Activity reports
from the
Advisers and Student Editors & Managers

CJ Salgado
Curt Yowell
Michael Brick
Shabab Siddiqui
Laura Wright
Jaclyn Kachelmeyer
Nick Mehendale
Joe Aragon
Ian Reese
Advertising Department
TSM Board Meeting: 4/25/14

The advertising team participated in the College of Communication Job Fair and the Student Affairs Job Fair. We were able to meet with many candidates at both of these fairs and are currently going through the interview process.

The annual Housing Fair was a success due to great teamwork and our clients were pleased with the overall event. Carter and Lindsey did a great job planning and executing the Housing Fair. Their current focus is on “Spectrum” the upcoming Fashion show. The programs to be used during the event were produced by our creative team and in collaboration with the School of Human Ecology. The Fashion Show program looks great! A big thanks to Carter and Lindsey for making it profitable, to Daniel for a lot of extra hours making sure the student designed outfits look great in print and Michael for helping ensure the overall layout was perfect. The show will be held at the Frank Erwin center on April 24th. Please support Texas Student Media and the School of Human Ecology by attending: http://he.utexas.edu/txa/spectrum-ut-fashion-show-2014

I am pleased to announce our Advertising department received several awards during the CNBAM (College Newspaper Business & Advertising Managers) 2014 convention. Hundreds of schools participate in CNBAM and it is always an honor to win a CNBAM award.

1st Place - Longhorn Life - Housing Fair Edition - Group Promo
1st Place - Rate Card/Media Kit
3rd Place - Online newspaper Promo
3rd Place - Newspaper Promo Multi-Media Campaign
4th Place - Professionally Designed Ad Campaign

I am very proud of my team, despite all of the challenges we face, we continue to move forward. They all did great representing our team during the convention, a special thank you to: Carter Goss, Lindsey Hollingsworth, Daniel Hublein, Michael Gammon and Ted Sniderman for presenting as a team during the convention and helping to lead the charge, ensuring our team is a success.

Hook'em & Sell'em!!!

CJ Salgado
Advertising Adviser
April 2014

Curt Yowell, Digital Manager
Texas Student Media
The University of Texas at Austin

The Texas Student Media digital team took shape over the spring 2014 semester. The team sought to become a results-oriented team, with projects moving from pitch to completion throughout the semester. The following is a rundown of most of the TSM digital team projects. TSM digital team students involved or leading the project are listed in parentheses. Students from the different media properties also contributed to the success of projects.

**Audience engagement:** A/B testing for the Daily Digest email subject line. The team is experimenting with using different approaches for the email’s subject. For example, using “Read Now” versus just using the title of the lead article. Analysis of the impact on open rates and click through rates is currently underway and will be completed by May 2. (Mary Grace Ewald, Ileana Barron, Saumya Wali, Sameeta Satyanarayana, Nicole Stewart, Nathan Beddome)

**Audience engagement:** The Daily Texan (DT) custom 404 error page with illustrations by the Comics department. The 404 error page project focuses on the audience experience with the goal of reducing bounce rates for web visitors hitting a 404 (page not found) page. Currently, we are seeing a 19% reduction in bounce rate (over last year) for visitors landing on a 404 page. (Mary Grace Ewald, Nathan Beddome)

**Audience engagement:** social media. The digital team is working with the social media managers of the TSM media properties to gather social analytics, provide reports, and develop strategies to engage their audience through social media. The team delivered reports and presentations for the Travesty, TSTV, and The Daily Texan. (Nicole Stewart, Saumya Wali, Nathan Beddome)

**Audience engagement:** social media. The team is working with the DT social media team to segment and track Daily Texan social media analytics based on web traffic generated through the DT social media accounts or viral traffic (traffic generated from audience members’ social sharing of DT content). The tracking allows the TSM digital team and the DT social team to better understand when and how content goes viral and to develop content marketing strategies. (Nathan Beddome)
Audience engagement: social media. Twitter cards are displaying as part of DT posts to Twitter. The TSM digital implemented the feature by using Drupal resources. The cards allow for a summary of the website’s content to be displayed natively within a Twitter user’s feed. The goal of the cards is to increase the click through rate (CTR) to the DT website. The first assessment of success will be done May 1. Project goal: improve the audience experience of TSM, increase engagement with TSM content and increase online revenue as a result. (Nathan Beddome)

Audience engagement. The team is completing the analysis of *The Daily Texan* Audience Survey. To our knowledge, this is the first survey conducted by students on this level. Project goal: gather audience insights beyond Google Analytics, and pave the way for future surveys; provide a summary report with key findings and recommendations. (Mary Grace Ewald, Nathan Beddome)

Audience engagement. The team is working on the Texas Student Media website redesign and re-launch. We are gathering input from stakeholders and conducting research on the websites and online features of peers and competitors. Project goal: produce a report with a summary of the research, stakeholder input, recommendations, examples, and timelines to guide the TSM website redesign. (Sameeta Satyanarayana, Nicole Stewart, Nathan Beddome)

Audience engagement. A redesign of the *Longhorn Life* website is underway with responsive, mobile-first design. Project goal: produce a redesigned *Longhorn Life* website that will highlight the content, increase the online audience and revenue. (Shihan Huang)

Website analytics and Search Engine Optimization. A page value system is part of the DT web analytics. The approach seeks to take web analytics beyond the number of pageviews or visitors to articles as the key metrics. The system takes into account the amount of time a user spends on an article, how much of it they read, and if they visit other content after it. This is a better analytic tool because it allows us to incorporate audience engagement as a metric, while providing insight into the value of content to our audience and advertisers. (Nathan Beddome)

Website analytics and Search Engine Optimization. The team is preforming SEO audits for the DT and KVRX. The SEO audit is intended to increase the search engine rank for key pages on the websites. We look at titles, summaries, and keywords for the web pages. Project goal: increase the success rate of content seekers finding our content; increase traffic to the websites; increase online advertising revenue. (Sameeta Satyanarayana, Saumya Wali, Nathan Beddome)

Website analytics and Search Engine Optimization. Heatmap research on user engagement is underway with kvrx.org. Project goal: provide insights into the behavior patterns of the web visitors, allowing us to optimize future redesigns to meet the needs of the online audience. (Saumya Wali, Nathan Beddome)
Website analytics and Search Engine Optimization. The team is working with DT staff to implement Google+ Authorship. Project goals: allow reporters to connect the Google+ profile to their DT content, and leverage their work in their careers; increase click through rates for articles retrieved via search engines; increase online advertising revenue. (Nathan Beddome)

Online advertising. The team is in the process of moving our internal ad server from OpenX to DoubleClick for Publishers. The move will allow us to sell remnant online ad space through a connection to AdSense. Project goal: offer geo targeting and video ad options for clients, and increase online advertising revenue by 3-4%. (Ileana Barron, Nathan Beddome)

Online advertising. The TSM digital team created the following during as part of the process to implement DT native advertising (also known as sponsored content): policies, procedures, price analysis, a social listening campaign, and a potential client list. We are currently awaiting ITS support for web development implementation. Project goal: increase online advertising revenue by 10%. (Ileana Barron, Saumya Wali, Nathan Beddome)

Online advertising. Implementation of a new online classifieds system from Kaango is on hold pending further approval from UT’s Treasury, Records, & Risk Management department. Project goal: increase classified revenue by 15%. (Mary Grace Ewald, Nathan Beddome)

Training. The TSM team completed certification in Google Analytics “Platform Principles” and Google Fusion Tables “Making Sense of Data.”

Training. TSM web developers participated in a Drupal basics workshop conducted by ITS. In addition, the DT tech leadership had a one-on-one with ITS to receive customized guidance on their web redesign project for the DT. Project goal: complete a redesign of the DT website in 2014, with a focus on responsive design, making content shareable, and creating a more streamlined process for content creators (DT reporters and staff).

Training. TSM and TSTV alumnus Cecy Correa (Director of Business Development at Four Kitchens) provided social media guidance and advice to TSM digital team members. Project goal: provide TSM media properties insight into social media best practices to increase audience engagement and increase online revenue.

Challenges. Web development continues to be a challenge for TSM. The DT tech team is moving in a positive direction with the tech team leadership training new students. The model may provide a realistic path forward for all TSM media properties. TSM should consider hiring a Drupal developer or upgrading the current service agreement with ITS to allow for more hours of web development support. An in-house web developer would need to be able to meet the educational mission of TSM.
Digital assets. In fall of 2012 several external drives failed and the DT photo department lost photographs from the mid-2000s. As a means to address the issue and provide a process to ensure TSM data is properly backed up, a partnership was formed with UT Libraries. In spring of 2014, 1.2 TB of TSM data was backed up to tape. Project goal: ensure the integrity and longevity of TSM digital content.

Digital assets. Microfilm of The Daily Texan printed publication exists back to 1900. Digitizing the microfilm archives is a project worth pursuing, and UT Libraries and DT alumni are expressing interest in helping with the project. In partnering with UT Libraries, TSM ensures DT maintains control of licensing opportunities. Project goal: digitize the entire DT back catalogue; increase web traffic; increase revenue.

Web stats
**Spring 2014 - The Daily Texan**
Compared to the same time period last year, The Daily Texan website has a
31.83% increase in sessions
28.74% increase in users
24.10% increase in pageviews
32.91% increase in average session duration
7.31% decrease in bounce rate

83.73% increase in mobile sessions
46.75% increase in tablet sessions

5.86% decrease in pages per session
2.97% decrease in the percentage of new sessions

349,966 average pageviews per month
241,106 average sessions per month
172,072 average users per month
# Texas Student Media Website Analytics

--- **February 2014**

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<th>Unique Visitors</th>
<th>Pageviews</th>
<th>% total pgv</th>
<th>Pages/Visit</th>
<th>Avg. Time</th>
<th>Bounce Rate</th>
<th>Mobile Visitors</th>
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<th>CTR</th>
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**Totals**

|              | 332,947      | 252,925       | 489,658        | 136,607   | 41.0%       | 1,719,488   | 2,367      | 0.14%       |

--- **March 2014**

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**Totals**

|              | 226,121      | 172,353       | 351,582        | 92,662    | 41.0%       | 1,332,367   | 1,744      | 0.13%       |
At the national College Media Association convention in New York last month, The Daily Texan took the top honor, Best Newspaper. Our entry, the Nov. 22 edition covering the 50th anniversary of the Kennedy assassination, featured deep reporting and analysis, with strong content from every section. But most of all, the edition was a triumph of design, reprinting the front page from Nov. 23, 1963 with subtle changes. It was a risky choice, but the effect was arresting, as the prize committee affirmed. On April 16, the university illuminated the tower bright orange in recognition of the student’s achievement.

This semester, in my opinion, the journalism has been even stronger. The news department, which has had a remarkably high retention rate, dispatched a team to cover the shooting at Fort Hood, with stories focusing on the base’s ties to the UT campus. Though that breaking news arrived just days before the start of the Civil Rights summit on campus, the students followed through with impressive and thorough coverage of the summit. The stories were hardly fluff – they examined angles including protests on campus, how tickets were distributed to the well-connected few and how the Longhorn Network chose to air a ball game over President Carter’s speech. The web presentation was crisply executed, with a livestream and scrolling updates linked to longer stories. One highlight of the coverage was an exclusive interview with Jesse Jackson, presented in print and on video. Our student journalists prepared well, thought on their feet and followed up with smart questions examining the state of civil rights and higher education.

Over the course of this semester, the arts department has transformed itself from a focus on national film and music criticism to a new focus on reported features examining campus life. Leading Ladies, a regular column, tells the stories of how successful alumnae have made their way in the world. The department also did a great job during SXSW, when a multi-fatality car wreck in the middle of the festival suddenly turned an arts story into a tragic national news story.

Our sportswriting has been consistently professional-caliber when it comes to game coverage. The department has also produced a neat recurring feature on walk-on
players and engaging coverage of lesser-known club sports. Moving forward, we’re going to try to tackle some more investigative work on off-the-field issues.

The Comics department successfully produced a standalone comic book, working closely with the Advertising staff. Our cartoonists have promoted the book with appearances at a comic convention. They also set up on campus to promote the book by drawing caricatures of passers-by.

Multimedia has put quality over quantity this semester. The relatively few videos the department has produced have been strong, particularly the Jesse Jackson interview, a piece on the anniversary of the fertilizer plant explosion in West and interviews with survivors of the SXSW crash. The Huffington Post stole some of that last one, but later credited the Texan (after I sent a cease and desist letter).

Our enterprise desk did a great story on the vacancy at the UT Tower. KVUE, a local network affiliate, followed with its own piece, putting the paper and our reporter on the air.

DT Delta, the web redesign project, remains challenging. A year ago, a group of students wrote an open letter demanding control of the web site’s appearance, which clearly needed a major overhaul. But after months of work recruiting programmers, it has proven difficult to get the students putting out the daily print product to engage with the web redesign team, and vice versa. The technologically-minded students are trying to learn basic newsroom culture and function, while the journalism-minded students may have underestimated the task of getting under the hood of a CMS. There’s little to show for it so far, unless you count education (and we sure do).

- Michael Brick
Dear Texas Student Media Board of Trustees:

I hope you all are doing wonderfully since the last meeting. I plan to do an oral board report today, so below is my outline for that:

- Cross-departmental collaboration
  - Focus for the semester
- Website redesign
  - Tedious but educational
- Award
  - CMA
- Recruiting high school students
  - ILPC
- Mentorship, continuity
- Relationships
  - Managing Editor and Editor-in-Chief
  - Adviser
  - TSM
  - Friends of the Texan
- Content is king. Good content is queen. (Think chess)
  - Breaking news: SXSW crash, jaywalker, Ft. Hood shooting
  - Sports coverage: Kansas (twice), Oklahoma
  - Planned coverage: Primaries, West explosion, Civil Rights Summit
  - Recurring content: Campus Characters, football recruiting
  - Packages: Special Ventures

Please let me know if you have any questions, as I would be happy to receive your feedback.

Thank you for your time,

Shabab Siddiqui
To: The Texas Student Media Board of Trustees

From: Laura Wright, Editor-in-Chief, The Daily Texan

Board Report, April 21, 2014

Internal achievements:

• Held make-up orientation sessions for employees hired mid-way through semester
• With ME Shabbab Siddiqui and Advisor Michael Brick, selected awards for Daily Texan staffers
• Met with Interim Director Frank Serpas to discuss TSM’s budget situation
• Brought Editorial twitter following from 660 at beginning of term to 1,000+

External achievements:

• Represented the Texan at a Student Government candidate debate
• Represented the Texan to the press during budget conversations

Best Regards,

Laura Wright, Editor-in-Chief, The Daily Texan
4/19/2014

To the Board:

This semester, *Cactus* has proceeded full speed ahead since sorting out questions of publishing companies and the likelihood printing. We have gone through all 120 archives and are currently scanning and photographing the content we would like to use. Hopefully we will have a publishing contract in order soon to send our cover and page designs to print on time.

*Cactus* also participated in the graduation fair for seniors a couple weeks ago, and we are reaching out to Texas Exes to see how we can get involved in The Great Texas Exit graduation celebration.

With the hiatus we experienced midway through the academic year, we are a bit behind the usual schedule. However, given the nature of this year’s book and the progress we’ve made thus far, *Cactus* should be back on schedule for print soon.

Thank you,
Jaclyn

*Cactus* Editor-in-Chief
To the TSM Board of Trustees:

In the period of time since my last report, a lot has gone on in with the Travesty.

- Late February we held our screening of the cult classic The Room in the Union Theatre. We amassed a turnout of around 150 people, which we were able to convert to around 27% liking us on Facebook in the following 24 hours.

- We have continued to promote online only content and promoting our online brand. This has included a rejuvenated commit regular tweeting that has resulted in a 1.2% increase in the amount of Twitter followers in the last month alone.

- By the time we will be having this meeting, we will be in the throws of compiling and disseminating our coverage of Moontower Comedy Festival. We have set up interviews with performers as well as having gained press credentials to be able to expand our coverage to show and set reviews.

- We have partnered up with Longhorn Life to produce supplemental content for their upcoming issue. This will hopefully both provide a new, more diversified identity for Longhorn Life and promotion for Travesty’s work, allowing us to expand to a new audience and thus grant us access to more advertising opportunities.

Best,

Nick Mehendale
Editor-in-chief, Texas Travesty
To The TSM Board,

KVRX is winding down the Spring Semester mostly by preparing for summer. We are taking initiatives to make sure all graduating members of staff are accounted for and replaced so that we have a smooth transition into the 2014-15 school year. Before this semester is through, we are looking to hold at least one more training session so that we will have an ample amount of student volunteers for our summer schedule, which we are in the beginning stage of compiling.

Our other focus is finishing projects for this semester. This includes our Local Live album release, which we are compiling currently. We are looking at a new model for distribution on this release, and are hoping to clear the rights for a digital release instead of just a physical one. We believe that, if this is secured, we will be more able to promote and sell this release. It will act as a branding opportunity for future KVRX products, as well as a way to promote ourselves through the web.

We are continuing to reach out to our Pledge Drive 2014 donors. All gifts and premium packages have been sent out, and we are in the preliminary stages of continued outreach to our large donors in order to foster a relationship with them year-round. This includes further premiums to “KVRX Members” and continued communication via email updates.

Our biggest event for the future is a new fund-drive to raise money for a new transmitter. It is currently scheduled for November 15th, and alumni outreach will be a big part of this. We look forward to holding a large event that will act as a concert, a pledge drive, and an alumni gathering. We have staff members who will be staying on next year to insure that this event is a success.

It has been a great year serving for TSM and KVRX, and I’m very proud of the work my staff has done this year. This has been one of the smoothest years I’ve experienced at KVRX, and there is plenty of room to grow and make things better. I look forward to having Rodrigo Leal, our candidate for next year’s Station Manager, lead KVRX and make it even stronger. With an exciting new future for TSM under the Moody College of Communications and the enthusiasm of our younger volunteers, I look forward to watching KVRX grow in the coming years.

Thank You,
Joe Aragon
KVRX Station Manager
Texas Student TV
Station Manager Report
April 21, 2014

Productions:

- We’ve had a successful few months with production work at the station. 14 productions over 4 months (February through May (projected)) will bring in close to $13,000 for the station (and TSM).
- Recently completed projects include:
  - International Symposium for Online Journalism – English and Spanish simultaneous live streams. Currently uploading content to YouTube and Vimeo
  - LAMP (UT OLLI Organization) 25th Anniversary Documentary – Filmed and edited a 15 minute documentary showcasing the 25 years of LAMPs existence.
  - Texas Tribune Digital News Revenue Summit – Streaming for the Trib’s conference in the Belo Center.
  - Various projects for College of Communication events, guest lectures organized by Advertising professors.
  - Slow Motion Video booth for a Wedding in town – my personal favorite.
- Productions in the works/upcoming:
  - College of Communication Commencement Ceremony
  - Graduate School Convocation Ceremonies (Bass Concert Hall)
  - Carpigiani’s Gelato World Tour Festival
  - Various College of Communication events, guest lectures.
- On the horizon
  - Excited about the possibility of work with the Austin Aztex.
- I can’t mention productions without thanking Dave Cox and Keefe Boerner of CoC Tech Services and RTF. They have both been of massive help to the station and will be fantastic sources of information and support for TSTV in the future (I’m going out on a limb with the future thing).

Recruitment/Training:

- Steven Zurita, former TSTV station manager, spoke to a group of 10 volunteers this past Friday on social media strategy. This volunteer group was made up of people I believe to be important station leaders down the road, so I am happy that Steven was able to reach out to them.
  - Steven is currently working for online media companies in Los Angeles were he is organizing a TSTV Alumni group that will provide a nice landing spot for recent graduates or students who plan to spend time working in LA.
- I attended the Digital Media Institute’s Internship event this past week and was able to get in contact with a number of students interested in being part of our TSTV Web/Digital Team. We are beginning to meet with interested people and plan to have them take the reigns on our web projects soon.
  - We may, with a good amount of luck, also have someone interested in App development. This helps us particularly in our operations department, where we are relying more and more on applications for organization and efficient transfers/equipment usage.

Remote Broadcast Gear:

- It’s in the room! We are about 98% complete with the development of this project. We are still under budget; with the remaining money set aside for improvements and repairs over the coming months.
Ask me to explain what all the gear does after the meeting! Or ask one of our volunteers.

As indicated in the Productions section, we have already deployed this gear with much success for both paid productions and station events.

24seven:

- We survived 24seven, which turned out to be more like 14seven, depending on the day you tuned in. Needless to say, volunteers here had fun and a lot of people were able to try producing live segments for the first time.
- Nicole Stewart, a member of Curt’s digital team, was able to collect a good amount of info on website traffic for TSTV during the event.

Next Year:

- Looking forward to training our new station manager over the remaining months of my term and sometime throughout the summer.
- I am building, as mentioned before, a handbook/manual that compiles information on running TSTV along with things that I have learned over this year. My hopes are that between meeting in person and delivering this handbook, our next manager will be at a better starting point than many managers that came before him.