

Charting online maze



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There's been a shift in how journalists report and write today's news. Convergence across media boundaries can be found from major news organizations to smaller media: newspapers, radio and television stations. Elementary, middle and high schools have incorporated the principles of convergence. Here are four new books that can help to demystify the online maze:

Foust, James. *Online Journalism: Principles and practices of news for the Web. 2nd edition.* Holcomb Hathaway. 2009. Paperback. \$43.

The second edition of James Foust's *Online Journalism: Principles and practices of news for the Web* delivers on a promise to help readers apply their developing journalistic skills to the Internet. This text is reader-friendly with many examples, illustrations and descriptions of online journalism.

The structure of the text makes it easy to follow and forecasts what is to come. It provides a comprehensive overview of online journalism discussing the basics of journalism. Throughout the text, Foust differentiates online journalism from the various delivery methods such as blogs and other Web sites. Design is emphasized throughout the text from headlines to HTML and through the use of photographs. The author emphasizes making solid news judgments determining how and when to make links to other Web sites, to using e-mail and Web sites as sources for stories.

While a good overview, this is not a textbook to teach journalistic writing. Foust provides one chapter on writing, but does not go into much detail. The exercises are limited in number, but are thoughtful and easy for students and teachers alike to employ. The text could easily serve as a supplement to a news writing class or one about online technologies.

The writing style makes it easy to read and

appropriate for both high school and college journalism students.

— *Rochelle Ford, associate dean for research and academic affairs at Howard University's School of Communications, was a Quill and Scroll member at Gabanna Lincoln (Ohio) High School, where she served as assistant editor of The Lion's Roar.*

Leib, Thom. *All the News: Writing and Reporting for Convergent Media.* Pearson Education, Inc. 2009. Paperback. \$80.40.

In contrast, Thom Leib's book, *All the News: Writing and Reporting for Convergent Media*, is a book that focuses on how to be a successful writer. As news becomes reported across multiple platforms (audio, video and online), this is the book that can help a student master writing the news to meet the demands of different media. It is an excellent book for the general media writing course, with "Assignment Desk" activities and "News Pointers" to ensure the student's toolbox is full at graduation.

The individual "Why Choose Journalism" essays accompanying each chapter make the book most personal. The writers are noted journalists (and the author's former students) who have faced the many changes in today's evolving/converging newsroom.

The author focuses on writing the basic online story; then moves to the basic audio story and the basic video story. There's a logical progression that helps the writer build confidence and an effective multimedia story. He hasn't forgotten the importance of focusing on some of the key kinds of stories (i.e. public events and meetings, obituaries, accidents and disasters, crime, and special events) while sprinkling in a good dose of journalistic principles, ethics and legal issues.

His chapter on "Writing in a Diverse Environment" is thorough, tactful and sensitive. It is a model for showing how and why diversity matters.

The appendices on style: Print and Online, Broadcast News, and Associated Press provide the important basics.

Miller, Carolyn Handler. *Digital Storytelling: A Creator's Guide to Interactive Entertainment.* Focal Press. 2008. Paperback. \$39.95.

Any person with a desire to know how all of the new technology works that is entering the market and our world will want to pick up a copy of *Digital Storytelling: A Creator's Guide to Interactive Entertainment*. With 25 chapters that slip smoothly into 5 smart sections, this cleverly designed and well-organized guide to the digital imagination will keep one reading,

no matter what page they jump to. The glossary in the back will instantly bring anyone up to speed on all the latest digital terminology.

Carolyn Miller begins with a deep history and understanding of storytelling and its origins, paying homage to the traditions and methods that first laid the foundation of message sending. She provides a brilliant metaphor for pairing the characteristics of ancient familiar rituals to the multi-sensory forms of contemporary digital storytelling.

She moves the reader quickly over a broad survey of the ever-changing digital media of now. Video games having transcended to interactive media with a new look and feel are now readily adaptable and accessible to the Internet. Many new forms of gaming and digital entertainment are examined and reviewed for hands-on usability.

The author brings us closer to the topic of convergence and discusses how 'real time' is easily aligned with communication delivery systems such as Wi-Fi, gaming consoles, graphics and the digitizing of media content. For families, the chapter "Tackling Projects for Children" is entirely dedicated to parents, with discussions about which kind of interactive media are good for their children (and which are not), the effectiveness of product testing, and an outline of chief concerns parents have about their children when using interactive media.

The final section focuses on careers and how one can find work as a digital storyteller, and tips on how to sell work once you have perfected that 'great idea'. This book proves to be an essential tool for professionals, students and educators in a quickly changing field.

— *Olivia Drake is a doctoral student in the graduate program in Mass Communication and Media Studies at Howard University.*

Grant, August E. and Jennifer H. Meadows. *Communication Technology Update and Fundamentals. 11th edition.* Focal Press. 2008. Paperback. \$39.99.

Communication Technology Update and Fundamentals is an "umbrella book" designed to look at communication in its different forms: its history, evolution and development, emerging technologies and related global issues. Multiple contributors shared issues and perspectives related to communication technology.

In this 11th edition, every chapter has been completely rewritten to reflect the latest developments and market statistics, and now covers mobile computing, digital photography,