

**The EMT of Multimedia:  
How to Revive Your Newspaper's Future**

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## **The EMT of Multimedia: How to Revive Your Newspaper's Future**

The grim outlook for the nation's newspaper industry continued in 2012 with the latest release of the State of the News Media report. Although newspapers weren't dying, they also weren't guaranteed a secure future. Weekday and Sunday circulations continued to decline as did advertising revenue. After three years of layoffs, remaining staffers were stretched thin. However, a bright spot remained: online audiences continue to grow as does the use of new media.

For community newspapers, the push to move into multimedia isn't new but, for many, it's an idea that's easier said than done. Believing they lack the Experience, Money and Time (EMT), many community editors assume only large daily newspapers have the resources, skills and audience for multimedia reporting. Using in-depth interviews conducted in mid-May 2013, this paper explores how newsrooms of varying sizes (and with diehard print reporters) ventured into multimedia. This includes the stories of two Nebraska community newspapers that have enhanced engagement with their communities through new approaches to reporting. Discover how the Hastings (Neb.) Tribune (circulation 9,500) is working to transform its culture from a newspaper to a "media information center." Learn how the Aurora (Neb.) News-Register (circulation 3,000) uses partnerships and marketing to make multimedia work in a newsroom with three full-time reporters. Read advice on getting started from the paper's author, Teri Finneman, a trailblazer of multimedia reporting in North Dakota who juggled working for four daily newspapers and three TV stations at once.

The goal of this paper is for community newspapers to walk away with tips on how to overcome the Experience, Money and Time obstacles that have kept them from embracing new

media. By opening the door to greater citizen engagement and diversified content, publishers and editors can ensure their communities will continue to have viable newspapers in the future.

## Findings

### *The Hastings Tribune*

Before launching into multimedia, Publisher Darran Fowler had the same concerns as any other community newspaper manager: Who was going to

**Who:** Darran Fowler

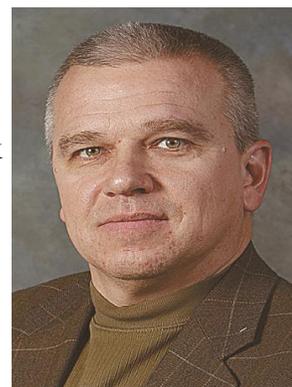
**Paper:** Hastings Tribune

**Publication Frequency:** 6 days/week

**Newsroom size:** 12 + Fowler

**Circulation:** 9,500

**Website:** [hastingstribune.com](http://hastingstribune.com)



do it? How would they manage with the staff resources they had? How could an operation that was already labor intensive possibly take on more?

“You have limited resources, obviously, just to get the paper out, and multimedia is – I guess I don’t want to sound negative,” Fowler said. “I view it as a positive. But you have to be smart about it.”

Below, Fowler describes how he addressed the experience, money and time concerns of multimedia at the six-days-a-week *Hastings Tribune*.

### *Experience*

Fowler’s initial advice to fellow editors and publishers is to hire smarter and to turn to new college graduates with multimedia training.

“You have to hire people with the skillset that’s now required to work for a quote ‘media company,’” he said.

In the meantime, Fowler acknowledges the shift to multimedia is a “difficult and painful process” since newsrooms are still full of reporters used to only working in print.

“We are newspaper people. I’m a newspaper guy,” he said. “Everybody’s a creature of habit, and our habit is newspapers. So, what we struggle with is that other component. We always revert back to newspaper and so what that results in is inconsistency (with multimedia).”

Still, Fowler knew he did not want to create a separate multimedia division within his newspaper. Besides the issue of resources, he did not want competition to develop between a multimedia team and the print team. So instead, he’s focused on turning his staff into a “jack of all trades.” Before asking his staff to do multimedia, however, Fowler decided to try it himself.

“I never felt I could force it on anyone,” he said. “I felt I needed to know what all was involved from a time standpoint: not only amount of time, but also time of day.”

He primarily taught himself but also received advice from a local college student working part time at his paper. Once he felt more comfortable with multimedia, he began having training sessions with his staff. His reporters now each have a “24-hour toolbox,” which includes a laptop, a camera, a portable scanner, a notepad, a highway safety vest and video capability whether via a flip video camera or their smartphones.

“In order to do this (multimedia), we have to provide them with the tools,” Fowler said.

For other newsrooms lacking multimedia experience but not up for trial-and-error learning, the *Hastings Tribune* found creating partnerships with outside experts can also help overcome the experience barrier.

Fowler noted the benefits of the Nebraska Press Association partnering with a multimedia specialist at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. Supported with funding from the press

association's foundation and other sources, this specialist is available to go into newsrooms across the state and provide free multimedia training to reporters and editors.

"He came here, visited our newspaper, found out where we're at, went through the whole video shooting/editing process, helped us with our website and all those kinds of things," Fowler said.

Fowler plans to have the specialist return to his newsroom to provide additional training and support. Community newspapers may want to discuss with their state newspaper association what partnerships they could form to receive on-site training.

### ***Money***

Like other publishers, Fowler was concerned about the financial side of branching into multimedia.

"The newspaper is our core product. It is our most recognizable brand," he said. "It's what really pays the bills ... and so anything we do, regardless of whether it's a texting service, an email service, web, whatever, it has to complement the paper. It can't compete against it."

Therefore, Fowler implemented a "hybrid approach" to multimedia. The newspaper typically posts abbreviated versions of all of its stories on its free website: the lead, a support graf or few, and a strong quote. Readers are then advised to read more in the newspaper or the e-edition. However, if other media are covering the same story, Fowler will have his staff post the *Tribune's* full story online to keep readers on its site rather than reading the story on a competitor's site.

After years of experimenting with how much to give away on the web, Fowler said he's found this hybrid approach to be the best.

“Newspaper websites are probably the No. 1 website that people go to (for news),” he said. “So, if you don’t have a website, you’re opening the door for somebody else to provide the service.”

Still, Fowler thinks newspapers need to be smart about multimedia. Every day, the newspaper emails out a news bulletin to anyone who opts in. The bulletin provides the latest headlines on the website as well as teases to stories in the print edition. Readers can also click to find the nearest rack locations to help them find where to buy the paper. The *Tribune* also sends out bulletins when there is breaking news. Fowler said the newspaper uses [mailchimp.com](http://mailchimp.com) to send these bulletins. He said the service allows the newspaper to track “opens” and “clicks.” The fee is minimal (e.g. unlimited emails to 1,000 subscribers for \$15/month), and the emails encourage readers to go to the ad-supported website or to buy the print edition. (*Example below.*)



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### Quote of the Day

"I finished and maybe a minute later a big explosion close behind and smoke and then another. "

— **Stacy Shaw of Hastings who ran in the Boston Marathon**

[Tuesday's headlines in Tribland](#)

[Find these stories at www.hastingstribune.com](http://www.hastingstribune.com)

- Tribland runners share Boston experience
- Church organist retiring after 55 years
- Coach Harper says Bronco QBs getting better

**Here's what else is in today's Tribune**

- FBI seeks images to help with investigation
- Obama says bombings act of terrorism
- Governor explains why \$2.2 million plane necessary
- Skateboarding professor to retire
- HPS, CCC partnership for auto mechanics program moves forward

[CLICK for rack locations in your area](#)

The *Tribune* has also embarked on larger multimedia projects to generate new streams of revenue. The newspaper has live streamed regular season high school football games on its website for the past three years and high school basketball games for the past four years. Fowler said the initial setup took some work: getting permission from the school, discussions with school administrators and setting up access to the Internet. There were also concerns from school personnel that the live stream would affect gate revenue. However, Fowler said the partnership has worked out, and there's no evidence the school has lost money.

"The people who want to be at the game will go," he said. "They're not going to want to watch it on this (computer) ... But for those people who can't make it for whatever reason – it could be health; it could be distance; it could be weather – that's who it's really for."

The *Hastings Tribune* places ads around the video player on its website. A video ad also plays every time a user needs to refresh, thus bringing in revenue to support the service. As far as staff resources, Fowler said three people are involved with these games: a newspaper reporter who also calls the game, a photographer and a camera operator to pan the camera up and down the field or court. Fowler said he often runs the camera, but the newspaper has also paid a student to do this.

The newspaper has also live streamed graduation ceremonies and is open to streaming weddings and other events for a fee, Fowler said. The live stream has been popular with the public, which the newspaper has tracked by analyzing web hits and comments from viewers, he said.

Although the newspaper isn't making big financial gains from its multimedia, Fowler said the public service is important as well as staying competitive.

“If we don’t do something, someone else is going to come in and do it,” he said.

*Quick \$\$\$ tip: For newspapers concerned about the cost of equipment, Fowlers advises checking with other media in the state to see if they have plans to upgrade anytime soon and would be willing to sell old equipment.*

### ***Time***

Training print reporters’ brains to adapt to the demands of a multimedia world has been one of the biggest struggles at the *Tribune*, Fowler said. This includes remembering to take time to update the website in a timely fashion.

“You have to be consistent, and we struggle with that. We really do,” Fowler said. “If you don’t keep things current, it’s like any website. It becomes stagnant in the minds of the people who are coming to it, and so what are the odds of them coming back?”

Keeping the website current, the email bulletins and posting to Facebook and Twitter are multimedia approaches the *Tribune* uses that are relatively low in time commitment. Putting refers in the paper to let readers know about video or special copy online also doesn’t add up to much staff time but adds to the newspaper’s product. Fowler said the paper ran a story about a benefit for a child with a brain tumor and referred readers to [hastingstribune.com](http://hastingstribune.com) to read a prior story about the boy in case they missed it or wanted to read it again.

As far as video, Fowler said his staff mostly does feature story videos because the staff has more time for turn around. The reporter can write the newspaper story first and then do video editing later in the day or the next day. Once both are done, then the newspaper will publish the story and include a teaser directing readers to watch the video online. On its website, the *Tribune* has a tab called HTmedia that includes a news channel and a sports channel, where videos are posted.

However, Fowler said the paper is lucky if it posts one video a month. He'd like his staff to do more, but the old habit of only focusing on print is hard to break. Still, he thinks videos can be beneficial to newspapers and are worth the time.

“What multimedia has given us the capability to do is to tell stories in a different way and also provide content that we couldn't provide before, whether it's video, live or just stuff that doesn't fit in the paper that you don't have space for,” Fowler said.

“And plus it makes us not just a newspaper anymore. We're an information center. We're a media company and so what really is good about that, if you can find a way to do it with the resources you have, is that you've got capabilities you've never had before. You can break stories at any time of the day or night,” he added.

### ***Aurora News-Register***

After attending press conventions and hearing about other newspapers venturing into multimedia, co-publisher Kurt Johnson knew the newspaper he runs

**Who:** Kurt and Paula Johnson

**Paper:** Aurora News-Register

**Publication Frequency:** Weekly

**Newsroom size:** 3 full time; 5 total

**Circulation:** 3,000 (5,200 w/shopper)

**Website:** [auroranewsregister.com](http://auroranewsregister.com)



with his wife, Paula, needed to get on board with the new media world.

“Because, ultimately, 10 years from now, what remains of our papers I think will be dictated by how we respond to some of this,” he said.

Below, Johnson describes how he addressed the experience, money and time concerns of multimedia at the weekly *Aurora News-Register*.

## *Experience*

Like Fowler and the *Hastings Tribune*, Johnson and the *Aurora News-Register* benefited from the Nebraska Press Association's support. The association offered a daylong technology seminar that included learning how to create Soundslides, which are photo slideshows with audio. After the seminar, Johnson went back to his newsroom, loaded the software and trained his employees. The *Aurora News-Register* also took advantage of the free training provided by the University of Nebraska-Lincoln multimedia specialist.

“That was a very helpful resource. Part of the message here, frankly, is – especially for small weeklies – we know that they don't have an IT staff,” Johnson said. “It makes a difference to have somebody actually come to their place and say, ‘OK. I'm on your computers. I'm using your camera' ... there's just a confidence boost.”

Johnson also understands that many weeklies with a one-, two- or three-person staff don't have time to do research and figure out how to do multimedia on their own. Therefore, partnerships between the state newspaper association and experts can help relieve time and financial burdens on individual newspapers.

As far as getting his staff on board with multimedia, Johnson said the whole newsroom was included in discussions. Staffers had an opportunity to provide feedback and figure out how to make it work. Now, they include multimedia discussion in their weekly news meeting to try to incorporate it into regular assignments.

“Although we talk about it, and they know it's there, especially in the early going, it needs that daily reminder, myself included,” Johnson said. “Because, you know, we're reporters, some of whom have been in the business a long time. You kind of have to ingrain that new

format of, ‘Hey. Every quarter in the football game, send out a tweet.’ Once you’re doing it, it becomes habit, but you need that support from the publisher level.”

Johnson recommends establishing guidelines to know who is posting to the web or social media so there isn’t duplication or confusion.

Johnson also advises newspapers to not be afraid of the possibility of failure. In January 2012, the *News-Register* launched a mobile site after entering a partnership with a Minnesota company. The partnership also allowed the newspaper to become a mobile provider for local businesses and to earn new revenue. However, the Minnesota company went bankrupt earlier this year, so the newspaper no longer offers mobile services. Still, Johnson is glad his newspaper had the experience, and he’s working to get a mobile site for the *News-Register* again.

Johnson advises newspapers worried about lack of multimedia experience to reach out to their newspaper peers who are doing multimedia successfully.

“Call people, whether it’s the publisher, editor, reporter,” Johnson said. “Then be prepared to return the favor, if you do something that works.”

### ***Money***

Knowing your market is an important part of determining how to approach multimedia. Johnson said his newsroom learned that posting sports and breaking news multimedia is more time and cost effective for the audience it serves than creating and posting feature videos.

During the high school sports season, the *News-Register* posts Soundslides that include a number of photos from the game as well as audio from the head coach and/or players or a recap from a *News-Register* staffer. The feature is supported with advertising. The *News-Register* receives a photo from the sponsoring business and a pre-approved script to record. The ad is built into the beginning of the Soundslide.

The Soundslides have also created other new revenue. With room for only one or two photos in the newspaper, using Soundslides allows parents to easily see dozens of photos taken by the newspaper staff.

“When you post 37 photos on a Soundslide, and moms and dads see those, you sell more photos,” Johnson said. “That’s definitely part of the formula. That’s how we’re able to keep that equipment up to date and current and all of those kinds of things.”

The *News-Register* also burns whole sports seasons of Soundslides onto discs and sells them for \$10 each.

“If you’re Joe Athlete, and you want to remember your senior season, this is a real keepsake item,” Johnson said.

The *News-Register* hands out business cards to sources after doing Soundslide interviews to drive traffic to the web feature. The paper also runs house ads reminding the public to check out the Soundslides online.

Video or Soundslides are also posted to [auroranewsregister.com](http://auroranewsregister.com) when there’s breaking news. The newspaper staff has three smartphones capable of shooting video. If a story warrants higher-quality video, the reporter uses a newsroom Nikon D300S.

Johnson said his approach of what to post on the web and when has evolved since 2000. Trying to strike a balance between “giving away the farm” and a sustainable business model, Johnson said his newspaper now posts to the web throughout the week rather than just on Tuesdays. However, the paper only posts the lead or short intro of each story and then teases to the print or e-edition.

The approach allows the newspaper to protect the print product, Johnson said, but also to attract younger readers, who want to know basics right away, to the ad-supported website.

## *Time*

Like other community newspaper managers, Johnson's No. 1 concern about multimedia was "byline time." Running a weekly that doesn't receive news hole help from the Associated Press or other wire services, Johnson worried multimedia would impact the print product. However, he's also realized the need to adapt to the changing times.

"As publishers, I think we have to realize that the paradigm of change is not only a constant in our world now, but the pace is picking up," Johnson said. "So you just have to know that every six months, not every two to three years, you have to reevaluate what you're doing, what technology you're using, your protocol."

Tracking web hits is part of knowing whether a certain approach to multimedia reporting is worth the time, Johnson said. However, the public also needs to be aware that the newspaper is now doing multimedia in order to get hits.

Johnson said he's used his personal column to let readers know about the newspaper's transition to multimedia. The column allowed him to "think out loud" and receive reader feedback. He also poked fun at himself as he learned how to use Twitter, with the humor column also serving as a promotion of the newspaper's social media sites. He also found it beneficial to set up a booth at Aurora's popular home show to explain to people the difference between the website and e-edition and to promote the newspaper's products.

"It just has to be a constant marketing effort," he said.

Although training and marketing takes time, Johnson has seen how taking time for multimedia can pay off. Using his smartphone, he expected to capture the emotion of the basketball team as it lost a state championship. Instead, he captured video of a winning shot at the buzzer that generated statewide controversy.

Johnson posted the video from the arena before he left that night and then fine-tuned it back at the office to replace the original with a higher-quality version. The video went viral, generating more than 100,000 hits from people wanting to know if the shot got off in time or not.

“I had a lot of sports fans say that was really cool that you were the one that captured that,” Johnson said.

However, Johnson has found there isn’t enough traffic on his site for feature story videos to justify the amount of time needed to put together that kind of multimedia.

“We did a couple of those, and it was a good experience,” he said. “From a business standpoint, it wasn’t worth the two to three hours that it took to produce it.”

Friday night football Soundslides, however, have been worth the extra hour of time, he said. Audio for the Soundslides is captured at the same time as the print interview. The audio is then played straight through in the Soundslide, without editing, to save additional time. By noon Saturday, the Soundslide generates enough traffic to justify the extra time to put it together, Johnson said. The Soundslide also teases viewers to the print or e-edition to read more.

“There’s an example of how it’s not just the same thing in print,” Johnson said of the web and print products complementing each other. “Two days later (when the paper comes out), there’s more depth.”

Johnson knows some publishers don’t want a website or to take part in the changing media landscape. He’s concerned about what will happen to these newspapers in the future and has seen how a blogger can steal away the audience of a newspaper not willing to change from its print-only focus.

“Our franchise is no longer the printed product,” Johnson said. “It is the information that we provide. I just think you have to embrace that. It’s a formula that includes multimedia.”

### *Forum Communications*

Newspaper reporter Teri Finneman had no desire to be on camera or to do videos.

“I may be part of Generation Y, but I was trained in old school

newspaper reporting,” she said. “Plus, I was part of the newspaper crowd that stuck their nose up at TV and felt what we did was much more ‘pure’ or ‘real journalism’ than what they did.”

A combination of Sam Donaldson and the Great Recession changed her tune on TV reporting, however. After 10 years as a newspaper reporter, Finneman became a pioneer of multimedia reporting in North Dakota from 2010 to 2012 with her work for four daily newspapers and three TV stations. The former multimedia correspondent shares her tips on how to overcome the experience, money and time concerns about multimedia.

### *Experience*

Finneman thinks the biggest mistake that newspaper publishers and editors make is to expect too much too soon. Their newspaper may try video or other multimedia but then either A.) get frustrated because it didn’t turn out like they wanted so they just give up; B.) get frustrated because it was too much to do multimedia on top of reporting work; or C.) get frustrated because not enough readers clicked on it.

“The key word here is ‘frustrated,’” Finneman said. “They forget that they didn’t learn how to be a good newspaper reporter in a day or a week or even a year. Yet they expect to be able to do multimedia right off the bat or after just one day of training. There’s a reason that it takes a few years to earn a broadcast degree.”

**Who:** Teri Finneman

**Media:** The Forum of Fargo-Moorhead, The Grand Forks Herald, The Jamestown Sun, The Dickinson Press, WDAY, WDAZ, KXMB (North Dakota)

**Publication Frequency:** Daily

**Circulation:** Ranged from 5,400 (Jamestown) to 53,000 (Fargo)



In 2009, Finneman spent three months at ABC News in Washington, D.C., where she worked alongside Sam Donaldson and learned the TV business. While there, the Great Recession hit newsrooms hard, and she knew she had to make herself as competitive as possible for a future in the media business. She then spent more than 400 hours working at an NBC affiliate in Missouri to learn local TV reporting while finishing her master's degree.

"I'm not telling this story because I expect weekly publishers to send their reporters off to six months of training," Finneman said. "My point is that it takes a lot of time to just reach the skill level of a 22-year-old broadcast student. Newspapers need to be realistic with expectations."

Therefore, she recommends newspapers start small to adapt not only their staff but their community to their leap into new media.

"First and foremost, you need to have a website that people want to come to. Without that, it doesn't pay to do multimedia," she said. "Newspapers that don't have a website or that only post a few sentences once a week are not going to make it when Generations Y and Z get older and become their primary readership base. These generations want information now, not a week later."

With so many people on social media, newspapers also need to establish a strong social media presence and post frequent teasers to stories as well as do live tweeting and/or Facebooking, Finneman said. Being consistent with frequent website and social media postings doesn't take any special skills but is an important foundation for multimedia, Finneman said.

"Your community needs to get into the habit of knowing there will consistently be fresh information on your sites," Finneman said. "Once your site starts becoming a destination, then you can move on to more complex multimedia."

Finneman, now a Ph.D. student at the University of Missouri, has the same advice for newspaper reporters as she does for her undergraduate students: If you want to learn how to do something, study how the professionals do it. Stop watching TV news for the content. Start watching to analyze how they did it. Notice that sound bites are generally about 15 seconds. Notice that the video images tend to change every three seconds. Notice how images were framed. Notice that their long stories (called packages) are generally 70- to 90-seconds long.

“It’s great if you can bring an expert into your newsroom or to your state newspaper convention to teach video basics,” Finneman said. “I recommend it. But if lack of resources doesn’t allow for this, turning on your nightly news and paying closer attention can be almost as good and is there every day essentially giving out free advice.”

Newspapers can also contact their local universities to find out what Broadcasting 101 textbooks they use and then order them for their reporters to read, she said. Perhaps a broadcast professor would also be willing to form a partnership with your newspaper and provide advice and feedback, Finneman said. Newspapers should also consider hiring broadcast students as interns rather than just newspaper students in order to learn from them as much as they learn from you, she said.

Like the Nebraska newspapers, Finneman agrees newspapers should make a point to talk about multimedia during staff meetings to start incorporating it into the regular routine. Communication and support are critical for multimedia to work, she said.

“I really admire that Darran and Kurt from Nebraska decided they were going to learn multimedia first before requiring it of their reporters,” Finneman said. “Too many newspaper executives think reporters are supposed to suddenly do the work of five people yet are clueless

themselves of what this really means. This can create a lot of resentment and get the multimedia experience off on the wrong foot.”

To get started with video, reporters should shoot raw footage that doesn't have to be posted online, Finneman said. Getting into the habit of bringing video equipment along on a story, setting it up and just hitting record is a small victory in itself, she said.

From there, small improvements can be made as the reporter learns what worked and what didn't from the basic footage. Perhaps the sound wasn't good enough in the last video so maybe the microphone placement should be different. It only takes a moment to push the camera angle over to someone else talking and then resume taking newspaper notes. It only takes a moment to zoom in. Soon, your reporters will find they're able to take newspaper notes and run the camera at the same time.

“Again, it's taking it slow so that you can have a series of small successes rather than trying to do a TV-style package your first day out and feeling like you can only fail,” Finneman said. “You don't need this video for a 5 p.m. broadcast. You have time to just practice with it for as long as it takes before posting anything online.”

Having smaller expectations with these smaller steps will reduce the stress on staff, Finneman said. Mastering small steps that are achievable will give reporters more confidence as they build upon those skills and gradually move to more complex steps, such as video editing. Then they won't feel as overwhelmed when they reach the final point of being a full-fledged newspaper and multimedia reporter, Finneman said.

If the multimedia doesn't turn out, no one should get discouraged, she said.

“Learn from it, and try again next time,” she said. “You wrote a lot of stories before you consistently became a good reporter. Likewise, you will shoot a lot of bad video before you consistently become a good multimedia reporter.”

### ***Money***

Finneman, who got her start working for weeklies, understands the concern about “giving away the farm” on websites and social media. However, she said there has to be compromise in this digital world.

“If you’re only open for business once a week, people are going to get what they want from someone who’s open 24-7,” she said.

This could be bloggers who can pop up instantly in a community or readers who simply go on Facebook or Twitter and ask if anyone knows who won the local election or football game, thereby bypassing the newspaper completely.

“What newspapers should want is, when there is news, readers immediately go to them for information. Not the coffee shop. Not their friends’ social media,” Finneman said. “In this age of instant everything, newspapers have to adapt, or they are going to become irrelevant.”

Small newspapers don’t have to post full stories on their websites, she said. But they need to get better at marketing.

“A post on Facebook should not read, ‘Find out who won the election in this week’s paper,’ and the paper doesn’t come out for two days,” Finneman said. “The coffee shop has told the town by then. The winners of the election have posted that they won on their Facebook and Twitter by then.”

Rather, the moment the news comes in, the newspaper should immediately post the breaking news on its website and then tweet or Facebook: “Find out who won tonight’s election

by visiting (your website),” Finneman said. This directs traffic to your ad-sponsored site and allows readers to get their news from you – the news provider. The web burst and additional social media posts should then direct readers to the printed product to find out what the winners and losers had to say about the election.

“That’s where newspapers can still succeed: the depth,” Finneman said. “You can’t expect readers to wait four days anymore to find out who died in an accident or how the city council voted. You have to be the news leader. But the coffee shop isn’t going to have the details that you have, and that’s how the right marketing can maintain the printed product.”

### *Time*

It’s true multimedia takes away time that could be spent on newspaper reporting, Finneman said. However, this shouldn’t always be seen as a bad thing, she said.

“I’m sure many of you have covered your county fair for the past 20 years and pound your head on your desk trying to find a new way to cover it,” she said. “Multimedia makes tired stories brand new again. You go in with different goals with a video story.”

The rejuvenation is not only good for the newspaper staff but for your readers, she said.

“They have also read the same story for the past 20 years,” she said. “If you can give them video of the mayor in the pie-eating contest or of a farmer’s wife doing a demonstration on how to make pickles – teasing in the paper that this video is on your ad-supported website – they will be just as glad to have something new.”

To succeed in multimedia, reporters need to multi-task, Finneman said. While video is uploading or converting, reporters should work on their script or newspaper story, not just sit and wait. Reporters should also get in the habit of paying attention to the time codes on the camera to

mark the time of a sound bite or of other good video so they can fast forward to that section rather than have to watch the entire video to find the clips, she said.

As reporters get more experience doing multimedia, they obviously become faster at it, Finneman said. Still, the fact remains the reporter is doing the work of four people: newspaper reporter, TV reporter, TV cameraman and video editor.

“You cannot expect your staff to do this every single day and not have them burn out,” Finneman said. “You need to pick your battles. Not every story is visual and worth multimedia.”

To make multimedia worth the time, newspapers need to do a better job of self-promotion, she said. This includes writing editorials/columns to let readers know about your move into new media. This includes house ads and teasers. This also should include in-person talks with the local chamber and other groups to let them know about the newspaper’s plans for revitalization, Finneman said. Newspapers may want to consider hosting a town forum and letting readers weigh in on what improvements they would like the paper to make so readers can have a sense of ownership and feel part of the process, Finneman said.

“You aren’t going to get people on board with your new media unless they clearly know it exists,” Finneman said. “You may have to remind them often over the course of months if your website is nonexistent or barely existent now, and they aren’t in the habit of going to your site.”

The initial move into new media will take time on behalf of everyone – the newsroom, advertising and circulation, Finneman said. However, as multimedia gradually becomes an everyday fact of the newspaper, the time commitment will go down, she said.

“You have to look at this as an investment in the future. It will take money upfront. It will take more time upfront,” Finneman said. “This is true of any new business venture. But you have to position yourselves now for the future to make sure our industry doesn’t get left in the past.”