maintain hegemony, Berger (1999) insisted that distortion of power blocs shapes and limits members' world view within an organization and constructs reality and legitimating, which build the organization's positions, actions, beliefs, and representation from strategic others. Distortion and legitimating occur on the terrain of struggle, where competing worldviews coexist and establish more and more dynamic meanings. The global mass media play a powerful role in the terrain of struggle. Berger concluded that ideological theory in PR is needed because corporations increase their existing economic and political power in a global and mediated world. Considering how the NFL, which possesses the highest marketing value in professional sports, tried to expand its fan base, Berger's argument about power seems much more valuable to investigate. Research question 4, therefore, is posited below:

> RQ4: How did the NFL and NFL Europe form power relationships with their internal and external publics?

METHODS

Various newspaper articles were analyzed for this study. The Lexis Nexus academic database was searched using key words "World League of American Football," "NFL Europe," and "NFL Europa." The three U.S. newspapers which contained the most articles were selected (*New York Times*, *Washington Post*, and *USA Today*). *London Times*, *The Independent*, *The Mirror*, *The Globe*, and *Daily Yomiuri* were selected as non-U.S. newspapers. Industry trade press, such as *Hay Market*, *Advertising Age*, *Business Week*, and *Automotive News Europe*, were also analyzed. A total of 1060 articles published from 1987 to 2009 were searched, but we selected only 490 articles by deleting redundant content among newspapers and industry trade press.

Investigation of newspapers was conducted based on four themes: types of publics (priority publics, intervening publics, and influential publics), PR models (press agency, public information, two-way asymmetrical, and two-way symmetrical), relationships (reflective, managerial, operational, and educational), and power relations (*power over*, *power with*, and *power to*). However, rather than presenting normative numbers such as frequency and proportion, in the present study we focused on explaining situational context.

FROM WLAF TO THE NFL EUROPA

We divided the attempt to globalize American football into three periodical events; 1) World League of American Football (WLAF) as a *launching* period, 2) NFL Europe as a main period, and 3) NFL Europa as a diminishing period. The NFL initiated WLAF, which lasted just for just two seasons from 1991 to 1993. Two years later, due to a new partnership with Fox sports, the league resumed as NFL Europe and continued until 2007. In 2007, the league changed its name to NFL Europa, but it lasted for only one season before NFL commissioner Roger Goodell decided to launch a real NFL match at Wembley stadium in London every year.

THE CASE: WORLD LEAGUE OF AMERICAN FOOTBALL (LAUNCHING PERIOD)

Anderson (2001), a journalist and the author of *The Proving Ground a Season on the Fringe in NFL Europe*, explained that it was network television officials who asked the NFL in January 1989 about the possibility of playing football from April to June. They were always searching for reasonably priced non-baseball sports that attracted audiences (Eskenazi, 1989). It was an intriguing proposal for the NFL, which had just sold $50 million of NFL-licensed products to England in 1989. Tex Schramm, former general manager of the Dallas Cowboys, started market research. Based on market research and discussion with city staff, Schramm selected twelve expected franchise cities, including six American teams, four European teams, one Canadian, and one Mexican team. Schramm aimed to open the league in 1990. NFL team owners passed the bill to launch the new league 27 to 1. The Chicago Bears owner abstained and asked for more information because the World Football League and the United States Football League (which were small leagues operating during the NFL's off-season) had failed. Schramm's ambition was indeed huge. He wanted to build a big, bold, and profitable WLAF. Schramm insisted that the league "is not an experiment," and "we are not another spring league" (Eskenazi, 1990).

Ironically, Schramm's vision was not supported by all the other NFL team owners. They actually wanted a small spring football league in which some NFL players could gain experience and make a small amount of money. After all, NFL officials fired Schramm in 1990. Schramm's original plan was also objected to and postponed until 1991 (Justice, 1990). Then, Mike Lynn succeeded Schramm. His vision for NFL Europe was in the same thread with the other NFL team owners. He even emphasized that NFL Europe was being created to make some money and utilize its marketing value.

The season kicked off on March 23, 1991. The first league was downsized from its original plan. NFL owners tried to implement innovative ideas and test new items with the "developmental league," as they named it. For example, the New York/New Jersey Knights provided day care service during the game. In addition, some new rules were also experimented with, such as a two-point conversion system and not allowing teams to win by simply scoring first in overtime. Helmet cameras were also adopted to air player and coaches' sound bites during the game (Smith, 1991a).

The inaugural season was quite successful. WLAF attracted European fans especially. Football players were called "footballers" in London, which was home of the London Monarchs; fans wore Monarchs jerseys with players' names on the back. League officials expected an average attendance of 15,000 for European teams and 25,000 for American teams; however, in the inaugural season, an average of 33,113 attended WLAF in Europe, while an average of 20,388 attended in the U.S. The Montreal Machines attracted an average of 31,882 people, which was much higher than the average attendance in the U.S.

However, from the beginning, the NFL organization had to own the Frankfurt and Montreal teams because those two teams could not afford to pay the $11 million franchise fee (Campbell, 1991). The NFL teams invested $13 million at the beginning of WLAF and added $15 million in May, 1991. After the first season ended, NFL owners were concerned about their $7 million loss. Chicago and Phoenix did not even support the WLAF (Smith, 1991b). In 1992, NFL owners lost $20 million each and failure in the U.S. damaged two media companies, ABC and USA Network. ABC's average TV rating for WLAF was 1.4. USA Network's first three-week TV ratings seemed promising, 2.6, 2.7, and 2.4; however, the ratings dropped to below 1.0 after the third week. Fortunately, the London Monarchs acquired five sponsorships in 1992 ("London Monarchs American football team announces sponsorhip," February 27, 1992). In addition, the Monarchs hired PR practitioners to promote American football in England ("Monarchs hire Cohn and Wolfe to improve PR," 1994). ABC and USA Network, however, had a hard time selling their advertising space. ABC sold just 60% of available airtime for its 12 games, and USA network sold 40-60% for its 25 games ("KFC, 'USA Today' team", 1991).

Anderson (2001) argued that average attendance did not necessarily mean successful establishment of American football in Europe. According to Anderson, many Europeans in the stadium for WLAF games did not have any clue what was happening on the field. Oliver Luck, the general manager of the Frankfurt Galaxy in 1991, admitted that European fans wanted to experience a bit of American life, such as tailgate parties and cheerleaders. A few anecdotes provided glimpses of the NFL's disappointing experiences in Europe. One day, Luck saw a boy wearing a Los Angeles Raiders cap (currently Oakland Raiders) and asked him if he knew the NFL. The answer ("The NFL – is it a clothing company?") stunned him. Luck confessed that there was a long way to go for American football to gain a foothold in Europe. In another telling situation, Mike Lynn attended a charity dinner hosted by Prince Charles of England. It was a few days before the first World Bowl game in London in 1991 and Luck asked Prince Charles if he would attend the game. Prince Charles replied, "What game?" ("First World Bowl bewilders the prince," 1991). Furthermore, the first playoff that the London Monarchs played against the New York/New Jersey Knights was held in New York in 1991. Even though the Monarchs' record was much better (9-1) than the Knights' (5-5), the Monarchs had travel to New York instead of having a home field advantage. They could not use their home stadium because a regular premier league soccer match was being held there (Smith, 1991c). In terms of players, it was hard to make franchise stars. International players, required by the WLAF, were not as good as NFL-experienced

players, and the NFL-experienced players' goal was apparent: to go back to the NFL. Indeed, WLAF lasted for only two seasons.

In addition to financial problems, the NFL lost a lawsuit against eight players over the free agent system. Plan B, which the NFL instituted in 1990, included an unrestricted free agent system, in which players could play on another team for two months without any compensation to their previous team (Litsky, 1990). It was a win-win situation because Plan B made it easier for players to participate in the WLAF and the WLAF could get enough players. However, players did not trust the Plan B free agency system, believing that Plan B made it hard for players to come back to the NFL. For example, New York/New Jersey Knights receiver Cornell Burbage signed as a Plan B free agent player with Minnesota Vikings and was cut in training camp. He played in the WLAF, but wanted to go back to the NFL. He mentioned that 90% of players did not want to go back to the WLAF (George, 1991). Plan B was finally ruled illegal, and the league ceased. League officials announced that the primary reason that they postponed the league was to save money. Another reason was that they needed "manpower" to control other issues; in fact, they moved Neil Austrian, who was then president of the WLAF, to other projects, such as getting a new television contract for the NFL in 1993 (Freeman, 1992). Among WLAF players on 10 teams, only 32 players survived by moving to the NFL. NFL owners, however, terminated the WLAF league, giving the message that "we control the jobs" (Freeman, 1992).

THE CASE: NFL EUROPE (MAIN PERIOD)

The WLAF resumed in 1995 thanks to joint ownership and funding by the NFL and FOX Television (Anderson, 2001). The league changed format, and only six European teams were included in the league. Anderson evaluated NFL Europe as a better league than the WLAF. While the WLAF was just working as developmental league, NFL Europe was almost like a minor league of the NFL because, as of 2000, 159 players in the NFL had worked for NFL Europe. Innovation was also continuing, such as a new rule that allowed players to gain four points on longer than 50-yard field goals, while field goal in NFL only gets three points (Hayes, 1995). TV ratings were also sound for every country. Sky Sports in the United Kingdom, Carlton, and Scottish TV were satisfied that NFL Europe was attracting young male viewers, who were crucial for advertisers. NFL Europe drew attention from all over the world, including Canada, Australia, Japan, Mexico, and Latin America.

NFL Europe had especially great success in Germany. Germans adopted American football with ease because the American military had been in Germany since World War II. The problem was the teams in London, Barcelona, and Scotland. Paul Tagliabue, the NFL commissioner, regretted that the league had been shut down just as the London Monarchs had begun creating a fanbase. Furthermore, Tagliabue also realized that many positions were filled with American players, denying places for local players. Oliver Luck, former owner of the Frankfurt Galaxy actually recruited soccer and rugby players, but high-profile players like quarterbacks were mostly Americans (Andrews, 1999). League officials closed down the London Monarchs in 1998, the Barcelona Dragons in 2003, and the Scottish Claymores in 2004. When league officials closed the

Claymores, coach Jack Bicknell strongly resisted the league officials. He claimed the league banned young fans who wanted to see the game and even would play for the team someday (West, 2004).

FOX eventually gave up their partnership with NFL Europe in 2001, and the NFL players association tried to take over the role of FOX by helping fund the league with between $10 million and $15 million (Shapiro, 2001).

THE CASE: NFL EUROPA AND DISCONTINUATION (DIMINISHING PERIOD)

In 2007, NFL Europe was renamed again as NFL Europa. It included five German teams and one Dutch team. World Bowl 2007 attracted 48,125 attendees, but this was insufficient to justify continuing the league. NFL commissioner Roger Goodell announced the discontinuation of NFL Europa and changed the marketing format to have some NFL games in Europe. In 2007, the NFL's revenue grew to $7 billion, but only 1 percent of revenue came from the international market. Mike Waller, born in Kenya and a lifelong soccer, rugby, and cricket fan, became a leader of the NFL's international operation. He realized that the problem with NFL Europa was that people in Europe wanted to watch the best athletes in their sport, not a minor league of the sport (Baker, 2007). Neither the WLAF nor NFL Europe was a major sport league; instead, they were developmental or experimental leagues. For the first time, the NFL's regular season game played outside of the U.S. in 2004. After the NFL decided to stop NFL Europa, Waller claimed that the reason was not money or a power struggle against players, but the failure of relationships. Waller said there was a hope to revitalize NFL Europa after the 2007 season, but he gave up that hope when he realized that German television networks did not carry a single live NFL Europa game to audiences. In fact, even the World Bowl game was televised a day later (Branch, 2007a).

Fortunately, despite the failure of the NFL's settlement in Europe, a fanbase was created. The NFL's first regular season game in Mexico City attracted 103,000 attendees and recorded a 20-25% viewing rate with favorable licensing and sponsorships. Moreover, the NFL launched the International Development Practice Squad Program in 2003. Ninety-nine foreign-born players are now on the NFL rosters, double the number of 10 years ago. Branch (2007b) reported that the NFL changed its globalization strategies to have two regular season games a year outside of the U.S. Whether the NFL's new approach and paradigm shift would make progress in its global marketing strategies is uncertain. However, it seemed very promising because NFL officials finally began listening to what other publics wanted. The NFL now has uses corporate catchphrases such as "responding to fan interest," "sharing the experience," and "extending the sports landscape." In 2007, the Miami Dolphins and New York Giants played at Wembley Stadium in London, and all 88,000 seats were sold out; furthermore, the first 40,000 seats were sold out within 90 minutes (Branch, 2007b). The NFL returned to Wembley stadium with the San Diego Chargers and New Orleans Saints in 2008 and those seats also sold out (Hey, 2008). In 2009, an NFL match between the New England Patriots and Tampa Bay Buccaneers was held at Wembley Stadium again on October 25, and the first 70,000 tickets were already sold out in January; the first 20,000 seats were sold in the first seven minutes of availability ("NFL game selling fast," 2009). In 2010, 83,941 fans

came to Wembley stadium to watch the NFL match between San Francisco 49ers and Denver Broncos (Love, 2010) and the match between Chicago Bears and Tampa Bay Buccaneers in 2011 attracted 77,000 fans even though there was a limited sales window because of the NFL lockout (Head, 2011). Head even said that there have been demands for two NFL games a year in London.

FINDINGS

Major findings are discussed with respect to each research question. The first research question was about determining the kind of publics identified in the NFL Europe league case. First of all, Rawlins (2006) categorized media as intervening publics. In the NFL Europe case, the league began at the request of media and ceased because of bad performance in TV ratings. When the league was resumed, Rupert Murdoch and FOX built a joint ownership with NFL Europe. Later, NFL Europe's continuous loss of money was not unrelated to FOX's resigning from the partnership. In sports, media relations are regarded as the most crucial part of PR (Mullin, Hardy, & Sutton, 2007). Sports organizations and media can easily create a mutually beneficial relationship. In our findings, though, it is plausible that media was more a part of a dominant coalition than an intervening public. Another dominant coalition, the NFL officials, played a priority role during the WLAF season and the NFL Europe season. They tried to establish power over the players when they discontinued the WLAF league in 1992.

As intervening publics, the local government of each country and local media also played a significant role. The London Monarchs could not play their playoff game at home and had to travel to New York to play, even though the Monarchs' season record was better than New York's. In addition, local media usually did not televise the games live, which Waller, a current vice president of the NFL, indicated as one of the reasons to discontinue NFL Europa.

Once Waller mentioned the fans and what the fans wanted to see from NFL Europa, fans finally became an influential public. NFL officials had to make changes and eventually close the league because they did not get enough fans, but fans had not been even considered as an influential public throughout the history of NFL Europe. For example, the WLAF was discontinued due to legal issues and power struggles between NFL officials and players. In this case, even the players were not considered priority publics. After the WLAF closed the league, many players lost their jobs. NFL officials moved Neil Austrian, then-president of the WLAF, to another position in the organization rather than deal with the players and find out what they wanted.

The NFL officials' way of determining publics was problematic because there was a hegemonic power battle with publics. Considering that creating a relationship with their external public (fans) is the most vital purpose of sports marketers, who are concerned about increasing attendance and creating more loyal fans (Neale & Funk, 2006), the NFL officials' ignorance of fans was fatal. This problem leads into a discussion of the second research question.

The second research question addressed which of the four typical models of PR were practiced in the NFL Europe league case. In fact, the NFL recognized the importance of PR. As Anderson (2001) said, the NFL has done a very good job of creating publicity and gained some attention from publics in Europe. Campbell (1991) reported that the NFL had good PR in terms of dealing with kids and entertaining people. The WLAF created a number of innovative rules and marketing strategies such as helmet cameras and child care at the stadium. However, it was hard to find a mutually beneficial relationship among internal publics, including players, employees, and stockholder. The press agentry model was most used among the four models suggested by Grunig and Hunter (1984).

With an internal public, for example, the NFL owners fired Tex Schramm because he did not follow the purpose of the dominant alliance. In addition, even though fans, players, and coaches should be priority publics that sports organizations have to fully consider, the dominant alliance (i.e., the NFL team owners) overlooked them. They closed teams whenever profit was not promising. The NFL owners also did not care about 400 players losing their jobs when they disbanded the WLAF in 1993. In this case, the NFL certainly provided "services" to their publics, but did not listen to them or address deeper concerns. The communication was neither symmetrical nor two-way.

The third research question posed the issue of the relationship among publics. The NFL's relationship-building method in Europe was not very effective. Fundamentally, the NFL's approach was not appropriate for mutually beneficial relationship building. Evidence of this can be found in many places. From the beginning of the WLAF, the NFL was concerned about creating a small league that could feed some players to the NFL and give players some extra money. Mike Lynn, president of the WLAF, declared that their goal was to make money. The league looked promising at least for the first year when the London Monarchs and Barcelona Dragons played the inaugural World Bowl game. However, the American teams completely failed to attract fans. TV ratings were so low that ABC and USA Network gave up the league.

Chris Maume (1998), an NFL Europe reporter for *The Independent*, described the England Monarchs, which barely attracted 5,000 attendees in 1998: "A parade of ineptitude from a tawdry collection of rejects and no-hopers" (p. 14). The England Monarchs had been the London Monarchs, the most successful team in the WLAF's inaugural league, but were shut down by NFL officials in 1998. Paul Taliabue, then-commissioner of the NFL, confessed that it was hard to build a fan base without local franchise star players. He mentioned the gap between ability of players from the NFL and local players; however, a real gap existed between the fans' expectations of NFL Europe and NFL owners' perceptions of NFL Europe. In addition, the players did not like the idea of the Plan B free agent system and even filed an antitrust lawsuit which damaged the WLAF directly. League officials responded by shutting down the league, which irreparably damaged the WLAF as well as the players. The NFL owners' main goal was to make money, as Mike Lynn said; therefore, there was no trust between the NFL and its publics, and mutually beneficial relations were not observed.

The fourth research question deals with power relationships within the organization and with other publics. These power relations certainly existed. In particular, *power over* relations were dominant until the WLAF totally collapsed. However, *power over* relations gradually shifted to *power with* relations both within the organization and with other publics. For example, Mike Waller, vice president of NFL International, is now participating in a decision-making process in the NFL organization.

Hegemonic power relations were observed with other publics. The NFL especially struggled with cultural differences. Prince Charles did not know about the World Bowl championship of the WLAF, even though he had dinner with Mike Lynn, president of the league. Playoff games had a lower priority than regular season soccer games of the England Premiere League. Even the success of NFL Europe in Germany did not translate to the NFL's hegemonic success at all because there were no live football broadcasts in Germany. Even the World Bowl game was broadcast one day after the game was actually played.

The NFL, which was one of the most successful professional sports organizations in the world and represented capitalistic hegemony, was demolished by the hegemonic power of European culture. However, giving Mike Waller the title of international relations vice president in the NFL now allows PR practitioners to be involved in the decision-making process. This is *power to* relations, which Berger (2005) defined as practitioners' trying to do the "right" things in opposing the dominant coalition. Therefore, it is safe to say that the NFL's initial *power-over* relations shifted towards *power to* relations.

All findings support and detail the failure of the NFL to globalize. Their poor performance in relationship management and in not following all four typical models of PR, especially the two-way symmetrical model, led to their failure in building a proper relationship with and among publics.

DISCUSSION

The findings of this study underline the crucial role of PR in sports organizations. Without an excellent PR program, sport marketers' efforts to sell advertising and create promotions can be undermined. Marketing myopia in sports deteriorates the sports organization: "A short-sighted focus on quick-return price hikes or investments like sponsorships rather than long-term investments in research and in relationship marketing" (Mullin, Hardy, & Sutton, 2007, p. 12). Mullin et al. listed media and community relations as elements of sports PR; however, they explained that PR is functioning to manage relationships with various publics and create an image with media and the community. Curtin and Gaither (2005) considered sports a powerful cultural agent which can even unify nations and promote social change. Sport is simultaneously shaped by social, economic, and political change. As a result, ideological studies, especially microcosms of sports life and power relations issues, are emerging. Hegemonic research has already been done in sports studies (e.g, Griffin & Genasci, 1990; Messner, 1988; Russell, 2009; Sage, 1998; Simon, 2010).

The findings of this study also have implications for hegemonic relations of the organization. The NFL surely has had capitalistic power, such as the biggest revenue in the world and successful performance in Europe in pre-market testing. The NFL's failure to expand its revenue outside of the U.S. can be explained in part by their deficient PR practice in terms of their relationship management within and among publics. Especially, their *power over* relations relied upon their economic and capitalistic hegemony and prevented creating healthy relationships with their various publics. The solution is to build *power with* relations. NFL league officials changed their power relations to *power with* relations from *power over* relations as reflected by the facts that the head of international relations is also a vice president of the NFL and that its latest corporate catchphrases include such ideas as "responding to fan interest," "sharing the experience," and "extending the sports landscape" (Hey, 2008).

Three propositions can be inferred from this case study. First, power relations are ubiquitous in every organization and every culture. In an international setting, it is crucial to build healthy power relations within organizations and with other publics. PR practitioners should play a role to facilitate *power with* relations within and between publics. Second, mutually beneficial relationship building is crucial in PR practice, and a two-way symmetrical approach is needed to build mutually beneficial relationships. To practice this approach, PR practitioners need to figure out publics and their needs appropriately. Third, both mutually beneficial relationships and the two-way symmetrical approach are representative of *power with* relations. If the two-way symmetrical approach leads to excellent PR practice, as Grunig (2005) insisted, *power with* relations need to be considered an essential practice within organizations.

Ostensibly, the NFL's hegemony was conquered by the cultural hegemony of European countries; however, the real reason for NFL Europe's failure was lack of effective PR by the NFL. Regardless of culture, generic principles exist in PR practice because those principles are keys to overcoming different cultures. Berger's (2005) *power to* relations come into play here because an organization's success requires building the "right" relationships within organizations and between publics, and this is the "right" role of PR practitioners, as the NFL's case shows.

The findings of this study imply that organizations, especially in a global market, need to have a PR perspective that pursues two-way symmetrical and mutually beneficial relationships among publics to establish *power with* relations in different market settings among different cultures and people. In addition, to fulfill this ideal perspective, *power to* relations should be considered within an organization.

LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE STUDY

NFL Europe League games were hugely popular in Germany and the Netherlands, but due to the fact that neither of the researchers read German or Dutch, newspapers in these languages could not be included in the analysis. As Yin (1994) suggested, more data sources are required to obtain stronger reliability and validity. With this in mind, the authors suggest that future study needs to include newspaper articles from Germany and

the Netherlands. Furthermore, to increase methodological preciseness, interviews with reporters who frequently wrote articles about the WLAF and NFL Europe or with representatives of the league could also make this study more reliable.

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Does BCS Money Trickle Down? Marketing Strategies of NCAA College Sports Websites

Stephen McClung and Britney Wright

This research project is a content analysis of official National Collegiate Athletic Association Football Bowl Subdivision member web sites. The 120 colleges and universities are members of the highest collegiate athletic division, and as a result are among the most high profile athletic programs in the nation. The research examines the overall strategies that FBS sites use to market themselves to their fans and audiences. The study finds that two companies account for the construction most of the sites on the market. Despite this apparent duopoly of content creators, there are differences between Sites that are members of the Bowl Championship Series and those who do not automatically qualify for the BCS. Some of those differences are in revenue stream strategies and in branding of the athletic program.

Key Words: NCAA, college football, BCS, web development, marketing strategies

In 1997, Jon Ripperger, former Associate Sports Information Director at Southwest Missouri State University, said, "Right now the Web is still new enough that most people are happy with whatever they get. But, there will soon come a time when they will want more – graphics, video, audio, interaction – and we'll have to respond to those needs" (Sherman, 1997, p. 1). Fullerton (2007) says, "In today's environment it is almost essential for every team, league, association, and event to maintain its own Web site" (p. 424). The sports industry is a $441.1 billion business (Plunkett, 2008) and its presence on the web has only increased its popularity.

According to McClung, Hardin and Mondello (2004), "the neighborhood bar has…been moved to the Web" (p. 35). McClung et al. say "sports sites are popular because of the uses the Web provides for sports fans" (p. 35). Pederson, Miloch and Laucella (2007) note that "compared with traditional sport media, the Internet is immediate and instantaneous" (p. 208). Fans are able to quickly learn the latest scores and updates while sports marketers are able to target visitors with merchandise and promotional materials. As for Ripperger, who also said, "There is no limit to how much time could be spent developing a web site," he is now the Director of MgoBlue.com, the official University of Michigan athletic web site (College Sports Information Directors of America, 2008).

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THE INTERNET

Hoffman, Novak and Chatterjee (1995) describe the Internet as a "culture of connectivity and communications" (Introduction section, ¶ 2). They suggest "the present popularity of the World Wide Web as a commercial medium (in contrast to other networks on the Internet) is due to its ability to facilitate global sharing of information and resources, and its potential to provide an efficient channel for advertising, marketing, and even direct distribution of certain goods and information services" (Introduction section, ¶ 3). According to Rayport and Sviokla (1996), "every business today competes in two worlds: a physical world of resources that managers can see and touch, and a virtual world made of information" (p. 21). A check of the *Fortune* magazine's annual rankings of America's top 1000 companies indicates that all are operating a web site (*Fortune* 500, 2008).

WEB SITE CATEGORIES

Hoffman et al., (1995) categorize web sites into 2 distinct groups: "'Destination Sites' and 'Web Traffic Control Sites'" (The Web as an Active Model of Marketing Communications section, ¶ 4). Destination sites "[compete] for consumers' share of visits on the web." There are three types of destination sites online storefront, Internet presence and content sites." Online storefronts are described as a combination of direct marketing and in-store shopping with "the potential to be vastly more efficient than either." Internet presence sites "provide a virtual 'presence' for a firm and its offerings". This group is comprised of three sub categories: flat ad, image and information. "Flat ads are single page electronic flyers with no hypermedia links. They could just as easily appear in a newspaper or magazine, though a flat ad is decidedly less sophisticated than its print counterparts" (Internet Presence Sites section, ¶ 2). Image sites focus more on "emotional rather than rational [consumer appeal]" and tend to be used with products that have low information need (Internet Presence Sites section, ¶ 3). Information sites provide rational facts and figures about products and are most likely to be used when marketing high risk products. Content sites are also divided into three sub categories: fee-based, sponsorship and searchable database (Hoffman et al., 1995).

Web traffic control sites are used to direct people to the various destination sites on the web. These sites come in the form of "electronic malls, incentive sites and search agents" (Summary and Conclusion section, ¶ 2). With fee based sites, consumers must pay to access certain information on a web site. Sponsored web sites sell advertising to related companies to eliminate the need to charge consumers for site content. Searchable databases are described as "the inverse of Fee-based content model" (Hoffman et al., 1995, Content section, ¶ 3). Web site owners pay to have their web site listed in a database based on the content of their site for consumers to find when looking up certain topics. Mall sites are a collaboration of related business offering their services on one web site. These sites usually charge business to occupy space. Incentive sites serve to attract people to a secondary site through the use of some type of incentive or information. Search agents identify web sites through keyword searches and are typically fee-based or advertising-sponsored.

SPORT WEB SITES

Pedersen, Miloch and Laucella (2007) define sport communication as "the process by which people in sport, in a sport setting, or through a sport endeavor share symbols as they create meaning through interaction" (p. 10). Sport web sites allow marketers to differentiate themselves in a crowded market while at the same time providing an opportunity to gather information about potential consumers in a way traditional media cannot. Caskey and Delpy (1999) organize sport web sites into four categories: "content sites, team or league sites, commerce sites, and gambling sites" (p. 14). The authors also mention fan sites as a likely fifth category although it was not used in their examination.

Content sites are those which gather news and scores from across various sports and often provide their own analysis of the latest sport related events. According to Fullerton (2007), "these sources are independent from the sports themselves…[and] are generally an extension of some media vehicle" (p. 416). Examples of content sites would be ESPN.com, CNNSI.com and SportsLine.com. Team or league sites are the official sites representing a specific sport team or governing body. Examples of team or league sites would be the Los Angeles Lakers team site lakers.com or Major League Baseball site mlb.com. Fullerton (2007) identifies official collegiate athletic web sites as a part of the team or league sites category (p. 416). Commerce sites are those sites designed to sell a sport related product or service. Examples of these sites are Nike.com which sells sporting goods and ticketmaster.com which sells tickets to sporting events. Gambling sites provide information for fans to aid in their gambling decisions and some sites even facilitate wagering on sporting events. Examples of sport gambling sites include sports.com and betus.com. Fan sites comprise all of the unofficial sport sites on the Internet. Sport enthusiasts may create sites supporting their favorite sport, team or even player. For example, dwyane.wade.us is a site created by fans of National Basketball Association player Dwyane Wade. Just as pinstripealley.com was created by fans of the New York Yankees.

REVENUE STREAMS

Team or league sites are not only designed to provide general information, the majority of them also incorporate some form of revenue production. The two prevelant forms of revenue production are e-commerce and advertising and sponsorship opportunities. E-commerce is "the use of the [World Wide Web] to provide a virtual retail storefront where visitors can purchase an array of sports products" (Fullerton, 2007, p. 417). The sale of sport products includes team or league merchandise, tickets, and other paraphernalia unique to the organization.

Online advertising and sponsorship are perhaps the easiest form of online revenue generation. Fullerton (2007) notes, "…banner ads and ad badges are commonly employed in the effort to reach specified target markets" (p. 419). Advertising and sponsorship is arguably more evident in sports than any other industry. According to

Pederson, Miloch and Laucella (2007), "advertising makes up more than $27 billion of the industry," while sponsorships are valued at more than $7 billion (p. 11).

COLLEGE ATHLETICS WEB SITES

According to Johnson C. Smith University Athletics Director, Steve Joyner, "In this information age, the official Web site serves as the largest marketing tool for an athletic department" (Roach, 2007, p. 21). Indeed the Web provides college athletic departments with opportunities the likes of which did not exist fifteen years ago. Official college athletic web sites allow schools to exercise some control over the messages that are disseminated to fans. Athletic departments are no longer "at the mercy of editors and reporters, who have the luxury of picking and choosing what stories they want to write" (Suggs, 2000).

Another incentive athletic departments have for using official college athletic web sites is the revenue possibilities. As Suggs (2000) states, "where there are sports, there are people looking for new ways to make money off them" (p. 1). While the revenue earned from these web sites is sometimes small, Suggs (2000) believes "the rapid advance of technology has opened up a succession of intriguing opportunities in college sports" (p. 1). With the benefits apparent, college athletic departments wasted no time embracing the technology, and in a relatively short time the technology had fully diffused through collegiate athletics (Rogers, 1983).

Kahle and Riley (2004) said "sport has (1) unique combinations of characteristics that (2) lead to unique patterns of psychological responses that therefore (3) demand out of the ordinary attention to a variety of marketing tactics" (xvii). Since the mid 1950s, colleges and universities have realized the value of athletic programs. Most of the news about a college comes in the form of sports news rather than academics, so schools realized the value of marketing and public relations in the athletic department.

With the potential revenue and fans available, it's important to properly utilize a sport web site. Brown (2003) feels "it is important for sport marketers to develop new methods for reaching targeted audiences to increase their organization's share of the Gross Domestic Sports Product" (p. 48). In Chalip's (2004) foreword to *Sport Marketing and the Psychology of Marketing Communication*, sport marketing is described as a combination of three separate marketing strategies. The first marketing strategy is to promote sports as entertainment and "create audiences for sport" (xi). The second marketing strategy promotes increased sport participation, encouraging people to "take part as competitors in sports" (xi). The final marketing strategy deals with using sport to promote "non-sport related products and services" (xi).

Traditionally, collegiate sport marketers have two goals, first to promote their sport and second to promote sponsors through their sport. The advent of the World Wide Web has not changed those goals, but it has enhanced them. Sport marketers are no longer limited to promoting events in a physical manner but also in a digital one. There are many levels in which sport marketers can use the Internet to further their goals. The

web can be used to promote events that are taking place in a physical location or it can be used to develop web only promotions, driving fans to the web site.

Before the Internet became a commercially viable option for athletic departments and sports information directors, print media was the most popular means of disseminating information to the public. Media guides were created before each sport season to include general information about a team. Player biographies, prior season statistics, and information about upcoming opponents can all be found in an athletic media guide and during the season, press packets.

While sports information directors used these materials for decades, as time went on they did not fully meet the public's insatiable need for sports information. With the creation of ESPN, the idea of the 24 hour sport industry became a reality. The commercialization of the computer gave athletic departments greater mobility in terms of producing informational materials. Computers reduced costs and allowed the departments to produce materials on a more frequent basis. As technology progressed, so too did the demands on sports information directors to provide information about their athletic programs. When the Internet became fully diffused the entire athletic department was transformed.

In "Web-Company Officials See Potential in Marketing College Sports Online", Suggs (2000) details the evolution and effect of the Internet in collegiate athletics. When college athletic departments began using the World Wide Web in the mid-1990s, the sites were typically a part of the college or university's official web site. The limitations of using a ".edu" were not as apparent in the beginning because athletic departments were embracing the mere fact that they had an outlet in which they had full control over and did not have to rely on outside media portrayals. As audiences began to expect information at a faster rate, online athletic departments were having difficulty keeping up with demand. Athletic departments would have to gather the information they wanted and submit it to the IT departments and then wait for the IT departments to update the site. This process did not allow for quick updates to the site. Additionally, when a team was on the road for competition, reporting the results of their games took even longer. Athletic departments began to find the task of operating the athletic web site to be more of a burden than a benefit.

The initial upsurge of college athletic departments establishing commercial web sites can be traced back and credited to two interactive cd-rom businesses in the mid-1990s. Duke University and University of Notre Dame fans were selling interactive cd-roms to fans of their respective athletic programs (Suggs, 2000). Suggs attributes the higher profit potential of the World Wide Web as the reason these businesses abandon their cd-rom enterprises and began developing web sites. By the late 1990s, the two cd-rom distributors would become the leading web content management systems for college athletic web sites. By 2000, "Fansonly," which evolved from the Notre Dame CD-ROM distributor, had 76 Division I athletic departments on its client list. At the same time Total Sports, which purchased the Duke University CD-ROM distributor, had 51 Division I athletic departments on its client list. Turing to web content, management

systems allowed athletic departments the ability to keep their sites updated but without the daily work needed to operate the site.

However, by 2000 the World Wide Web was still proving a difficult source to turn a profit for college athletic web sites. While fans valued up to the minute scores and information, the number of American's with personal computers was still low and many people did not trust security of online purchases, limiting the amount of merchandise schools could sell online. Additionally, many companies were hesitant to purchase advertisements on official college athletic web sites because there was no barometer for the success.

The uncertainty of the World Wide Web proved too great for Total Sports and Fansonly. According to Suggs (2000), after posting a $1.6 million loss in 1999 Fansonly was acquired by Student Advantage, a college marketing company. Total Sports was acquired by Quokka Sports in the summer of 2000 in a $120 million stock swap (Suggs, 2000). Even as the World Wide Web became more accessible to the masses, the revolving door of leading web content management systems continued. By 2007, CSTV Digital Subscription and XOS technologies were the largest web content management companies in collegiate athletics (Roach, 2007). CSTV was partnered with nearly 215 collegiate athletics departments and XOS was partnered with 150 (Roach, 2007). By the middle of 2007 though, XOS was acquired by JumpTV for $60 million dollars (Goldberg, 2007).

In June 2005, CSTV partnered with CBS SportsLine for the exclusive streaming rights of the NCAA Division I men's basketball tournament. This deal also allowed CSTV access to NCAA and CBS SportsLine materials and information for use on its official collegiate athletic web sites (CBS Sports, 2008). Months after this agreement CBS SportsLine announced that it would acquire CSTV in its entirety as part of a $325 million deal (Diverse Issues in Higher Education, 2005). The acquisition included not only cstv.com but also all of the collegiate athletic web sites CSTV managed. CSTV remained a distinct part of CBS SportsLine and CBS Sports until early 2008 when CBS Sports announced that the division would change its name to CBS College Sports Network effective March 1, 2008, and completely merge all its operations with CBS Sports (CBS Sports, 2008).

FOOTBALL BOWL SUBDIVISION

According to Mahan and McDaniel in "New Online Arena: Sport, Marketing, and Media Converge in Cyberspace" (2006), "traditional media typically cater to coverage of major college programs and so-called revenue-generating sports such as football and basketball" (p. 1). While the Internet has the ability to act as an equalizer between larger and smaller athletic programs in terms of getting information to the masses, disparities still persist online. Larger athletic programs typically have greater autonomy than smaller school when it comes to financing and operating an athletic web site. Then there are the disparities between BCS and non-BCS schools.

Much has been made recently about the disparity of income between BCS leagues and non automatic qualifying leagues. Utah Senator Orrin Hatch (R-UT) has called the BCS, "an illegal monopoly benefiting six conferences at the expense of smaller schools," (*Street and Smith's Sports Business Journal*, 2009). Hatch held a Senate hearing on the matter noting how, in part, that the revenue distribution between BCS and non-BCS schools was unfair and that the six BCS leagues held an illegal financial advantage. At the time, there was a bill pending in the U.S. Senate to strip the BCS of the title of "National Championship" because it was impossible for the non-BCS schools to play in the title game (*Street and Smith's Sports Business Journal*, 2009). More recently, in another type of discrepancy, a Florida lawyer noted that non-BCS and HBCUs (Historically Black Colleges and Universities) tend to be hit harder with NCAA sanctions, the only common penalties across all NCAA classifications, than schools of the six BCS leagues (Ruibal, 2009).

While college web sites are gaining visitors, their viewership and revenue still pales in comparison to that of espn.go.com and sportsillustrated.cnn.com. The Football Bowl Subdivision athletic web sites have an average of 31,000 visitors monthly. This number is vastly overshadowed by the millions of visitors the three major sport web sites, ESPN, Sports Illustrated and Fox Sports, have monthly. The official athletic web sites may also find it hard to compete against fan web sites because they are restricted by NCAA regulation from talking about potential recruits until the recruit has signed to play with that school (Suggs, 2000). Nevertheless, athletic departments continue to expand and develop their web sites in order to meet the ever growing fans' desire for all things sport.

RELATED RESEARCH

Currently, there is limited research related to content analysis of college athletic web sites. Finley and Finley (2003) published the only research directly related to this project. The research consisted of three goals, with the first two goals providing the most relevance. First, the researchers wanted to "determine the specific features (content) included on web sites promoting women's cross country at NCAA schools," and second "determine the differences in content provided and frequency of content exhibited between Divisions (I, II, III)" (Abstract section, ¶ 1). While the research focused on components of the athletics web site that directly related to recruiting in women's cross country, quantitative approach was taken that could be used in studying other parts of the web sites as well. Finley and Finley observed the frequency of 40 different web site features across 108 NCAA women's cross country web sites to determine the rate of use for each feature.

According to Finley and Finley (2003), only two features were available on over 90 percent of the 36 Division I women's cross country sites analyzed. Those features were the team schedule (94.44 %) and headline stories about the team/program (91.67 %). There were 12 features that appeared on less than 10 percent of the Division I web sites, including five features that appeared on Division II and III web sites but did not appear on a single Division I site. Among those low frequency features were team photos

(8.33%), cross country course map (5.56 %), course records list (5.56 %), training venues information (8.33 %), alumni biography listing (2.78%), alumni biography listing questionnaire (2.78 %), and alumni e-mail list (5.56 %). Those features present on Division II and III web sites but not on Division I web sites include: coaching philosophy, athletes' testimonials, other coaches' testimony about the team's coach, video webcast of a competition, and a coach interviewed on video.

On the basis of content Finley and Finley, (2003) concluded the web sites left much to be desired failing to include many of the components the authors believed were critical to successfully reaching prospective athletes. Furthermore, the authors proposed future research including "analyses of web sites for other sports, both revenue and non-revenue" (Recommendations section, ¶ 9).

Based on the preceding, these research questions are asked:

R1: "What are the overall marketing strategies of Football Bowl Subdivision member web sites?"

R2: What differences exist between Bowl Championship Subdivision member websites and non-Bowl Championship Subdivision member (non AQ) web sites?

METHODOLOGY

The web site ESPN.com lists every school competing in the Football Bowl Subdivision. With these 120 schools identified, the next step was identifying their official athletic department web site. The National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) provides links to the athletic web sites of all of their member institutions, including the 120 Football Bowl Subdivision schools. These links were verified and compiled into a master list.

The master list was entered into the HTTrack web site copier which downloads the content of web sites to be saved. The program preserves the state of a web site at the time of download. The main goal of this research is to determine what content is on these sites and how that content is presented. Only the first level of these sites, the home page, was analyzed. The home page acts a portal to pages lower in the site and provides the most sales, promotional and indexing information to capture users' attention. In addition to the first level, splash pages appearing before the first level will also be counted. The primary categories included for analysis are identification, content, and feature variables.

The code book for this research was adapted from research (Bates, Chambers, Emery, Jones, McClung, & Park, 1997; Potter, 2002; McClung et al., 2004) concerning Internet media websites and Internet sports sites. Identification variables include the web site URL, domain type, and whether the site is on its own server. The domain types are coded either .com or .edu. Content related variables represent the largest portion of this research and include news, promotional content, advertising, menus, and links to other content. The number of each variable is counted and its location and size was analyzed.

Feature variables include multimedia, such as audio and video, as well as splash pages. Unsolicited video, which starts immediately when a page loads, will be counted separately from those requiring the user to manually start them. Because splash pages are not used on every web site, they are coded as a feature variable and their existence before each home page was categorized as either present or not. The type of splash page present will be coded based on the page's main purpose.

The web sites will also be compared based on their institution's membership in a Bowl Championship Series conference. BCS member sites will be compared to non-BCS member sites to determine differences in their web content.

RESULTS

The website capture gathered 120 homepages, each the official web site of the NCAA FBS member institutions. The results of the data collection were separated into three categories: identification, content, and feature variables. The first section of the results is the overall frequencies. The second section of the results is a comparison of BCS and non BCS web sites and variables in which large variances appeared between the two.

R1: "What are the overall marketing strategies of Football Bowl Subdivision member web sites?"

IDENTIFICATION VARIABLES

There are four identification variables: BCS membership, content management host, word "official" on the homepage, and existence of an identification variable. There are presently 66 BCS member institutions (55 %) in the FBS and 54 non BCS member institutions (45 %). The sites are managed by a total of 10 content hosts; however, the majority of these sites (89.2 %) are managed by one of two companies, CBS College Sports (60 percent) and JumpTV (29.2 %). CBS College Sports manages 72 sites, while JumpTV manages 35. Internet Consulting Services is the only other host managing multiple sites in this data. Four of the sites are managed entirely by their athletic departments, and one site is operated within its university's site. Overall, 89 of the 120 sites feature the word official on the site, and identification banners are featured on 119 of the sites.

CONTENT VARIABLES

There were 23 individual menu categories observed here, as well as an "other" category which includes any menu headings not compatible with the categories outlined. Only the main menu heading was analyzed as it is the first information a user sees and likely determines will go within the site. As indicated in Figure 1, the menu categories appearing on the most sites are Athletics/Teams (117), Athletics Department (112), Tickets (106), Donors (96), and Multimedia (90). The Awards category was the only

featured on less than 10 percent of the sites, with only two sites featuring the category as a main menu heading.

Figure 1

Menu Categories Appearing On Websites
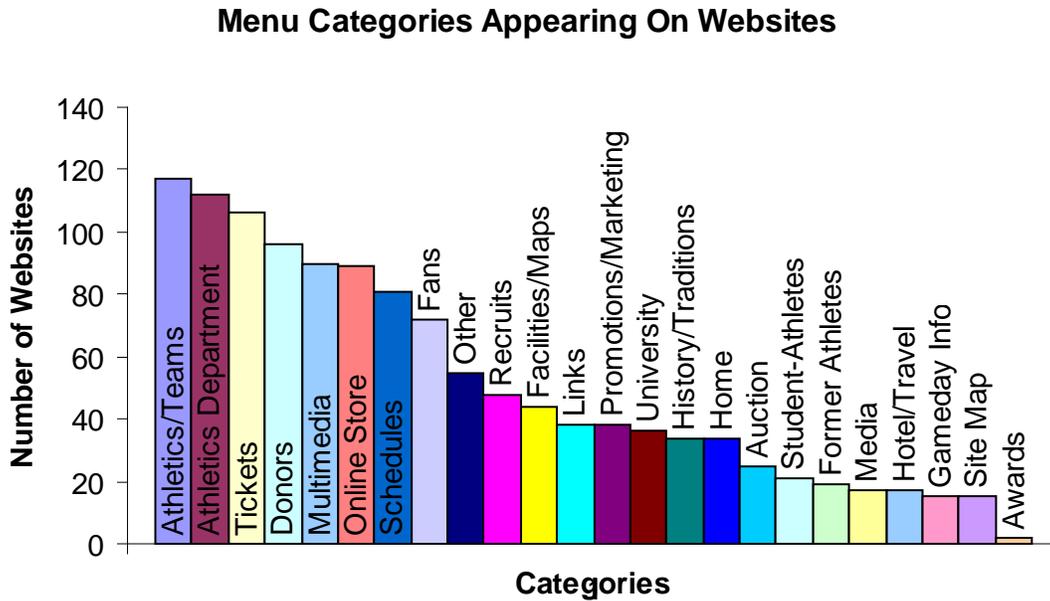
Every site analyzed featured at least three internal news stories, with the majority of sites containing between 9 and fourteen news stories. There is an extreme outlier in the results of this category, as one site included 104 internal news stories on the homepage. No other site featured more than 34 internal news stories on the homepage.

While every site included ticket sales information, the format varied. There were three formats for marketing ticket information: icons, links, and internal site pop-ups. Icons were not used heavily, with over half of the sites using a ticket icon or none at all. The majority of the sites feature at least one ticket link. Only 12 sites are without at least one ticket link. The use of ticket information in internal pop-ups was rare, with only three sites using the format.

Donor information is presented in two formats on these sites, either as icons or as links. Less than half of the sites use icons while more than two thirds use at least one link to provide donor information. Merchandising information is presented in two formats, icons and links. The sites are more likely to use merchandise icons. 110 of the 120 sites feature at least one merchandise link. Over one-third of the sites (42) use two merchandise sites. Less than half of the sites use icons while more than two thirds use at least one link to provide donor information. While majority of the sites include at least one merchandise link, nearly a quarter of the sites (29) do not use merchandise links.

Figure 2

Merchandise Icons
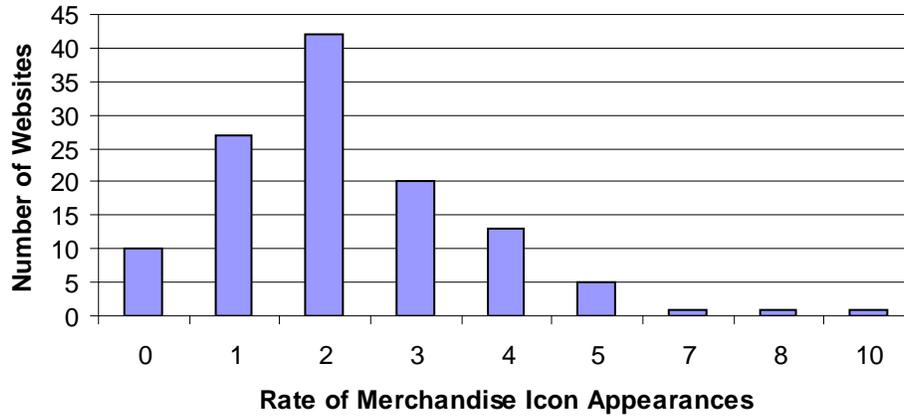
The inclusion of university, conference, and NCAA links and logos is varied amongst the sites. 44 sites use links to provide university information and 43 sites use logos to provide university information. Similar to university information, conference information in the form of links and icons are featured on majority of the sites. However, of the 75 sites displaying conference information, there is an overwhelming move towards the use of logos rather than links. Only eight sites use links to connect users to conference information, while 68 sites feature conference logos on the homepage. Unlike university and conference information, NCAA information is only featured on about a third of the sites. Of the 40 sites displaying NCAA information, only one site provides the information in the form of a link.

There is at least one advertisement on nearly all sites; 115 of the 120 sites examined have advertisements. Advertising banners and icons are used at nearly the same rate. Most (92) sites display at least one advertising banner on the homepage and 96 sites use at least one advertising icon on the homepage. This indicates majority of the sites (68) include at least one advertising banner and at least one advertising icon on their homepage. The use of external advertising pop-ups was rare with only 10 sites including an advertising pop-up. The business types featured in site advertisement was separated into for profit and not for profit advertising. An overwhelming majority of sites (112) display advertisements of for profit businesses. Not for profit businesses only advertised on 14 sites, and only one site included more than one not for profit business advertisement.

Figure 3

Advertising Icons
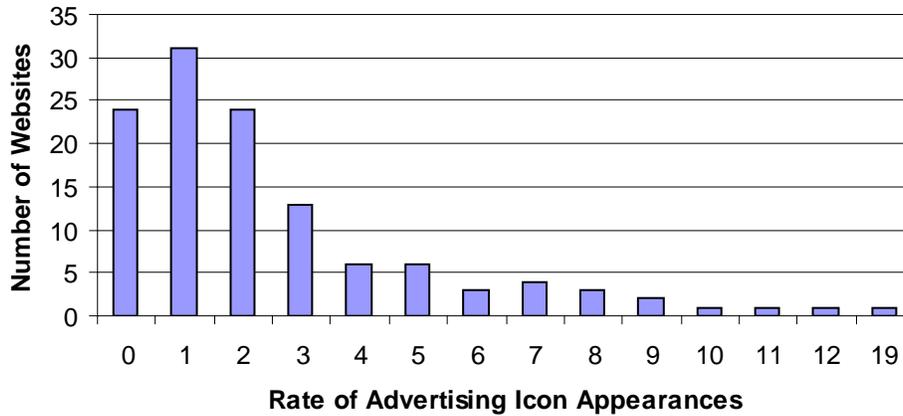
Figure 4

For Profit Advertising
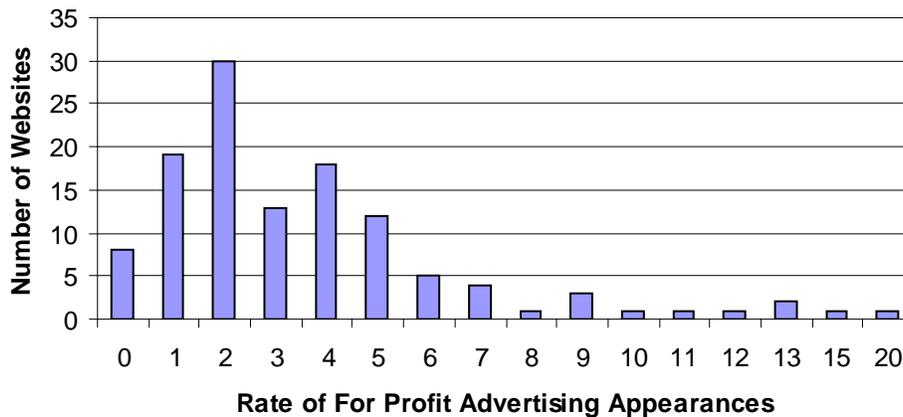
As with advertising, sponsorships were on a majority of the sites as 112 sites included at least type of sponsorship on the site. Sponsor links and banners are rarely used on the sites, while sponsor icons are used heavily. Nearly 90 percent (107) of the sites have at least one sponsor icon on their site, with majority of the sites featuring between one and five sponsor icons. Internal site pop-ups were used on 24 of the sites and the most common information displayed in these pop-ups is merchandise related.

Figure 5

Sponsorship Icons
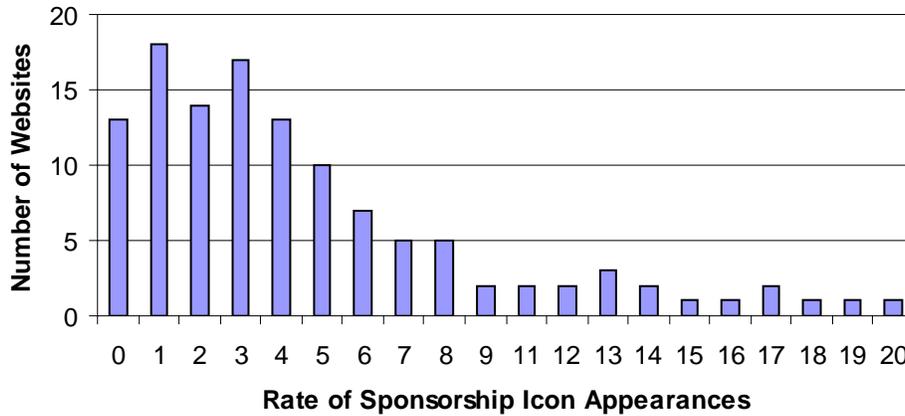
FEATURE VARIABLES

Feature variables included in these results are the types of multimedia included in these sites and the presence and content of splash pages. There are nine multimedia tools observed here and the two most popular are RSS (114) and solicited videos (104). The least common multimedia element on these homepages is the use of unsolicited videos (10).

Figure 6. Multimedia Strategies used on NCAA FBS Websites

Multimedia
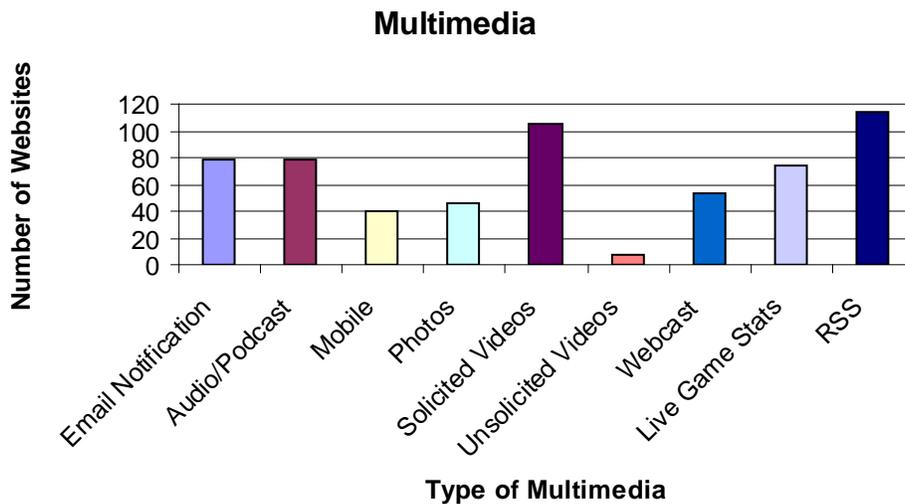
Less than a quarter of the sites (28) use splash pages to display information before the homepage is reached. Of those 28 splash pages observed, 20 splash pages display information pertaining to tickets while 8 were promotional in nature, promoting a specific team, employee, or other aspect of the athletic department like a bowl game.

R2: What differences exist between Bowl Championship Subdivision member websites and non-Bowl Championship Subdivision member (non AQ) web sites?

CO-BRANDING WITH THE CONFERENCE.

Overall BCS and non-BCS sites looked and most used the same marketing strategies, but there were exceptions. Generally, there are more multimedia options on BCS member sites and they tend to be multimedia options that are more expensive to employ. Non-BCS members tended to co-brand their athletic programs more. These programs co-brand with their conferences and their university more than BCS members. The average number of conference logos on the sites reveals difference between Non-BCS member sites and BCS member sites. Most non-BCS members (M= .78, SD= .420) include their conference logo on their sites' homepage compared to only 26 of BCS (M= .39, SD= .490) members (t= 4.536, p= 000). Also, non-BCS members (M= .81, SD= .392) tend to have information about their conference on their websites than BCS members (M= .47, SD= .503) (t= 4.130, p=.000) (see Table 1). Non-BCS members (M= .41, SD= .496) were also more likely to have a menu link that connected the user to the academic university than BCS schools (M= .21, SD= .412) (t= 2.357, p=0.02), which is another method of co-branding.

Table 1. Co-branding tools used by non-BCS members.

	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means				
	F	Sig.	t	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference
Conference Information Equal var. assumed	41.073	.000	4.120	118	.000	.345	.084
Conference Information-Logo Equal var. assumed	16.966	.000	4.536	118	.000	.384	.085

USE OF MULTIMEDIA

While all of the sites were using multimedia to attract and retain fans on their sites there were also differences in the types of multimedia used between the schools on these levels. One difference was in a section of the sites designated as "Fan" areas. Less than half of non-BCS member sites (M= .48, SD= .504) featured a "Fans" category on their main menu, while most BCS member sites (M= .71, SD= .489) feature the category and the mean difference between the schools was significant (t= -2.535, p=013). Many of the "Fans" areas are full of interactive and user driven technologies. For instance, fans can upload YouTube videos, use discussion boards and chat with other fans. These multimedia programs are generally more expensive to employ on a website. On the other hand, non-BCS members are more likely than BCS members to feature a "Recruits" category in their sites' main menu. This is to aid the schools in recruiting new student

athletes via the Internet and more than half of Non-BCS members have a "Recruits" category (M= .57, SD= .499) compared with a only a quarter of BCS members (M= .26, SD= .441) (t= 3.687; p=000).

While sports related websites often are information portals for fans, they more often than not attempt to make money from merchandising. College athletic department websites are no different. However, there seems to be more of an emphasis on merchandising on BCS school sites. BCS members had more merchandising icons on their pages than non-BCS members. While non-BCS members averaged just under two per page (M=1.71, SD= 1.143), athletic programs averaged almost three merchandising icons per page (M=2.74, SD= 1.748) (t= -3.757, p=.000).

Table 2. T-tests for marketing strategy differences between BCS and non-BCS websites.

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference
		Lower	Upper	Lower	Upper	Lower	Upper	Lower
Merchandise Information-Icons	Equal var. assumed	3.728	.056	-3.757	118	.000	-1.039	.276
Advertising Popup	Equal var. assumed	35.520	.000	2.813	118	.006	.189	.067
Not For Profit Advertising	Equal var. assumed	16.508	.000	2.106	118	.037	.180	.086
Website Sponsors	Equal vari. assumed	3.967	.049	-2.392	118	.018	-1.162	.486

There are four variables which indicate significant differences between non-BCS and BCS member sites and all are related to revenue generation. The four variables are merchandising icons, pop-up ads, non-profit (not-for-profit) advertisers, and website sponsors. These areas all are indicative of revenue generating tactics and are more prevalent on BCS websites than schools who are not members of the Bowl Championship Series (see table 2).

Non-BCS members (M= .53, SD= .541) are less likely to include audio/podcast elements on their homepage, while most BCS members (M= .77, SD= .422) use the feature (t= -2.769, p=.007). Non-BCS members (M= .50, SD= .505) are also less likely to have live game statistics on their homepage when compared to BCS members (M= .71, SD= .456) (t= -2.415, p=.017). While less than half of BCS and non-BCS members feature some type of photo gallery or photo link on their homepages, only 25 percent (n=14) of non-BCS members use the feature compared to 48 percent (n=32) of BCS members.

DISCUSSION

The identification data collected here identifies some trends. CBS College Sports manages 60 percent of Football Bowl Subdivision Athletic web sites, while JumpTV manages 29.2 percent, for a combined total of nearly 90 percent of the sites. This is not surprising as both companies started in the collegiate sport media industry and evolved with the technological advances of the last decade. CBS College Sports manages over 200 Division I athletic web sites, which is inclusive of both Football Bowl Subdivision and Football Championship Subdivision athletic departments, as well as non-football sponsoring athletic departments in the NCAA's highest division. The company also manages the NCAA's official web site which may bolster its reputation in the eyes of athletic media operators and contributed to its stronghold in this niche market. The fact only four athletic departments operate their own web site is likely because of the time and financial resources required to fully develop, operate, and maintain a web site which meets the standards of most athletic departments and their audiences. However, those athletic departments may find their staff is skilled enough in web development to produce a more cost effective site than using a company such as CBS College Sports, which can charge an annual rate of anywhere from $10,000 to the mid five figure range depending on services provided (Smith, 2009).

It is important that these web sites distinguish themselves as the authentic site representing their College or University's Department of Athletics. The word "official" and the appearance of trademarked logos and imagery are the easiest and most effective method of distinguishing or branding a site from fan sites. The word "official," or one similar of meaning, appear on 89 of the 120 sites. Some athletic departments may find it unnecessary or some may have simply overlooked the small variable. But it's clear that the word "official" establishes credibility.

CONTENT

The one common content category every FBS member site uses is internal news stories. Every site includes at least three stories, and one extreme outlier features 104 headlines on the homepage. Most sites include between 9 and fourten news stories on the homepage, which includes about three to five main stories and the remainder as headline and feature stories. Featuring multiple news stories on the homepage acts as an overview of the multiple athletic programs within the department, and provides a quick overview of the most recent activities within the department and programs. It is also an inexpensive way to keep users returning to the sites as these are text updates with no multimedia involved.

Ticket sales, Donors, and Merchandise licenses are typically the largest sources of revenue for athletic departments, so it is no surprise the three are heavily promoted on the athletic department web sites. Sites are more likely to use ticket links than ticket icons for a few reasons. The first reason is there is little need for visuals in conveying the promotion of tickets; that is to say, people are not persuaded to buy tickets based on their appearance. The second reason for the higher use of ticket links is 106 sites include ticket information in their main menu which accounts for one link appearance. While

athletic department representatives may put together icons promoting special prices for specific athletic events, it is less time consuming to write a single word or statement which links to the full information.

Donor information follows the same trends as ticket information with sites utilizing links more often than icons. Of the 120 sites, 96 included donor information in their main menu, while less than half of the sites use donor icons. Again this is largely attributed to the unnecessary need for images when requesting people provide money. The few icons featured on the sites either included the donor organization logo or images of a student athlete or facility to show potential donors how their funds are used. In the instances of student-athlete or facility images the purpose is clearly to evoke an emotional response in users, with the hopes it will compel them to donate.

Unlike the ticket and donor information on the sites, merchandise information is more often presented in the form of icons rather than links. Most (70 percent) of the sites include two or more merchandise icons, compared with a 20 percent rate of two or more merchandise links. Merchandise icons allow users to view samples of products which, if they find appealing, will drive them to the sites' online stores. It is much harder to attract merchandise buyers with a product name and price, particularly if the price is higher than some may be willing to pay. If users can see what they perceive to be quality merchandise, they may be more likely to purchase it than simply reading a description provided in a link.

As discussed in the literature review, advertising and sponsorship in the sport industry involves deals for billions of dollars annually. There is at least one advertisement on 96 percent of all FBS sites. Icons are used at higher rates than banners and external popups, probably because they are less likely to distract users from the athletic departments' own content, and the widespread use of popup blockers prevents external ads from appearing on users' computer screens. As for the sites which do not include advertisements, the decision may be based on maintaining the integrity and focus of the site. The advertising on some sites is not related to either the sport industry or the geographical location of the athletic departments, and therefore may create an unprofessional appearance in the eyes of users. Sponsorship is often viewed more positively than advertising and presents many opportunities. Nearly all (93 percent) of sites use sponsorship strategies, primarily in the form of icons. These icons are typically displayed in a designated section of the homepage, while some sites allow for feature sponsorship and will display the icon somewhere in that feature section.

FEATURES

The multimedia features as they are today were nearly nonexistent when these sites were first released on the Internet. Now the use of multimedia is used to distinguish lower level web sites from higher level web sites. The most popular multimedia feature is RSS (Real Simple Syndicator), which allows users to subscribe to the sites' news stories and view them in a news reader, along with any other feeds they subscribe to, without visiting the site directly. Although athletic departments would prefer users to visit their site they recognize, in today's environment there is more information available

online than there is time in the day to digest it all. RSS allows users to consolidate the sites they visit frequently into one reader and in a sense acts as a way for athletic departments to reach users without waiting for them to visit the official site each day.

Solicited videos are also on more than 100 sites, while unsolicited videos are used on the homepages of fewer than 20 sites. Solicited videos are more common than unsolicited videos because many computer users often multitask when visiting web sites, performing tasks such as watching TV, listening to music or completing work. Therefore unsolicited videos are seen as an interruption to other activities and are intrusive. Additionally, when a user chooses to view a video from the video player menu, it typically guides the user to more information about the video options the site provides. Other popular multimedia features are email notification, audio/podcast, and live game statistics, all of which provide a way for the athletic departments to reach users who may not visit the site daily or are unable to follow athletic events in person or on the television.

Splash pages are not a widely used with less than a quarter of sites using them at the time of data collection. However, there is likely a large fluctuation in the use of splash pages depending on the time of year. At the time of this data collection, eligible football programs were preparing for postseason bowl games, and majority of the splash pages were reflective of this, with sites either purely promoting the football team or directing site users to purchase tickets for their team's bowl game. Other splash pages promoted the hiring of new coaches or the sale of tickets for other winter sports. In all likelihood the use of splash pages is even lower in the summer when there are few if any sporting events taken place.

RESEARCH QUESTION 2 - BCS/NON-BCS

While stated previously, that generally all FBS sites are similar, there are some notable differences. After all the sites are created by mostly two companies that undoubted work from templates that are used for every school. However, there are some differences between BCS and non-BCS schools that tend to point to the money gap between them. While subtle, the differences appear to lie in the ability of BCS to afford to use strategies that are more expensive, and non-BCS schools to use the sites to establish credibility, identity and use the sites as an inexpensive way to aid in recruiting.

CONTENT

There are menu categories which yield differences between BCS and Non-BCS member sites. While most BCS members include a "Fans" section in the main menu, less than half of non-BCS sites include the section. This section is multimedia heavy which means more interactivity and generally a higher price tag to construct. Inversely, non-BCS members are more than twice as likely to include a "Recruits" section than BCS members. The clearest rationale for this pattern is likely related to athletic department money and priorities.

Based on their reputation and high visibility, BCS schools usually attract the most talented high school and junior college recruits. These recruits generally don't scour the Internet for program information as a typical student would look for information about potential colleges. Coaches and athletic department representatives determine which athletes they want to recruit and will reach out to them directly in part because recruiting budgets are higher at BCS schools and more one-on-one contact can be afforded. Non-BCS members do not typically have the recruiting resources or reputation to match those of BCS members, so they are more likely to utilize their sites to provide any interested recruits with information. It's a more cost effective tool for narrowing down the recruits that the coaches can spend resources on actually visiting.

Another difference between BCS and non-BCS members' sites are the presence of conference logos. Non-BCS members tend to not be as well recognized as BCS members and therefore co-brand with their conferences to create a better (brand) awareness of the program. For example, a person may not recognize the Southern Methodist University Athletics Department, but a fan may recognize Conference USA and the association strengthens SMU's athletic position and brand awareness among all college football fans. Unlike the university and conference information, NCAA information is only visible on 33 percent of athletic homepages. Many programs may feel displaying NCAA information on the main page is unnecessary as the NCAA is the largest and most well known collegiate athletic association in the United States and it simply assumed the program is a member.

REVENUE STREAMS

Another area where BCS and non-BCS sites differ is that of areas that can generate revenue. BCS sites tend to have more multimedia options that tend to generate revenue. BCS sites have more merchandising icons, pop-up ads, not-for-profit advertisers and website sponsors. At first, it may be that the differences here are market driven. However, it could be that the differences are that non-BCS schools may have fewer of these options because they are more expensive to employ. It takes more money to fulfill ecommerce orders and revenue is something that non-BCS members are comparatively short on, compared to BCS schools. It takes money to make money and it is possible that is the phenomenon at work here.

CONCLUSION

When looking at the overall picture here, it's clear that there are more similarities than differences. The similarities are to be expected because the companies that make the sites basically operate in a monopolistic situation. Economies of scale would dictate that the product is very similar in design and in fact the sites do appear to be made from a template. However, there are differences in the two "levels" of the FBS. And the differences appear to separate these levels of FBS. Most of those differences are areas that seem to be in revenue generating areas. BCS schools have more interactive options, more revenue generating strategies, and rely less on their conferences and universities to establish their brand. While it's not possible to establish the differences that these options

mean in raw dollars, it's clear that more probably means more. The rich are likely getting richer in terms of traffic and revenue generation.

This study is a starting point for future researchers to explore specific aspects of college athletic web sites. There is potential evidence of the bandwagon theory's application in college athletic web sites. For example, the use of multimedia is increasing on these web sites, but the utilization of these tools may warrant closer examination. Are web site managers compelled to feature these multimedia tools because they see the industry widely accepting it, or because they truly intend to incorporate and transmit their messages through these mediums, or because one segment of this group can simply afford to do it?

Future research might also focus on the subcategories of specific variables. An analysis of the internal news stories would determine what subjects are covered in those news stories, potentially unveiling biases in internal news coverage. Marketers might also be interested in determining advertising trends on these web sites. While this research analyzed the number, and type of advertisements featured on the sites, it did not analyze the advertising content, beyond distinguishing for-profit and not-for profit advertisers. The ratio of local advertising to national advertising, or sport related advertising to non-sport related advertising on these web sites may yield useful information. Beyond the official athletic web sites, future research could analyze the content of the athletic departments' official subscription fan sites, or their presence on, and use of, social networking sites.

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THE MAKING OF A SPORTS REPORTER: KEY KNOWLEDGE AND SKILL SETS

JOSEPH H. MOORE

It is imperative to educate journalism students for the ever-changing job market into which they will enter. One facet of journalism that has seen a great deal of change is sports reporting, yet the training of future sports reporters has not been studied extensively. The advent of blogs, social networking, and multimedia platforms for presenting sports content has necessitated an examination of journalism education. The current study attempts to determine whether professional sports reporters in newspapers and television believe the traditional journalism skills (AP style and grammar, interviewing, feature and investigative reporting) should remain as the focus in college journalism courses, or if emphasis should be given to more contemporary skill-sets (photography and videography, Web development, ability to write across platforms). The study sought to lay the groundwork for more extensive research in the future. Newspaper and television sports reporters were asked which abilities they deem most important for college journalism graduates. In an e-mail survey, 120 sports reporters in Missouri and Kansas were asked to rate 15 knowledge and skills sets on a semantic differential from one (not necessary) to 10 (essential). The purpose of the study was to determine which knowledge and skill sets sports editors and directors believed are most important, if decision makers in newspaper and television sports have the same priorities, and if reporters from large, medium and small markets share similar beliefs. Overall, 53 sports reporters (36 from newspapers, 17 from television stations) responded. The general consensus was that, despite the changing media that relies so much on the Internet, it is the basics—grammar skills, interviewing skills, the ability to write features, and to report ethically—that received the highest marks.

Key Words: journalism, journalism education, sports reporters

In the fall of 2006 a sportswriter friend made a request: Please teach your students proper grammar. He complained that his newspaper frequently saw recent college graduates who did not know correct grammar, usage, spelling, punctuation, or Associated Press style. That request begged the question, "What knowledge and skill sets do professional journalists view as most important? Given the trends in the media, should teaching of traditional subjects in college journalism programs continue, or is it time to place more emphasis on the skills needed in the convergence age.

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In 2002, Columbia University president Lee Bollinger broached this subject, as he called for journalism reform at his university, going so far as to suspend his university's search for a new head of its graduate program in journalism while a task force considered the need for a specific journalism curriculum. In response, Dates (2006), defended journalism education, writing:

> Unlike doctors and lawyers, who must follow a specific course of study to enter their fields, journalists often enter the industry through varied routes. So, too, do journalism educators. But, regardless of how we get here, one thing unites us: a desire to help our students learn best how to inform and engage our readers and viewers as honestly and as fairly as we can. (p. 144)

College textbooks, such as Melvin Mencher's *News Reporting and Writing* (2008), Brooks, Kennedy, Moen, and Ranly's (The Missouri Group's) *Telling the Story: The Convergence of Print, Broadcast and Online Media* (2008), and Tim Harrower's *Inside Reporting: A Practical Guide to the Craft of Journalism* (2007), address the basics of news reporting, from writing the lead to structuring the story, from covering a beat to using numbers. They also discuss different styles of writing, including writing for broadcast, online, and public relations.

What these texts do not answer, however, is which skills journalists consider most crucial, particularly with the changing media of the 21st century. They do not go into detail about how to produce a short-form video or podcast, or how to determine which hyperlinks should be included in order to provide the layers necessary for producing an online package. Nor do they consider the specialized field of sports writing and how convergent skills may be critical for reporters attempting to feed the insatiable appetites of the most rabid sports fans. The present study attempted to address these issues.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Bollinger is not the only one who sees the need to investigate how journalism is taught. Academicians and professional journalists alike are struggling to keep up with the convergence of new and old media in an effort to package news as "consumers are encouraged to seek out new information and make connections" (Jenkins, 2006, p. 3).

Nordenstreng (2008) wrote that "due to technological developments, the boundaries are dissolving between different media" (p. 38). He added that "we have been monomedia oriented with newspapers, radio, television, etc. each in its own pigeonhole, but this way of thinking will become increasingly outdated and replaced by the multimedia mindset" (p. 39).

In addition, it seems if journalists are to survive, they also may need to broaden their skill sets and learn more "tricks of the trade." In 2008, television news saw 1,200 jobs lost (Eggerton, 2009). It was even worse for those in the print industry in 2008, as almost 6,000 newspaper journalists lost their jobs, in part because of economic cutbacks,

and in part due to "consistent losses of ad revenue and the challenges from broadcast, online, and other electronic sources" (Harper, 2009, p. 1).

Dueze (2004) noted that "sooner or later all media organizations move towards a stage where integration of different parts of the news-making process (including audio, video, text, images, graphics; but also marketing, cross-promotion, sales, redistribution and interactivity with publics) is achieved" (p. 140). He defined the term "multimedia" by providing examples of multimedia journalism, such as stand-ups where print journalists present some aspect of the news on camera for their company's television counterpart or for streaming on the Internet, galleries or slideshows of pictures for their company's Web site, and fully integrated media projects where workers from print, broadcast and online work together.

Kraeplin and Criado (2005) discussed the importance of developing a convergence curriculum and the angst felt by faculty in both the print and broadcast:

> Many of us teaching journalism find this presents challenges. A truly converged curriculum requires the blending of two very different cultures and approaches— print and broadcast. Add the Internet to the mix and one has a stew of different technologies, visual needs, conceptual approaches, etc. (p. 48)

From a national survey, Kraeplin and Criado (2005) learned that 23.5 percent of television managers and 16.2 percent of newspaper managers believed convergence skills were "very important" (p. 50). They also learned that about 80 percent of television managers and 60 percent of newspaper managers valued the ability to write across platforms, and just under one-third of media managers thought it was important for journalists to know Web language and design (p. 51). Finally, Kraeplin and Criado learned that more than 98 percent of media managers viewed writing/reporting skills and news judgment as important, and more than 92 percent believed knowledge of media law and ethics were important. What they did not consider was the impact experience or market size could have on these opinions.

Other studies have been conducted that demonstrate the importance of traditional journalism skills. In particular, Pierce and Miller (2007) wrote "In the mid-1980s, studies revealed that many media professionals were displeased primarily with basic writing skills of new graduates" (p. 51). Similarly, the authors noted that in 1990 the American Society of Newspaper Editors published a report stating editors were looking for "basic journalism skills such as writing skills, spelling/grammar knowledge, and knowledge about journalism ethics" (p. 51).

All these other studies have considered the hard news side—politics, business, education and the like—but what about those who produce the sports sections and segments? Do they believe the contemporary, convergent skills or the traditional skills are more important for college graduates? Rein, Kotler, and Shields (2007) made the argument that the sports media field seems to be a good area to consider, given the changing climate of the media in the new century:

There is probably no better place to examine the media landscape in the next decades than the sports arena, especially the first big players in this highly lucrative, multibillion-dollar worldwide industry. (p. 40)

To be sure, the Internet and social media have reached the athletic arena. Much was made of the lawsuit brought by St. Louis Cardinals' manager Tony LaRussa against Twitter (AP, 2009). Dart (2009) examined the use of blogging during the FIFA World Cup Finals. Galily (2008) reported that the World Wide Web, because of its "accessibility, interactivity, speed, and multi-media content" (p. 273) have generated a change in the manner in which sports information is distributed. Some view these new methods as a good thing. Beck and Bosshart (2003) recognized what could be perceived as the positive relationship between sports and the Internet. They noted that "statistics, plans, and background information can be consulted without any problems because of the almost unlimited memory capacity of the World Wide Web" (p. 14). They also noted that, because of discussion forums, blogs and opportunities for viewer feedback, the Internet allows for more interaction with audiences. Further, Beck and Bosshart said, the Internet provides sportswriters fast transfer of information, "so it is well suited to the transmission of short sports stories" (p. 14). Boyle (2006) added that the Internet allows for more flexibility for sports journalists:

While both television and radio have driven this process, the print media have also found that new technology has enabled them to shift deadlines and given a greater degree of flexibility to the ability of newspapers to change and update stories. (p. 83)

Boyle (2006) asserted that this change would allow for more breaking news stories in newspapers, a key piece of coverage traditionally held for broadcast.

Still, others think convergence may lead to tougher times for sports journalists. Reinardy (2006) cautioned that the Internet may contribute to the burnout many sports reporters already suffer:

For sports journalists, time away from their families; deadlines; long workdays that include nights, weekends, and holidays; and competition from twenty-four-hour television, radio, and Internet media may compound stress and burnout. Additionally, sports journalists are often publicly and privately admonished by their sources; sometimes receive death threats; and with the advent of e-mail, are subjected to a litany of demoralizing messages. (p. 398)

Fennelly (2009) reported that long-time New York Giants reporter Ernie Palladino was let go by *The Journal News* because of dwindling circulation and a reduction in ad revenue, and in part because of the marriage of the traditional press and the Internet. Fennelly's contention is that veteran journalists who fail to keep up with the changing face of the media may be out a job. "That's too bad – for everyone" he wrote.

If Fennelly is correct that failure to develop the skills needed to succeed in a converged sports writing environment could lead to job loss, then perhaps it is time to rethink how journalism as a whole, sports journalism in particular, is taught.

THE RESEARCH PROBLEM

Do media managers still place a premium on the traditional skills of journalism (good AP style and grammar skills, an ability to perform investigative reporting, quality interviewing and feature writing skills) or are the pros more concerned with the skills related to convergent media (the ability to write across platforms, Web development skills, photography/videography skills, and computer knowledge)? Do media type, market size, or the manager's years of experience factor into their values?

If convergence is here to stay, and judging from the literature it is, then it is important for college journalism faculty to develop courses that will provide students with the requisite skills. However, if professional sports editors and directors are concerned with future journalists learning the basics of good writing and reporting, focus in college journalism classrooms should remain there. With journalists losing jobs at an alarming rate, as reported by Harper (2009), Eggerton (2009), and Fennelly (2009), journalism educators must ask themselves what they need to do in order to equip the journalists of tomorrow. Educators must ask themselves, if it is time to revamp the entire curriculum to focus on more multimedia and convergent skill development, or if they should re-emphasize the basics of good journalistic practice while integrating sections of convergence training across courses.

With a singular focus on sports reporting, this study seeks to fill a gap noted by Ownby (2005). He said that "the academy anticipates a need for multi-platform (print, broadcast, and Internet) trained journalists" but that there "is a lack of research from the media employer's perspective regarding expectations of skill levels for newly hired (journalism-mass communication) students" (p. 4).   He also argued that investigation of such curricula in U.S. colleges and universities "can better assay appropriate courses of action based on industry needs" (p. 5). The current study was intended to help journalism faculty answer these questions and to craft classes and curriculum to place emphasis on the skills professional journalists want in college graduates. It also was also expected to provide an understanding of the strengths and weaknesses professionals see in graduates.

Based on the course of this research, four questions emerged:

RQ1: Which knowledge and skill sets are valued most by Missouri and Kansas newspaper and television sports reporters?

RQ2: Do newspaper and television sports reporters differ in the knowledge and skills sets they value?

RQ3: Do sports reporters, based on years of experience, differ in the knowledge and skills sets they value most?

RQ4: Do sports editors and directors, based on market size, differ in the knowledge and skills sets they value most?

LIMITATIONS

The first, obvious, limitation is the sample size as only one sports reporter from each daily newspaper and television station in Missouri and Kansas was surveyed. However, this method was chosen because the majority of journalism students from the investigator's school seek employment in Missouri and Kansas. Because of this, it may be difficult to generalize the findings to sports reporters outside Missouri and Kansas. Professionals in other regions of the country may have different opinions. Still, the study did provide a good baseline for future research and did offer some direction for journalism educators as they look at their curricula.

METHODOLOGY

INSTRUMENT DESIGN

The study involved completing a three-item survey. This survey asked professional journalists to use a semantic differential to rate 15 journalism skills/knowledge sets on a scale of "1" (not necessary) to "10" (essential). To develop the list of knowledge and skill sets, a survey of college journalism textbooks, including Melvin Mencher's *News Reporting and Writing* (2008), The Missouri Group's *Telling the Story: The Convergence of Print, Broadcast and Online Media* (2007), and Tim Harrower's *Inside Reporting: A Practical Guide to the Craft of Journalism* (2007), examined key headings and chapters. Once the survey of textbooks was completed, three communication department faculty members were asked if any other variables should be included. From this survey and these conversations, the final list of 15 dependent variables was developed.

In a second phase, the pros were asked to complete two open-ended questions seeking comments regarding the strengths and weaknesses of college journalism graduates. Finally, the sports reporters were asked demographic questions regarding the market size of their media outlet, their years of experience as a professional journalist, and if their outlet maintains a Web site (see Appendix B). A letter (see Appendix A) accompanied the survey, explaining the significance of the study.

The key independent variables were media type, market size and years of experience. The 15 dependent variables were: knowledge of Associated Press writing style; grammar skills (including use of capitalization and punctuation); Web development skills (including streaming video/audio); investigative reporting skills; feature writing skills; interviewing skills; photography/videography skills; alternate writing style skills (online, print for broadcast or broadcast for print); knowledge about specific fields (sports, business, health, etc.); layout and design skills; knowledge of computer programs (QuarkXPress, In Design, Photoshop, etc.); knowledge of media law; knowledge of media ethics; experience as a reporter; and experience as a sports reporter. The data was entered into SPSS for analysis.

For the purpose of this study, the traditional skills include AP style, grammar, interviewing, feature writing and investigative reporting skills. These are skills that any reporter, be it in newspaper, television or radio would need to have in order to gather information and then write a story. Contemporary or convergent skills include Web development and alternate writing style skills, computer knowledge and photography/videography skills. These skills were considered convergent skills because they allow reporters who once had a singular focus to also produce content for other mediums. For example, the newspaper reporter who once wrote her story and then saw it printed in the next morning's paper may now be asked to convert the same story to a format suitable for the online version. She also may be asked to shoot video on the scene in order to produce a short-form video, and when she gets back to the newsroom may be required to write a brief story for a stand-up.

VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY

In designing the initial instrument, three faculty members (one each in print journalism, broadcasting, and corporate communication) were asked for suggestions of knowledge and skill sets applicable to newspapers and television. In this way, content validity was established. Internal validity was established, as all participants were sports reporters for newspapers and television stations in Missouri and Kansas.

One concern of the study is that Cronbach's alpha was reported as .64, indicating the internal consistency reliability of the study is a bit shy of the acceptable .70 level. Still, as this research was exploratory and because content and internal validity were established, this was considered acceptable for the present study.

PARTICIPANTS

In order to find results from journalists in similar positions, because it was a sports reporter who initially presented the idea, and in consideration of the work of Rein, Kotler, and Shields (2007), sports journalists were chosen for this research project. The theoretical population was all sports reporters in the United States. Sports reporters at approximately 120 newspapers and television stations in Missouri and Kansas were available for analysis. One sports reporter (the editor or director whenever identifiable) at all 120 media outlets was e-mailed a letter (Appendix A) and a survey, (Appendix B). The newspapers were listed in the Gebbie Press All-In-One Directory, and the television stations were selected from the Missouri Broadcasters Association and Kansas Broadcasters Association Web sites. Participants were given one week to complete the survey. Following the teachings of Dillman (2001), a reminder e-mail was distributed one week later. Noting the lack of responses from large market newspapers and television stations, telephone surveys were placed four days later to reporters at the largest outlets in Missouri and Kansas. A final reminder of the Friday, June 27 deadline was sent on Wednesday, June 25.

DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS

THE RESPONDENTS

Of the 120 sports reporters who were given the survey, 53 responded, a response rate of 44%. More than half of the responses came from newspaper reporters, as 36 responses (68% of the total respondents) were from reporters in the print media. Seventeen television sports reporters (32%) responded.

Television sports reporters did respond at a much higher rate when considering their unique population: The 17 responses came from surveys sent to 26 stations, a return rate of 65%. The 36 responses from newspaper reporters came from surveys sent to 84 newspapers, a return rate of 43%. Distribution of responses from Missouri and Kansas was fairly similar, with Missouri sports reporters responding at a slightly higher rate. Missouri reporters gave 28 of the 53 responses (53%), while Kansans gave 25 responses.

THE FINDINGS: REPORTERS STILL VALUE THE BASICS

When the study began, it was believed that professional sports reporters would regard Web development and alternate writing style skills as high priorities. After all, as Brooks et al. (2008) pointed out, "Increasingly, editors ... are looking for journalists who can function in the world of convergence, a buzzword for cross-media collaboration" (p. 16). Despite the changing media, though, sports reporters in Missouri and Kansas still value the basics (see Table 1).

Table 1

Means and Frequencies on the Newspaper and Television Sports Reporters Ratings of Knowledge and Skills Sets

Knowledge/Skill Set	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Mean	Std. Dev	Skew ness
Interviewing Skills	1	0	0	0	0	0	5	13	9	25	8.89	1.53	-2.797
Grammar Skills	0	0	1	2	1	1	7	3	7	31	8.83	1.82	-1.660
Knowledge of Media Ethics	0	1	0	3	1	5	5	7	9	20	8.25	2.01	-1.184
Feature Writing Skills	0	0	0	0	2	5	13	14	10	9	7.98	1.37	-.153
Knowledge/Specific Fields	0	1	1	2	6	7	7	10	8	11	7.47	2.05	-.561
Experience/Sports Reporter	1	0	1	4	5	7	7	9	10	9	7.32	2.15	-.678
Experience / Reporter	1	1	0	3	4	6	12	13	5	7	7.19	2.00	-.856
AP Style Skills	2	3	2	1	6	2	5	16	6	10	7.11	2.57	-.936
Computer Knowledge	4	2	1	2	6	4	9	10	4	10	6.77	2.69	-.749
Investigative Skills	0	2	2	4	8	9	8	14	2	3	6.46	1.94	-.355
Layout/Design Skills	6	3	1	2	2	6	13	7	6	5	6.27	2.79	-.728
Web Development Skills	2	2	3	3	10	3	11	13	4	2	6.26	1.82	-.628
Knowledge of Media Law	1	2	3	5	12	6	8	6	3	5	6.10	2.26	-.007
Photo/Video Skills	3	5	3	3	5	8	7	9	5	5	6.09	2.65	-.400
Alternate Writing Skills	1	3	7	1	10	6	6	10	2	5	6.04	2.42	-.144

Note. 120 Newspaper and Television Sports Reporters were surveyed with 53 responses (a return rate of 44%).

Interviewing skills (a mean rating of 8.89 out of 10), grammar skills (8.83), knowledge of media ethics (8.25), and feature writing skills (7.98) were consistently rated as high priorities. In fact, interviewing skills received only one rating below a seven, and feature writing skills had no ratings below a five. What is more, 31 sports reporters gave grammar skills a perfect "10" rating (see Table 1), and 41 rated knowledge of media ethics between a "7" and a "10." One reporter added a comment that "too many people ignore these now" when rating ethics.

Conversely, skills associated with the convergence of the media and the need to be able to report in different formats received relatively low ratings. Web development skills saw a mean rating of just 6.26, and alternate writing style skills received a mean rating of 6.04, the lowest of the 15 sets presented.

To be sure, some reporters considered these skills more essential than others. One rated Web development skills a "5" but added that its importance is "changing rapidly," while another rated the skills a "9 out of 10" and wrote that "in the new age of newspapers, this is crucial."

Still, the numbers suggest that reporters expect college graduates to possess the basic knowledge necessary to be journalists, and while the media may be moving to a more convergent environment, sports journalists believe the requisite convergent skills may be taught on the job.

NEWSPAPER AND TELEVISION VALUES

The study next sought to determine which knowledge/skills sets print sports reporters viewed as most important, compared to the priorities of broadcast journalists. While the newspaper and television sports reporters only agreed three times in their *priorities* (both rated ethics as third-most important, investigative reporting skills as 11th, and knowledge of media law 12th), the mean *ratings* were fairly similar in nine of the 15 sets (see Figure 1).

The largest disagreements in ratings were Associated Press writing style (an 8.17 mean rating for newspapers, 4.88 for television) and layout/design skills (7.25 to 3.93). This seems reasonable. Newspapers generally use the recognized AP style of writing – complete with its precise rules for abbreviations, numbers, and such – in order to maintain consistency across the medium, while television reporters typically write in a more long-hand, conversational tone. Similarly, newspapers use layout and design skills to actually "build" the newspaper for each issue, but television stations would only use these skills in designing a Web page.

The newspaper and television sports reporters did agree on three of the top knowledge and skills sets. In order, the newspaper reporters' ratings produced a ranking of grammar skills (9.50 mean rating), interviewing skills (8.97), media ethics (8.25), Associated Press style skills (8.17), and feature writing skills (7.92). The television reporters, meanwhile rated their top five skills and knowledge sets as interviewing skills

(8.71), knowledge about a specific field (8.29), media ethics (8.27), feature writing skills (8.12), and a tie between alternate writing style skills and experience as a reporter (7.81).

Figure 1

Mean Ratings of Journalism Knowledge and Skill Sets by Newspaper and Television Sports Reporters
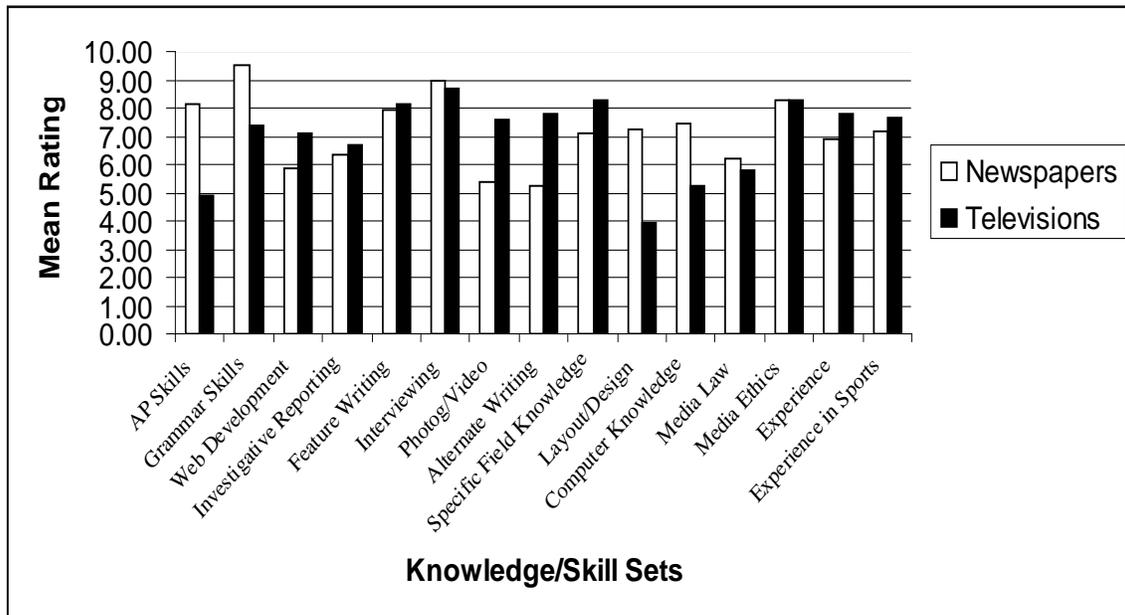
One result of the survey that was abundantly clear was that newspaper sports reporters consider grammar skills absolutely essential. This was evident by the 9.50 mean rating, but even more so by the fact that of the 36 respondents, 23 gave grammar a perfect 10 rating, while only five rated it less than a nine (none lower than a seven). What was a bit surprising was that the television sports reporters consider grammar skills almost an afterthought, as the 7.41 mean rating (ninth in ranking) indicated. Again, this may be the result of the more conversational tone with which television sports reporters typically write their stories, though Brooks et al (2008) caution that this "does not mean using slang, colloquialisms or incorrect grammar" (p. 252).

With regard to the convergent skills, reporters in both mediums agreed that priorities in knowledge and skills lie elsewhere. Television sports reporters did place a bit higher value on the convergent skills than did newspapers. For television, convergent skills ranked fifth (alternate writing style skills), eighth (photography/videography), 10th (Web development), and 13th (knowledge of computer programs). For newspaper sports reporters, convergent skills ranked sixth (knowledge of computer programs), 13th (Web development), 14th (photography/videography), and 15th (alternate writing style skills).

Newspaper sports reporters, though, valued the traditional skills more than did their television counterparts in terms of rankings. The print reporters ranked in the four of the traditional skills in the top five (grammar, AP style, interviewing, and feature writing), while the broadcast sports reporters only placed two traditional skills (interviewing and feature writing) in the top third of the rankings.

To determine if significant differences existed between the two media types, independent samples t-tests were run. Again, newspaper and television sports reporters shared similar opinions of the key knowledge and skills sets, but statistically significant differences were found with regard to seven skills: AP skills, grammar skills, photography and videography skills, alternate writing style skills, knowledge of specific fields, layout and design skills, and knowledge of computer programs. As previously stated, this would make sense for AP style skills and for layout and design skills; these are skills utilized more frequently in newspapers than in television. Therefore, of particular interest were grammar, photo/video and alternate writing style skills, as well as knowledge of specific fields and of computer programs. Photography/videography and alternate writing style skills and knowledge of computer programs all violated the assumption of normality, so Mann-Whitney U tests were performed. However, the significance levels were little different, so the t-test scores are reported. Table 2 shows the mean scores for these three skill sets across media types (newspaper and television).

Table 2

Comparison of Newspaper and Television Sports Reporters on Grammar, Photography/Videography, and Alternate Writing Style Skills and Knowledge of Specific Fields and Computer Programs (n = 36 newspapers and 17 television stations)

Variable	M	SD	t	df	p	d
Grammar Skills			3.45	51	.00	1.36
Newspaper	9.50	0.88				
Television	7.41	2.43				
Photography/Videography Skills			-2.80	51	.01	0.88
Newspaper	5.39	2.28				
Television	7.59	2.83				
Alternate Writing Style Skills			-4.48	49	.00	1.22
Newspaper	5.23	2.28				
Television	7.81	1.72				
Knowledge of Specific Fields			-2.36	51	.02	0.61
Newspaper	7.08	2.18				
Television	8.29	1.49				
Knowledge of Computer Programs	7.44	2.29	2.62	50	.02	0.87
Newspaper	5.25	2.98				
Television						

As seen in table 2, inspection of the two group means shows that newspaper reporters rated grammar skills and knowledge of computer programs much higher than their television counterparts, while television reporters placed much greater emphasis on photography/videography and alternate writing style skills and knowledge of specific fields. The most significant differences were for grammar and alternate writing style skills, as, for both, the effect size *d* is much larger than typical (1.36 and 1.22, respectively) and $p<.01$. What this indicates is that newspaper and television reporters do have some distinct differences in their views on these particular skills.

REPORTER'S EXPERIENCE

Research question three sought to determine if editors and directors at various stages of their careers had similar opinions on the key knowledge and skill sets. Only two statistically significant differences could be seen between groups based on years of experience. In this case, the differences occurred when considering the values of grammar and knowledge of specific fields. Table 3a shows the means and standard deviations for these two variables.

Table 3a

Means and Standard Deviations Comparing Three Groups of Sports Reporters, Based on Years of Experience (N = 52)

Years of Experience	*n*	Grammar Skills		Knowledge of Specific Fields	
		M	*SD*	*M*	*SD*
0-5 Years	8	9.88	0.35	9.13	1.36
6-10 Years	11	7.64	2.42	6.64	2.38
More than 10 Years	33	8.94	1.64	7.33	1.93
Total	52	8.81	1.83	7.46	2.07

For both grammar skills and knowledge of specific fields, statistically significant differences could be seen at the $p<.05$ level (see Table 3b).

Table 3b

One-Way Analysis of Variance Summary Table Comparing Years of Experience on Grammar Skills and Knowledge of Specific Fields

Source	*df*	**SS**	*MS*	*F*	*P*
Grammar Skills					
Between groups	2	24.78	12.40	4.18	.02
Within groups	49	145.30	2.97		
Total	51	170.08			
Knowledge of Specific Fields					
Between groups	2	30.17	15.09	3.92	.03
Within groups	49	188.75	3.85		
Total	51	218.92			

In both cases the group with 0-5 years experience had the highest mean scores, signifying the least experienced reporters placed the highest value on grammar skills and knowledge of a specific field, in this case knowledge of sports. This was a bit surprising, particularly with regard to grammar skills, as it was believed the reporters with more than 10 years would place a higher value on this basic need than would their less experienced counterparts. In fact, 0-5 year respondents placed a higher value on several of the key traditional skills (AP, grammar skills, and interviewing skills) than did their more experienced counterparts. Meanwhile those sports reporters with 6-10 years and more than 10 years of experience placed a higher value on Web development skills than did those reporters with five years or less experience. It was believed that these results would be exactly opposite. Still, it should be noted that, aside from the grammar skills, the differences were not statistically significant. It should also be noted that 33 respondents said they had more than 10 years experience, while the 0-5 and 6-10 year groups had a combined 19 respondents, so some power was lost.

In order to determine where the significant differences were occurring, post hoc Tukey HSD tests were utilized. In both cases (grammar skills and knowledge of specific fields), the difference occurred between the 0-5 years group and the 6-10 years group (p=.02, d=0.66 for grammar skills, p=.02, d=0.92 for knowledge of specific fields). The effect size was typical for grammar skills, large for knowledge of specific skills.

What this indicates is that the 6-10 year group has some very distinct views on the value of these two skills when compared to the 0-5 year group and the more than 10 year group, but overall, regardless of years of experience, the respondents share similar values when it comes to the knowledge and skill sets necessary to be successful as a sports reporter today.

REPORTER'S EXPERIENCE

Finally, research question four looked for differences in the opinions of sports reporters based on market size. From the findings of the one-way ANOVA, market size was not much of a determining factor when considering the value sports reporters placed on the different knowledge and skill sets. In fact, none of the 15 knowledge and skill sets showed any statistical significance, and only three were even close: Web development skills, photography/videography skills, and layout and design skills (see Table 4).

QUALITATIVE FINDINGS

Two qualitative questions were asked: "What do you believe are the primary strengths of students graduating from college and entering the sports reporting field?" and "What do you believe are the primary weaknesses of students graduating from college and entering the sports reporting field?"

The findings from these questions were both interesting and disturbing. Those who responded said the four greatest weaknesses they see in inexperienced journalists are a sense of entitlement, poor grammar skills, little understanding of what the job entails in the professional world, and poor reporting skills. Conversely, the professionals said

young journalists are enthusiastic and have a lot of energy, are very knowledgeable about technology, and really know sports.

Table 4

One-Way Analysis of Variance Summary Table Comparing Market Size on Web Development, Photography/Videography, and Layout and Design Skills

Source	df	SS	MS	F	p
Web Development Skills					
Between groups	2	23.96	11.98	2.56	.09
Within groups	50	234.34	4.69		
Total	52	258.30			
Photography/Video Skills					
Between groups	2	33.92	16.96	2.55	.09
Within groups	50	332.61	6.65		
Total	52	366.53			
Layout/Design Skills					
Between groups	2	42.17	21.09	2.93	.06
Within groups	50	345.98	7.21		
Total	52	388.16			

The findings from these questions were both interesting and disturbing. Those who responded said the four greatest weaknesses they see in inexperienced journalists are a sense of entitlement, poor grammar skills, little understanding of what the job entails in the professional world, and poor reporting skills. Conversely, the professionals said young journalists are enthusiastic and have a lot of energy, are very knowledgeable about technology, and really know sports.

This is interesting from the strengths perspective because, while the professional news editors and directors reported less value concerning convergent skills, they believe college graduates are equipped with skills in technology. Also, knowledge of specific fields (including sports) was the fifth-highest rated skill set, according to the respondents. Judging from the responses to the "strengths" question, new journalists are perceived as entering the workforce with these tools.

The findings are disturbing, though, because apparently the respondents believe educators are not doing a good job of advising students regarding the realities of the professional world. What is more, the skill the professionals value most—grammar skills—is the one they find most lacking.

These findings could mean one of two things; either the respondents based their ratings upon the perceived strengths and weaknesses they see in college graduates, or the ratings are, in fact, as reported and the pros are displeased with the basic skills being taught in colleges and universities. In-depth interviews may be necessary to determine the answer.

Further, recognizing that the traditional skills, across platforms, are most highly valued, further research may be needed to center on *which* convergent skills are valued most. In this way, as faculty begin to include convergent lessons and classes into their curriculum, focus may be placed on the skill sets the pros deem most important while taking nothing away from the traditional skills that are considered most vital.

AUXILIARY FINDINGS

Some interesting auxiliary findings also came out in the study. For one, knowledge of media ethics was deemed more important than expected. While it was anticipated that sports reporters would be concerned with these issues, the fact that almost half of the respondents viewed them as essential was a bit of a surprise. Already a thoroughly studied area of the media, it would be interesting to study why this is such a focus area. Are young reporters failing in ethics? Are journalists facing new levels of scrutiny? The sports section has often been considered the "toy department" of the media outlet because of what other journalists consider unethical practices. Garrison and Salwen (1989) determined that "sports journalism has been described as a part of Journalism 'conceived out of journalistic wedlock.' Sports journalists have been accused of hackneyed writing, cheering for the home team, unwillingness to report critical issues, serving as a source of scrapbook clippings for the stars, gladly accepting 'freebies' and engaging in other questionable activities" (p. 77). Four years later, Garrison and Salwen (1993) teamed up again to report that "Formal training and a concern for ethics underlie much of what has been written about journalism's drive toward professional status. Several studies indicate that sports journalists feel that they are progressing toward this status, although their commitment to formal training and ethics is less clear" (p. 37).

Perhaps, after two decades, sports reporters are still fighting this "less-than-professional" image. It may be that reporters are focusing on ethics in an effort to gain more credibility within the organization. Further research focusing on this issue may be in order.

Additionally, it was interesting that those reporters with 0 to 5 years of experience shared similar views as reporters with more than 10 years experience when considering the value of various skills and knowledge sets. The 6 to 10 year group, however, stood alone in its opinions. This may indicate a shift on the part of the less experienced reporters to more of the traditional way of thinking, coupled with recognition from the more veteran journalists that convergent skills are becoming more vital.

The final two auxiliary findings came from the qualitative section of the study. First, several reporters responded that they were pleased with the sports writing experience many young journalists bring with them. As experience as a sports reporter was the sixth-most valued item on the list of knowledge and skill sets, this indicates reporters are getting what they hope for in young journalists.

It was also interesting to find that veteran sports reporters are pleased with the sports knowledge young journalists bring with them. Many credited ESPN for this

phenomenon. One newspaper sports reporter said, "Today's college age kids are exposed to so many sports on all levels and read many different sports related publications—ESPN the magazine and Sports Illustrated." A television reporter added, "Generally they have great ESPN-type knowledge of sports."

What was intriguing about this is the fact that several other reporters (mostly on the broadcast side) *blamed* ESPN for a breakdown in presentation skills, citing weaknesses such as "poor grammar (and) writing styles that seem too full of ESPN-isms." One television reporter made the statement that "They grow up watching Sports Center on ESPN and think that every TV news department is like that." Another said, "The kids these days are all trying to copy the style they see on ESPN and the other cable derelicts and that's NOT the method to utilize in presenting what a sports audience really wants … information." It might be revealing to pointedly survey sports reporters regarding the value they place on ESPN and whether they believe the presentation style is good for young reporters to witness or if it is a detriment.

CONCLUSION

Brooks et al (2007) wrote, "Convergence is the hottest buzzword in the media industry these days" and "... in its most complete sense convergence involves alliances of three communication forms: Print (usually a newspaper or magazine), broadcast or cable television and perhaps radio, and the Internet and wireless communication devices" (p. 19). Such a proclamation would lead one to believe that the modern American journalist would favor more contemporary journalism skills. But despite this changing climate in journalism and the transition to a more convergent atmosphere in many American newspapers and television stations, sports reporters in Missouri and Kansas still favor the more traditional journalism skills and knowledge sets. While the desire for college graduates to have the ability to "step out of the box," write in alternate styles, and utilize newer technologies for informing the masses, it appears today that the professionals, regardless of their years of experience or the market size in which they work, want graduates to understand the basics—grammar, interviewing skills, AP writing style (for newspapers), knowledge of media ethics, and feature writing skills.

Further, whether college journalism graduates want to enter the newspaper industry or work for a television station, these traditional skills are valued. It also should be noted that the professionals expect graduates to come out of college with at least some experience in the field. While it was not in the top third of the 15 knowledge and skill sets, experience as a sports reporter was the sixth-most valued item on the list. This indicates that the pros believe the requisite abilities for success in the industry may not only be learned in the classroom, but also by working in the field.
Once these traditional knowledge and skill sets have been engrained in journalism students, attention may be turned to developing more contemporary abilities. In this way journalism faculty may better prepare their students for the changing media of the 21st century.

Appendix A
Journalism Knowledge and Skill Sets
E-Mail Survey Protocol

Greetings from Warrensburg, Mo. My name is Joe Moore. I am an instructor of journalism at the University of Central Missouri and a Ph.D. student at Colorado State University.

Your help would be invaluable in a study I am conducting, "The Making of a Sports Reporter: Key Knowledge and Skill Sets." This is a practical study for college journalism faculty to give us a better idea of which knowledge and skill sets professional journalists deem most important. With this knowledge, we can better train our students for careers in journalism, particularly as sports reporters.

Would you please complete this very brief survey (less than five minutes)? The first two questions deal with media type (newspaper or television) and location (Missouri or Kansas). Simply mark an "X" in the correct blank. The next 15 questions deal with the knowledge and skill sets. For these, please rank each from one (not necessary) to 10 (essential). Next are three questions related to market size, your experience as a journalist, and the existence of a Web site at your media outlet. Finally, I have two open ended questions related to the perceived strengths and weaknesses of recent college journalism graduates. If you will hit "reply," complete the survey and send it back to me, I will be most appreciative. I will be happy to share the results if you let me know you are interested.

Thanks so much for your support.

Sincerely,

Joe Moore, Instructor of Journalism
University of Central Missouri

Appendix B
The Making of a Sports Reporter: Key Journalism Knowledge and Skill Sets

Media Type:
Newspaper _____
Television _____

Location:
Missouri   _____
Kansas   _____

On a scale of 1 to 10, please rate following questions; 1 (not necessary) through 10 (essential)

_____ 1. Knowledge of Associated Press writing style
_____ 2. Grammar skills (including use of capitalization, punctuation)
_____ 3. Web development skills (including streaming video/audio)
_____ 4. Investigative reporting skills
_____ 5. Feature writing skills
_____ 6. Interviewing skills
_____ 7. Photography/Videography skills
_____ 8. Alternate writing style skills (online, print for broadcast or broadcast for print)
_____ 9. Knowledge about specific fields (sports, business, health, etc.)
_____ 10. Layout and design skills
_____ 11. Knowledge of computer programs (QuarkXPress, In Design, Photoshop, etc.)
_____ 12. Knowledge of media law
_____ 13. Knowledge of media ethics
_____ 14. Experience as a reporter
_____ 15. Experience as a sports reporter

What do you believe are the primary strengths of students graduating from college and entering the sports reporting field?

What do you believe are the primary weaknesses of students graduating from college and entering the sports reporting field?

Years of Experience
_____ 0-5 Years
_____ 6-10 Years
_____ More than 10 Years

Market Size
_____ Small
_____ Medium
_____ Large

Does your media outlet sponsor its own Web site?
_____ Yes
_____ No

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