Media Literacy and Newspapers of Record

By: **Scottie Kapel** and **Krista Schmidt**

Abstract

Purpose - The purpose of this paper is to describe the challenges associated with identifying newspapers of record for local, regional, and national newspapers, specifically as those challenges pertain to students' news media literacy. Visual literacy and information literacy intersections are explored.

Design/methodology/approach - Newspapers of record for province/territory and state areas of Canada and the United States of America were identified for student project purposes. Criteria for newspaper of record qualification were investigated, refined, and applied to all newspapers reviewed.

Findings - Distinguishing newspapers of record based on traditional criteria is inadequate in an online environment. Criteria must be more flexible and address both the visual as well as the content aspects of newspapers. Neither database access nor native website access alone is sufficient for identifying these newspapers. Straightforward and definitive identification of these newspapers will no longer be possible.

Practical implications - Librarians will be faced with focusing on content or visual literacy; addressing both in a meaningful way during a single instruction session will be difficult. More strategic instruction within and across disciplines is necessary to produce news media-literate and savvy students.

Originality/value - News media literacy for students in all disciplines is an urgent need and must incorporate both visual and content literacies. In a time of proliferation of news sources, understanding the challenges associated with identifying newspapers of record for both librarians and students is a necessary step in this area of information literacy.

Kapel, S. & Schmidt, K., (2018). Media literacy and newspapers of record. *Reference Services Review*, *46*(2), 205-16. Retrieved from https://doi.org/10.1108/RSR-02-2018-0012

Publisher version of record available at: https://doi.org/10.1108/RSR-02-2018-0012.

Archived version from NC DOCKS available at: https://libres.uncg.edu/ir/wcu/listing.aspx?id=24198.

Media Literacy and Newspapers of Record

Scottie Kapel

Western Carolina University

Krista D. Schmidt

Western Carolina University

Scottie Kapel, Research and Instruction Services, Western Carolina University.
176 Central Drive, Cullowhee, NC 28723 skapel@email.wcu.edu

Krista D. Schmidt, Research and Instruction Services, Western Carolina University.
176 Central Drive, Cullowhee, NC 28723 kschmidt@email.wcu.edu

.

Address correspondence to Scottie Kapel, Hunter Library, Western Carolina University, 176

Central Drive, Cullowhee, NC 28723. E-mail: skapel@email.wcu.edu

This is the author accepted manuscript for an article published in *Reference Services Review*.

Kapel, S., & Schmidt, K.D. (2018). Media literacy and newspapers of record. *Reference Services Review*, *46*(2), 205-216. https://doi.org/10.1108/RSR-02-2018-0012

Reference Services Review is available online at: https://www.emeraldinsight.com/loi/rsr

Media Literacy and Newspapers of Record

Abstract

Purpose - The purpose of this paper is to describe the challenges associated with identifying newspapers of record for local, regional, and national newspapers, specifically as those challenges pertain to students' news media literacy. Visual literacy and information literacy intersections are explored.

Design/methodology/approach - Newspapers of record for province/territory and state areas of Canada and the United States of America were identified for student project purposes. Criteria for newspaper of record qualification were investigated, refined, and applied to all newspapers reviewed.

Findings - Distinguishing newspapers of record based on traditional criteria is inadequate in an online environment. Criteria must be more flexible and address both the visual as well as the content aspects of newspapers. Neither database access nor native website access alone is sufficient for identifying these newspapers. Straightforward and definitive identification of these newspapers will no longer be possible.

Practical implications - Librarians will be faced with focusing on content or visual literacy; addressing both in a meaningful way during a single instruction session will be difficult. More strategic instruction within and across disciplines is necessary to produce news media-literate and savvy students.

Originality/value - News media literacy for students in all disciplines is an urgent need and must incorporate both visual and content literacies. In a time of proliferation of news sources, understanding the challenges associated with identifying newspapers of record for both librarians and students is a necessary step in this area of information literacy.

Keywords Newspaper of record, Information literacy, News media literacy, Media literacy, Instruction, Academic libraries

Paper type Conceptual paper

Introduction and Literature Review

Media literacy may be a current and urgent call to arms among librarians and educators, but pleas for increased literacy related to emerging or exponentially popular media (i.e. audio-visual sources) are not new. For example, in the 1970s and early 1980s, as televisions established their ubiquitous presence in American households, the associated amount of consumption by children prompted serious concern about the messages—both overt and discreet—conveyed by the medium (Breslin and Marino, 1974; Foster, 1981; Lucking, 1974). Educators, questioning the ability of consumers—particularly children—to understand and recognize the influences and messages of television, proposed new and adapted literacies for television (Anderson and Ploghoft, 1977; Brown, 1978; Lieberman, 1980). Like the initial tidal wave of television consumption, the proliferation of media sources—as well as routes of communication within the newest of media sources—exploded in the last decade and created an urgent need to increase student media literacy in these areas.

Despite this need, media literacy education continues to be stymied by challenges that make its implementation inconsistent at best and altogether absent at worst. The first of these challenges is the seemingly straightforward task of identifying exactly what constitutes media literacy. In a 2013 review, W. James Potter lists 23 definitions of media literacy provided by individual academics as well as organizations ranging from the American Psychiatric Association to the Office of National Drug Control Policy (pp. 418-19). Although more alike than different, the descriptions of media literacy often vary according to the unique mission of

the individual or organization that crafted them. If each discipline recognizes only its own definition, yet the concept spans all disciplines, how can we be sure that media literacy education is actually resulting in media-literate students in all areas of study?

Problems of definition aside, media literacy education is plagued by additional practical challenges. For example, before instructors can teach media literacy to students, they themselves may need instruction on how to do so effectively. This is a skillset that professors of history, biology, and philosophy (to name a few) do not typically get through their studies or classroom experiences (Rogow, 2004, p. 32; Schmidt, 2012, p. 12). Even if well-versed in teaching media literacy, instructors must determine how much time they can reasonably dedicate to media literacy instruction while still covering all of the required course content (Schmidt, 2012, p. 14). This is made even more challenging because media literacy cannot be taught effectively in a single session or by any one instructor (Rogow, 2004, p. 32).

News Media Literacy

The focus of this paper, media literacy as it relates to online versions of newspapers, comes with even more literacy concerns. These center around how news media operate and how those inner workings influence news media content—considerations that, when brought to light, make potential news consumers look more critically at their sources (Ashley *et al.*, 2010, p. 43). In many news organizations, these inner workings are transparent to the consumer; in other organizations, the inner workings are obfuscated, resulting in potentially deceptive content. One sees this in the proliferation of purported news content available online that is not supported by traditional journalistic standards. Renée Loth (2012), columnist for the *Boston Globe* and Shorenstein Center Fellow, writes:

> But many of the new information generators—operating in a culture of radically blurred boundaries between news, entertainment, propaganda, and advertising—don't practice those disciplines at all. Instead, they depend on the so-called wisdom of crowds to correct any errors (Wikipedia) or are driven by an ideology that all information must be unmediated and free (Wikileaks). If these popular sources of news won't verify their assertions, be transparent about where their interests lie, or stand behind the accuracy of their reports, ordinary citizens can get lost in the thicket. (p. 4)

Loth issued this warning in 2012, but it was perhaps the 2016 United States presidential election that brought this concern to wider attention and added the phrase "fake news" to the common vernacular. Related to this is the difficulty of conveying the importance of news to teens and early adults (Malik *et al.*, 2013, p. 3). When students—many of whom do not believe that daily news events have a bearing on their life—are tasked with finding information about a specific event, a dubious source may look equally as compelling as a credible source, particularly if it takes less time and effort to find. Social media platforms, including Twitter and Facebook, have further reduced the effort required to find and access news from both credible and questionable sources, and the platforms do not differentiate one from the other. Due to these challenges, news media literacy is arguably a pillar of responsible citizenship, and we see its political stake in forums from J. Herbert Altschull's (1995) *Agents of Power*, in which he wrote, "Hence, the news media are indispensable to the survival of democracy" (p. 5), to the *Washington Post*'s motto, adopted in February 2017, "Democracy dies in darkness."

Instruction Challenges

News media literacy is a natural extension of library instruction. Although perhaps better equipped than traditional teaching faculty to teach news media literacy, librarians still face an

uphill battle that requires careful consideration and unavoidable concessions. Research and instruction librarians typically have a single 55- to 75-minute session to teach not only the practical steps of research but also the theoretical framework that underpins the inquiry process. How can we, in this abbreviated time, look at the broader idea of information literacy as well as more targeted news media literacy instruction? Moreover, with the predominance of library literature on media literacy, of which news media literacy is a subset, focusing on its application in a K-12 setting, how are we addressing it in the university setting? Do we assume incoming students have a basis of knowledge—which can be a dangerous path—or do we start from scratch, which is onerous?

Given all this, news media literacy is obviously complex and difficult to convey to students in a one-shot session. This means that difficult decisions must be made when working with students who need to use news media resources: do you focus on how to find and evaluate news media sources, or how to search and evaluate content within those sources? Practically speaking, there is not time to do both, and do them well, within a typical single session. In this paper, we describe an instruction scenario regarding online versions of newspapers, how we addressed our instruction conundrum (flaws and all), and what we think are serious considerations for teaching news media literacy concepts to students both now and in the future. The issue of social media platforms—which we are not addressing in this paper—and their distribution of news is incredibly important to news media literacy and should be thoroughly explored in future research.

The Project

Our project began as part of a collaboration for a regional geography class for juniors and seniors. For this particular class, a geography professor designed an assignment requiring

students to use reliable news sources to report on current topics related to indigenous peoples of Canada and the United States. During our discussions with the professor, we elected to focus on guiding students to specific, vetted sources rather than asking students to find and evaluate sources themselves. In an ideal setting, there would be ample time to have the student locate reliable sources and search inside them for relevant information. However, the class size was relatively large (42 students), the course covered a lot of content, the professor lost several instructional days due to unanticipated external issues, and the project itself was large—spanning two reports over the course of the semester. These aspects, combined with the complexity of teaching students how to identify reliable sources, required pragmatic choices. We agreed that we would provide students a select list of newspapers by territory, province, and state (hereafter referred to as administrative areas), as well as a small smattering of international newspapers, which they could then search (by paper website or library access, or both).

For international newspapers, we agreed on a small set we all considered international in scope and balanced in viewpoint. For administrative area newspapers, we proposed that the list include only the main newspapers of record. At the time of our initial collaboration, that was defined to be the main newspaper that reported governmental news as well as general news important to the administrative area as a whole. We also chose newspapers of record based on our understanding of their reliability and journalistic integrity, concepts we thought invaluable when assessing current events.

<<<The following text should be formatted as a textbox>>>

Newspapers of Record

There is no hard and fast rule for what constitutes a newspaper of record across disciplines, and detailed descriptions and criteria can be surprisingly difficult to locate. For

example, we found that while popular and scholarly article authors may refer to newspapers of record, they rarely explain exactly what a newspaper of record is or how to identify these newspapers. One typical example is Zelier, Park, and Gudelunas's 2002 article on bias and the *New York Times* where the term "newspaper of record" appears in the title as well as the text, but the authors only hint in the text as to what that encompasses. There is no clear-cut wording clarifying this idea for the reader. An example of a rarer occurrence—a brief definition of newspaper of record—can be found in Örnebring's 2013 article on journalism in Europe where a single paragraph clarifies what a newspaper of record is for the purposes of the author's research (p. 394).

As for reliable reference materials, the "newspaper of record" concept is elusive. Most helpful is probably the *Oxford English Dictionary,* which includes the idea of a "newspaper of record" as a phrase entry as part of the definition of "record." A little work on our part also unearthed an entry along the same vein, this time for "elite newspapers" (Gross, 2003), in the *Encyclopedia of International Media and Communications.* We struck out with other likely candidates, including eminent resources such as *Black's Law Dictionary*, the *Associated Press Stylebook*, and the *New York Times Manual of Style and Usage*. None of these provided a definition of a newspaper of record. The last two were quite unexpected and we were particularly disappointed with the latter, since the guide is published from the organization that first proclaimed itself a "Newspaper of Record" almost a century ago (Mihal and Mihal, 2009).

Martin and Hansen wrote an article (1996) and a book (1998) regarding newspapers. In both, they beautifully outline the newspaper of record concept. They write that a newspaper of record, or official newspaper, may have several meanings depending on its use and that while a newspaper of record may be considered by governmental entities as the official public forum for

legal notices, historians and librarians may broaden the scope to include the newspaper of record as a chronicle of significant news. Martin and Hansen also discuss the assumption that newspapers of record have "a certain reputation for consistent attention to accuracy and depth in reporting local as well as national and international news" (1996, p. 591). The scope of this definition—that newspapers of record include governmental news, reporting, and official legal notices; chronicle significant news, particularly that of the local area; and have a journalistic reputation for accuracy and in-depth news at all levels—is exactly right, even as two decades of change in the media separate their definition from today's milieu.

<<<End of textbox>>>

Compiling the List

Initial Criteria

Our first tasks were identifying newspapers of record for each administrative area, determining library database coverage for those papers, and estimating the number of articles accessible through newspapers' websites before readers hit the paywall. To identify newspapers of record, we established the following criteria:

- The newspaper must be published in print daily.
- The newspaper must be relatively politically neutral.
- The newspaper must produce investigative journalism.
- The newspaper must report on state government and legislative proceedings and news of local and national importance.

These criteria were informed by past newspaper of record descriptions, and addressed the quality of the journalism, the stability of the publication, and the extent to which it is embedded in its community.

Methods, Results, and Challenges

For some administrative areas, identifying newspapers of record was done quickly and easily. For example, we selected newspapers such as the *New York Times*, the *Washington Post*, and the *Chicago Tribune* immediately due to their high profile, history, and venerated reputation. To identify other newspapers of record, we began by using circulation statistics reported in the current *World Almanac* and the *Gale Directory of Publications and Broadcast Media.* This narrowed the list to those newspapers with the highest circulation for each administrative area. We then examined those newspapers using the four criteria outlined above, while also ascertaining paywall limits to accessing content from the newspaper's own website.

As we began reviewing, we quickly realized the criteria were insufficient and, in many cases, altogether ineffective in the present news media landscape. The daily print requirement proved to be the first stumbling block; it was one that we anticipated, although not to the extent we encountered. Precipitated by a decline in circulation, many newspapers—even some major metropolitan newspapers such as the *Detroit Free Press* and the *Times-Picayune*—have reduced the amount of times per week that they print, driving readers instead to their web presence. Another unfortunate effect of this decreased circulation is that many newspapers have reduced the number of journalists on staff, supplementing their content with wire articles. A recent factsheet published by the Pew Research Center reports a 37% decrease in newsroom staff from 2004 to 2015 (Barthel, 2017), and as staff numbers decrease, so too does a newspaper's ability to report local news.

Moreover, we estimate around a quarter of the newspapers allowed non-subscribers to access only wire content and some feature articles; all other content was locked behind paywalls. These access restrictions prevented us from applying our criteria in many cases. While we were

able to determine whether a newspaper was reporting on territory/province/state government and legislative news through menu headings, we were unable to determine with confidence the political objectivity of the newspaper due to access limitations. These restrictions also made it difficult to determine the extent to which the newspaper used local journalists for reporting current events and issues that are germane and meaningful to its community. This not only presented a challenge for our analysis but also, and more importantly, would likely present the same challenge for news consumers looking for local news.

Revised Criteria

After encountering these challenges, we significantly revised our initial criteria in favor of new criteria. Our previous criteria reflected past ideas of the newspaper of record, which were conceived before the internet and its unimaginable effects on the way people find and consume news. Our new criteria focused on ways of thinking about modern challenges facing news consumers as well as ways to revise past criteria to make them more relevant to the current news media landscape. To reflect this sea change, we moved away from broad, basic criteria that required a clear yes or no answer to more nuanced questions requiring a more thoughtful approach. We developed the following questions to determine a paper's fit for our new newspaper of record classification:

- How many times per week is the paper publishing a print edition?
- Does the paper have reporters on staff?
- Are staff writers exclusively producing feature pieces, or are they also writing on current events and issues, particularly as they pertain to the local community?
- Is the paper reporting local and state government news?

- If there is no newspaper in the state that meets all the aforementioned criteria, is there one that meets most?
- Do news content and ad content share space? Are ads clearly differentiated from news?
- Is the newspaper independently owned or has it been acquired by a national media corporation?
- If access to content is limited or restricted, what external evidence can be used to assess the paper?

Methods, Results, and Challenges

With our revised criteria in mind, we began evaluating our previously compiled list of newspaper titles-by-circulation. To answer our guiding questions, we consulted more sources than originally planned. We confirmed publishing frequency with NewsBank's *Access World News Research Collection*, used the list of Pulitzer Prize winners for investigative reporting and local reporting by year, and searched the open web for external sources of evidence when our access was limited by paywalls. We ended up with a list of approximately 90 titles covering Canada and the United States that met, to varying extent, our criteria.

During the review, we found our revised criteria better addressed the changing publication landscape and the increasing emphasis on digital content for many reasons. For instance, we were able to take into consideration both the form and the layout of content, looking at where paid content was located on the digital page and how—or if—it was differentiated from news content. Additionally, our criteria prompted a look at the effect that the purchase of local newspapers by national syndicates has had, particularly the result of near identical design and layout of newspapers' websites across cities and states that, at least visually, serve to elide any difference between socio- and geographic areas.

However, even with these revised considerations, the process of accurately identifying a newspaper of record for an area was fraught and required a significant time investment. The preponderance of wire content, access limitations due to paywalls, and the homogenization of user interfaces made it difficult to locate and identify newspapers of local significance. Our final list contained newspapers representing each administrative area that we determined best met our revised newspaper of record criteria (see researchguides.wcu.edu/GEOG440_NorthAmerica for the final list). In some cases, we did not reach our decision easily or with full confidence, which indicates the complexity of the current newspaper landscape. More importantly, our struggle to identify these seemingly major resources is a signal to librarians regarding the importance of rethinking our approach to news media literacy. In doing so, we will better prepare our students to be informed news consumers.

Implications for the Student Experience

Based on our experiences and struggles with both the conceptual and practical aspects of this project, the challenges relating to finding and using newspapers of record are very real and very daunting. We predict that students will encounter similar challenges, meaning that identifying and evaluating those newspapers will be very problematic indeed—particularly if they confine themselves to online-access only. The most pressing issues we think students will encounter fall into two categories. The first encapsulates interface, context and access—that is, where students choose to look, how interface mediates the context of the news, and how they will deal with content access issues, including paywalls. The second category includes student issues with the quantity of information, types of information, and how that information is categorized.

Tackling Interface, Context, Access

The first potential obstacle for students is determining where they will look for content: through a library-provided resource or through the newspaper's public-facing page. Students may think these experiences are identical or even similar enough, but each has distinct advantages and disadvantages. For example, while database content is reliable, it presents a very stripped-down view of the newspaper, and readers lose the context of surrounding stories and section headings. Conversely, students going through the newspaper's site contend with imperfect newspaper search engines. These often do not allow access to the archives, are limited to keyword searches only, and offer few filter options. The results of these searches can give misleading or confusing results (e.g., the search retrieves the right article, but somehow the title has changed).

Additionally, students using the newspaper's site are extremely likely to be hindered by access issues. Most newspapers employ a paywall system that allows non-subscribers to access only a limited number of articles per month. Non-subscribers are limited in the number of articles they may access and, frequently, in the type of articles they may access. Usually these freely-accessible items are basic articles, not investigative pieces, and are often wire content. Students limited to this content will have difficulty determining whether the newspaper is publishing content written by those who have a deep understanding of the community the newspaper serves (i.e., local reporters or journalists). A final complicating factor is net neutrality. As of this writing, the regulations surrounding net neutrality have been repealed, so the effect this will have on less influential papers (those with less money and less visibility) is not only uncertain but also deeply concerning.

Wading through the Morass

If the glut of information available online is difficult for trained information professionals to wade through, for students it can seem insurmountable. The number of credible sources now available online is staggering; add to that the ease with which anyone can now post online content that mimics the appearance of a credible news site, and it is easy to understand student confusion. There is no authoritative body that judges the veracity of online news; it is up to individuals to construct our own understanding of authority and verify what we accept as news. This may not be a difficult idea to believe—after all, it is one of the frames of information literacy—but acting on it requires an investment of time, attention, and critical appraisal.

Student researchers must also be able to interpret a variety of media. Whereas print newspapers are simply sheets of newsprint, their digital counterparts comprise not only prose but now also audio and video components. Also complicating things is the similar nature of multimedia advertising content. Static, animated, and video ads have become commonplace on newspaper websites and, in many cases, are given prime real estate over news content. For example, in our evaluation of newspapers, we were able to do a side-by-side comparison of seven nationally-known print newspapers with their online counterparts. Not one of the print editions had any advertising above the fold on the front page. By contrast, every single online edition had prominent advertisements on the homepage above the fold (i.e., the part of the page visible without scrolling). In each instance, the online edition featured an ad so large that it either partially or entirely obscured news content or moved it below the fold. Advertisements this large and prominent are fairly easy to identify; more troublesome are those ads that seamlessly amalgamate with journalistic content, matching news content boxes in size, layout, and design. These ads can be easily mistaken for news content, especially by casual or rushed readers who are skimming headlines.

Also contributing to the confusion are discrepancies in naming conventions between print and digital editions of the same newspaper. In some instances, this is immediately noticeable, with URLs that bear little to no resemblance to the name of the paper. For example, the *Times-Picayune*'s website is nola.com, the *Arizona Republic*'s site is azcentral.com, and the *Florida Times-Union*'s site is jacksonville.com. While indicative of the administrative area each paper covers, none of the web addresses is at all reflective of the newspaper's title and could be easily misinterpreted as a local chamber of commerce or tourism site. Also notable is the de-emphasis of the newspaper title on the homepage (*Times-Picayune*, *Florida Times-Union*) or its absence altogether (*Arizona Republic*). The naming conventions problem is further compounded by differently titled or additional section headings than those that appear in the print edition (i.e., a "Metro" section in the print edition may be titled "Local News" on the website). One final problem is the ease with which viewers can be rerouted in these websites to pages other than those initially intended. For example, readers in the United States trying to visit the sites of *Al Jazeera*, *The Guardian*, or *Der Spiegel* may be automatically rerouted to the paper's US edition, which likely has an entirely different set of headlines than the original edition. While seemingly inconsequential—the reader is still getting to some version of the content—these cues serve to make the chasm between a print newspaper and its digital edition even wider and more difficult to traverse.

Implications for Library Instruction

Librarians already face numerous challenges in media literacy instruction, including ever-present considerations of how students use and synthesize information. Our experience indicates that librarians are also likely to encounter new—and potentially unfamiliar—difficulties when teaching news media literacy, particularly for newspapers of record. However, the most pressing

issues we think librarians need to consider are more practical in nature and can be categorized into considerations of the language and tools they will use in instruction and how to readjust student, faculty, and librarian expectations.

Weighing Options and Opportunity Costs

One of the immediate implications is how librarians will determine what concepts they will introduce to students, which tools to use during library instruction, and how they will describe what they are showing. Librarians will also have to decide what terminology to use (i.e. newspaper of record, elite newspaper, or another qualifying term) and how to whittle this broad idea of a newspaper of record into a definition that is understandable, relevant, and broadly applicable to both librarians and students. This is no easy task since, as we mentioned earlier, no standard, objective definition for this type of newspaper exists. Librarians will have to develop their own criteria through trial and error and work with colleagues to ensure that individual approaches to this topic are as harmonious as possible.

Once these initial implications have been addressed, librarians will need to work with faculty to decide which is more germane to the students' existing knowledge and research needs: searching for content through a library-subscribed resource such as NewsBank, or using a newspaper's website for access. This choice is not as clear-cut as you might think. If librarians teach the database interface for the newspaper, it is quite likely that extraneous content, meaning ads and wire pieces, has been removed, leaving intact the content that is most pertinent to students. Many librarians would find this desirable, and it is particularly important when students are looking for recent content as ads and wire pieces proliferate among local news content. However, if database searching is taught, skills specific to this type of searching may not transfer well to newspaper search engines.

On the other hand, if librarians focus on navigating and searching the public interface, students will experience the context of the news, which can be very helpful as they interpret its importance and relevance. However, they will also encounter the endless bounty of advertisements and wire content and it may be difficult for students to differentiate between those elements and bona fide news content. Because of this similarity and the confusion it can cause, librarians must consider if and when to teach students how to perform an effective visual analysis of these websites. These considerations require extensive forethought and planning before the librarian even begins creating a lesson.

Tempering Expectations

Approaching media literacy as it relates to newspapers will require repeated exposure for students to grasp, consistent approaches, and patience on the part of librarians. Student researchers also have falsely elevated expectations about the ease with which they can find information. These expectations have been inflated by the continuing move to put "all" information online and the sense of immediacy they have experienced as frequent internet users. This expectation holds true for hyper-current events as well as firsthand reporting on historical events. As a result, librarians need to devote time to adjusting the get-it-now expectations of their students. This will need to be done on a class-by-class, and in some cases student-by-student, basis as librarians assess how easily—or not—the students are finding their needed information. As instruction librarians teach students to dig deeper in their analysis of digital newspapers, they will also have to temper students' frustrations as they hit paywalls, making this an ideal opportunity to demonstrate that information truly has value.

Librarians and faculty must temper their expectations as well. Librarians need to reconsider the impulse that media literacy for newspapers is too broad a topic to consider

approaching, particularly in a one-shot session. Faculty will also need to dispense the mentality that this can and should be accomplished in a single session. Addressing the breadth of media literacy for newspapers effectively and meaningfully is not feasible for a single instructional period. To be successful, librarians need to convey to faculty the importance of choosing a single, accomplishable objective that is likely to be most relevant, and therefore meaningful, to the students' assignment. This point-of-need choice also increases the likelihood that students will retain what they have learned.

Conclusion

As we survey the current landscape, it is clear that the path forward for students, librarians, and faculty is thorny. Newspapers will continue their evolution in both print and online venues. However, the future of print newspapers is unknown but presently fragile, particularly as production costs continue to increase for newspapers of all stripes (see *Augusta Chronicle*, 2017; *Florida Times-Union*, 2017; and Gunn, 2018 for a sample of newspapers that outsource printing or design operations to save on production costs—a growing trend). The proposed tariff on newsprint, unsettled as of this writing, is another point of deep concern for the United States newspaper industry (see *Canton Repository*, 2018; *Hartford Courant*, 2018; *New York Daily News*, 2018; and *North Augusta Star*, 2018 for a sample of responses to the proposed tariff from newspapers, large and small).

Print newspapers and their online counterparts will also keep diverging. Online newspaper content will change in amount and appearance and include more and more non-news-based content. The trend toward integrating audio-visual content with traditional prose does not have an end in the foreseeable future, nor can we predict the unimaginable directions it may take. Additionally, as multimedia news and advertising content become more prevalent, students will

need more time to assess online newspapers. Furthermore, if newspaper revenues continue to decline, restrictive access policies may become commonplace, making adequate assessment difficult for students.

These effects are significant. Integration of news content with ads and entertainment changes the environment to make it much more challenging for students to discern, without practice and guidance, exactly what they are seeing when it comes to newspapers. Gone are the days when they could flip through the print version and know quickly, fairly accurately, and without too much guidance what they were seeing. This means visual assessment of websites will become as important for students to master as traditional content literacies. Balancing these competing but complementary literacies means that librarians will face crucial decision-making about instructional focus and need to abandon the idea that we can adequately address both literacies, visual and content, for newspapers in a single instruction session.

We recognize that we have addressed only some issues and concerns pertaining to news media literacy; this is a topic that is ripe for further study. Social media platforms, as mentioned previously, and how they rank, distribute, and permit the sharing of news (both credible and dubious) require thorough investigation. This type of research will help librarians determine the breadth of the issue and understand the subsequent implications for library instruction. Additionally, the impact of format—print versus digital—on students' perception of news source reliability requires investigation. Does format matter or is the difference truly artificial?

Finally, in the current social and political climate, we think there are three pressing aspects that merit timely investigation: bias, privilege, and partisanship. All three concerns result in privileging/exclusion of certain viewpoints, which may limit student understanding of a particular issue–especially for students inexperienced in recognizing the presence or influence of

bias or partisanship. What is needed are thorough analyses of which viewpoints are privileged in newspapers of record, whether students are able to recognize that privilege or bias, and the extent to which the demise of in-depth, local reporting has silenced entire communities (Barkan, 2017). The results of these analyses can help librarians craft news media literacy approaches that address these challenges and cultivate media-literate students.

References

Altschull, J.H. (1995), *Agents of Power: The Media and Public Policy*, Longman, White Plains, NY.

Anderson, J.A. and Ploghoft, M.E. (1977), "Television Receivership Skills: The New Social Literacy", paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the International Communication Association, 29 May-4 June, Berlin.

Ashley, S., Poepsel, M. and Willis, E. (2010), "Media Literacy and News Credibility: Does knowledge of media ownership increase skepticism in news consumers?", *Journal of Media Literacy Education*, Vol. 2 No. 1, pp. 37–46.

Augusta Chronicle (2017), "The Chronicle to outsource printing operation", 1 August, available at: http://www.augustachronicle.com/news/business/2017-08-01/chronicle-outsource-printing-operations (accessed 4 April 2018).

Barkan, R. (2017), "The decimation of local news in New York City", *Columbia Journalism Review*, 3 November, available at: https://www.cjr.org/local_news/local-news-new-york-city.php (accessed 25 January 2018).

Barthel, M. (2017), "Newspapers Fact Sheet", available at: http://www.journalism.org/fact-sheet/newspapers/# (accessed 8 December 2017).

Breslin, D. and Marino, E. (1974), “Literacy for the 70’s”, *Elementary English*, Vol. 51 No. 5, pp. 715-16.

Brown, D. W. (1978), “Reading TV: Today's Basic”, *Educational Leadership*, Vol. 36 No. 3, pp. 216-18.

Canton Repository (2018), “Newsprint tariffs imperil papers’ ability to sustain excellence”, 4 April, available at: http://www.cantonrep.com/opinion/20180404/editorial-newsprint-tariffs-imperil-papers-ability-to-sustain-excellence (accessed 4 April 2018).

Florida Times-Union (2017), “Times-Union to outsource printing operations”, 13 December, available at: http://www.jacksonville.com/business/2017-12-13/times-union-outsource-printing-operations (accessed 4 April 2018).

Foster, H. M. (1981), “Electronic Media: Teaching Television Literacy”, *The English Journal*, Vol. 70 No. 8, pp. 70-72.

Froke, P., Jacobsen, S., Minthorn, D., and Associated Press (2015), *Associated Press Stylebook 2015 and Briefing on Media Law*, Basic Books, New York, NY.

Garner, B. A., and Black, H. C. (2004), *Black's Law Dictionary*, Thomson/West, St. Paul, MN.

Gross, R.R. (2003), “Newspapers, Elite and National”, in Johnston, D.H. (Ed.), *Encyclopedia of International Media and Communications*, Academic Press, New York, NY, pp. 247-56.

Gunn, S. (2018), “The Virginian-Pilot to outsource most newsroom page design”, *The Virginian-Pilot*, 30 January, available at: https://pilotonline.com/news/local/from-pilot/article_0ae564d0-3bc4-5eb6-8052-16d6b90014a1.html (accessed 4 April 2018).

Hartford Courant (2018), “Proposed Newsprint Tariffs Are a Threat to Democracy”, 28 March, available at: http://www.courant.com/opinion/editorials/hc-ed-newsprint-tariff-20180327-story.html (accessed 4 April 2018).

Lieberman, D. (1980), "A New High School Curriculum: Critical Television Viewing Skills", *NASSP Bulletin*, Vol. 64 No. 437, pp. 53-59.

Loth, R. (2012), "What's Black and White and Retweeted All Over?", working paper [No. D-71], Joan Shorenstein Center on the Press, Politics and Public Policy, John F. Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University, 15 February, available at: https://shorensteincenter.org/whats-black-and-white-and-retweeted-all-over-teaching-news-literacy-in-the-digital-age/ (accessed 17 October 2017).

Lucking, R. A. (1974), "Television: Teaching the Message and the Massage", *The English Journal*, Vol. 63 No. 7, pp. 74-76.

Malik, M., Cortesi, S. and Gasser, U. (2013), "The Challenges of Defining 'News Literacy'", working paper, Youth and Media Team, Berkman Center for Internet and Society, Harvard University, 8 July, available at: http://youthandmedia.org/files/2013/07/YaM_The-Challenges-of-Defining-News-Literacy_FINAL_07082013_V2.pdf (accessed 17 October 2017).

Martin, S., and Hansen, K. A. (1996), "Examining the 'Virtual' Publication as a 'Newspaper of Record'", *Communication Law & Policy*, Vol. 1 No. 4, pp. 578-94.

Martin, S. E., and Hansen, K. A. (1998), *Newspapers of Record in a Digital Age: From Hot Type to Hot Link*, Praeger, Westport, CT.

Mihal, C., and Mihal (2009), "New York Times", Sterling, C.H. (Ed.), *Encyclopedia of Journalism*, Sage Publications, Thousand Oaks, CA.

New York Daily News (2018), "Trump to papers: Drop dead with steep tariff on Canadian newsprint", 30 March, available at: http://www.nydailynews.com/opinion/trump-papers-drop-dead-steep-tariff-canada-newsprint-article-1.3904406 (accessed 4 April 2018).

North Augusta Star (2018), "Newspaper tariffs will hurt everyone in the U.S.", 3 April, available at: https://www.northaugustastar.com/opinion/editorial-newspaper-tariffs-will-hurt-everyone-in-the-u-s/article_5a573649-b404-5b32-83e5-d5bd1d18bb61.html (accessed 4 April 2018).

Örnebring, H. (2013), "Journalism as Institution and Work in Europe, *Circa* 1860: A Comparative History of Journalism", *Media History*, Vol. 19 No. 4, pp. 393-407.

Oxford English Dictionary (2009), 3rd ed., Oxford University Press, Oxford.

Potter, W.J. (2013), "Review of Literature on Media Literacy", *Sociology Compass*, Vol. 7 No. 6, pp. 417-35.

Rogow, F. (2004), "Shifting From Media to Literacy: One Opinion on the Challenges of Media Literacy Education", *The American Behavioral Scientist*, Vol. 48 No. 1, pp. 30-34.

Schmidt, H.C. (2012), "Essential but Problematic: Faculty Perceptions of Media Literacy Education at the University Level", *Qualitative Research Reports in Communication*, Vol. 13 No. 1, pp. 10–20.

Siegal, A. M., and Connolly, W. G. (1999), *The New York Times Manual of Style and Usage*, Three Rivers Press, New York, NY.

Zelier, B., Park, D., and Gudelunas, D. (2002), "How Bias Shapes the News: Challenging *The New York Times'* Status as a Newspaper of Record on the Middle East", *Journalism*, Vol. 3 No. 3, pp. 283-307.