

the School of Journalism and Mass Communication, felt the overall message was more about motivation. “Don’t be afraid to use what you have access to,” said Flores, “don’t be afraid to share your ideas with others.”

Josh Shepherd, a new media graduate student in the SJMC and a seasoned SXSW attendee, thought the message last year was more about the rapidly changing world of technology, and how people must get on board now or get left in the dust. Shepherd, who hosts an online music podcast called The Backline Show, found the Selling Subculture Without Selling Out panel to be one of his favorites. “It was an amazing panel of some of the top names in American subculture speaking about how to stay true to one’s core, but still being able to make money,” said Shepherd.

The skills learned, and information absorbed, at SXSWi is essential in today’s intersection of technology and communication. Technology is changing the way that we communicate with others, and SXSWi participants are at the center of those changes. Flores credits the conference, and the project, for teaching her the importance of interactive journalism. “Facts and images may be the hardcore elements of news, but there are many different ways to present those elements—an interactive graphic, map or slideshow can present a story in a different way, and engage the reader at the same time,”

said Flores.

Networking and gaining useful contacts was also a goal of many students at the conference. The connections made at events like SXSWi could go on to provide job leads or even future career opportunities. Dale Blasingame, a new media graduate student in the SJMC, met and was interviewed by Jon Swartz, a technology reporter for USA Today at the conference. Blasingame said that since the conference, he and Swartz have had conversations through social media outlets like Twitter. “You never know when stuff like that is going to happen at SXSWi,” said Blasingame.

“It puts [Texas State] on the forefront of technology and as an active participant in one of the most exciting technology events in the country,” said Royal, “others recognize that we have sharp and motivated students.” Prominent figures in the tech and communication world have taken note of the university’s advancements. “When Gary Vaynerchuk is stopping by to



The Art and Science of Seductive Interactions, with Stephen Anderson, was about understanding basic human characteristics in order to seduce your audience. Photo by Carly Smith

say hey [at SXSWi], you know your group has made it,” said Blasingame. It is through the efforts of people like Royal, and the success of projects like South By Texas State, that Texas State University will shine as a leader in the

education of technology and communication. For more information about the South By Texas State project, or to follow the group through the SXSWi 2011 experience, check out www.sxtxstate.com.

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New Media & the Bobcats

Fall 2010
www.txstatenewmedia.com

Alumni use new media skills to excel in their careers

By: Carly Smith

New media has infiltrated most aspects of communication. Newspapers, television stations, public relations firms and even small businesses are all using new media in some way in order to get messages out to the

public. Professionals in the mass communication industry must understand how to effectively utilize new media in order to be successful and survive in today’s technology driven markets.

For many, college is the first place that future professionals learn about the world of new media. Many enter college thinking that public relations or print journalism is what they want to focus in, and that once they learn those skills, they will be fully prepared to find a job. This isn’t true in today’s society. In addition to basic writing, electronic media or public relations skills, future professionals must understand how to integrate new media into their chosen market. The School of Journalism and Mass Communication at Texas State University-San Marcos has been making great strides in implementing the teaching of new media skills in most undergraduate and graduate courses.

While the undergraduate degree program does not have a concentration that is strictly about new media, concentrations



Andrew Waldrup at Gowalla Inc. headquarters
Photo courtesy of Andrew Waldrup

such as public relations heavily incorporate new media practices into the curriculum. Students not only learn the skills necessary to succeed in their intended concentration, but also how new media influences that concentration. For example, public relations students learn the importance of well-written press releases, but they also learn how to effectively publicize and represent their company or clients online using new and social media. Students also have the opportunity to take classes in topics such as social media issues and HTML web design.

Andrew Waldrup, a recent alumnus of Texas State University, credits the SJMC for preparing him

for the professional world, as well as helping him find a connection between his studies in public relations and his love of technology. “The skills I learned in the program empowered me, and allowed me to develop a personal brand both online and off,” said Waldrup, a Culture Evangelist at Gowalla, a location-based social network.

The graduate program in the SJMC allows graduate students to declare new media as their chosen concentration, among other communication focuses. Students learn about the theories and issues behind the Internet and new media, as well as more technical skills like HTML coding

continued on page 2

In this issue...

PAGE 2
Social Media Club at Texas State

PAGE 3
New media students experience SXSW Interactive

PAGE 4
New media resources at your fingertips

and video editing. Kristin McCasland, a SJMC alumna of the new media graduate program and a Web Producer at FOX 7, named HTML coding and staying on top of current events in the new media industry as her two major tasks in her day to day job; two skills she learned while obtaining her Master's degree at Texas State University.

Mairin Heard, a new media graduate student and alumna of the undergraduate public relations program, uses the skills she's acquired while at Texas State University every day in her job as a musician publicist at Paper Thin Media. "Social media makes communicating a message to the public easier, timelier and more effective," said Heard, who uses new media to spread information to the public about the musicians she represents.

Remembering the traditional

aspects of mass communication is also important, even when taking your message online. Maira Garcia, a SJMC alumna of the graduate new media program and a Content Producer for the Austin American-Statesman, said that in addition to understanding web design and how to use social media effectively, students and professionals must remember to write properly. "Writing isn't a new media skill necessarily, but it is so important to be able to write well on the web," said Garcia, "people take you more seriously."

It is essential that students understand the importance of new media in the world of mass communication, because it is only becoming a more prominent aspect of the industry. "It seems that anyone and everyone in mass communication, whether it's public relations, television, newspaper, radio, etc., is using new

and social media to connect with people or promote something," said McCasland.

"Technology has changed the way we communicate," said Waldrup. In order to make it in the competing world of mass communication today, one must not only understand how to communicate traditionally, they must be able to keep up with and actively participate in the ever-changing state of new media.

Want to keep up with these new media pros? Follow them on Twitter

@amw411

@mairheard

@mairalg

@k_mccasland

dent, "we want to show our members a more professional side of the social media they are already using."

The Texas State University's student chapter of the Social Media Club is the first in Texas, and the third worldwide. The university's club, which meets on the first Thursday of each month, works closely with the Austin SMC chapter. Dara Quackenbush and Cindy Royal, both members of the SMC Austin and Texas State University-San Marcos faculty, are advisors to the new student chapter, and have dedicated a lot of time to its founding and success.

Melanie Mooney, the Texas State Social Media Club's secretary, says students should come ready to learn how to turn themselves into a marketable brand for future employers, as well as how to use it while in college. "Social media has made an impact everywhere, and every organization on campus uses it to promote their

continued on page 3

interests," said Mooney, "it only makes sense that there should be a club dedicated to showing students how social media can provide them benefits in the real world after college."

The club plans to bring in prominent professionals in the areas of social media and mass communication to educate students on how to effectively use these tools to be successful. The advisors and officers of the club also hope that members see the monthly meetings as networking opportunities. "Social Media Club is setting out not only to provide a fun learning experience, but a situation full of networking possibilities," said Barnett.

The initial meeting, which took place at the beginning of September, included a panel of four professionals who discussed how to create an online personality in order to be seen as more desirable



The Social Media Club set up at the SJMC Student Organization Fair
Photo courtesy of B Barnett

to future employers. The next meeting, which will take place on Oct. 7, will feature John Moore from Brand Autopsy. Moore will talk about how to successfully brand yourself, and how to create a persona that

people will want to talk about and meet. You can follow the Texas State Social Media Club on Twitter @SMCTXst for updates throughout the semester.

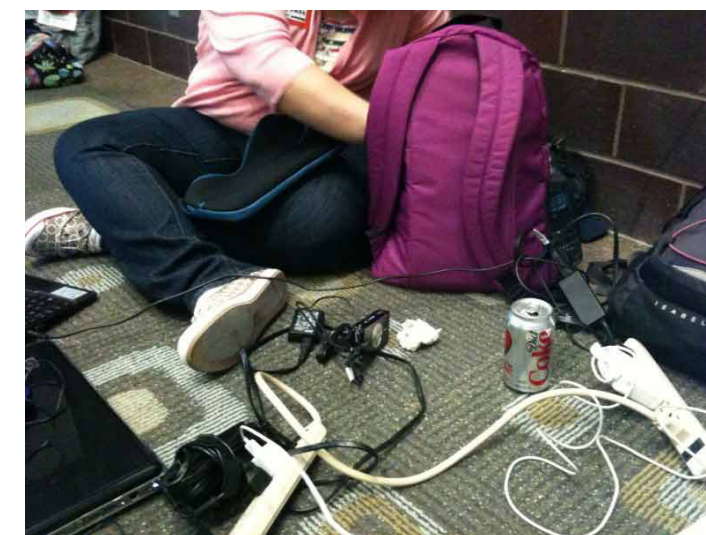


B Barnett, SMC president, and Elissa Fontenot, vice president, at the SMJC Student Organization Fair
Photo courtesy of B Barnett

Social Media Club educates students on how to make it in the professional world

By: Carly Smith

The Social Media Club at Texas State University-San Marcos may only be in its first semester of existence, but the club already has an impressive line-up of speakers and activities planned for students. The club's purpose is to "help educate students and staff about the benefits of participating in social media," said B Barnett, the Texas State Social Media Club's founding presi-



SXTXSTATE students set up camp to work on their blog posts and edit videos between SXSWi sessions. By sharing vital power strips and chargers, students made friends with other attendees.
Photo by Carly Smith

SXSW Interactive gives students a new perspective on the world of technology

By: Carly Smith

South By South West Interactive festival has been the place to be for everything technology related for years. Attendees come from all over the world to hear innovative speakers discuss the current trends and issues in technology, as well as what the future holds. A small group of Texas State University-San Marcos

new media graduate students, under the supervision of Assistant Professor Cindy Royal, have had the opportunity to experience the innovation, creativity and discussion first-hand through the South By Texas State project. The project's coverage of SXSWi 2011 will mark its fourth year of existence.

Royal, who has attended South By South West herself for the past six years, initially created the South By Texas State project as a way for students to hear what the speakers had to say. Over the past four years, the project has turned into an interactive student collaboration involving real time reporting, interviews, videos and live streaming. All the while utilizing social media to connect to speakers, potential interviewees and other media enthusiasts that weren't

at the conference. "Each year we have done this, we have improved the coverage on our blog, increased the social media interaction and developed ways that students could engage with participants, giving them an unique opportunity to network and communicate with the most innovative minds in technology," said Royal. Another evolution of the project has been panel previews, in which students interview speakers about their panels and lectures before the conference begins in March.

Everyone takes away something different from the conference each year. For Royal, the overall theme of the 2010 conference was about the interaction between privacy and sharing. Roberta Flores, a graduate student in

continued on page 4