

I thought that the online course was very interesting. The idea that an online multimedia news outlet was similar to a company didn't gel with what my idea of online media was. In the past, when I consider an online content producer/aggregator, I tend to visualize a small handful of people working together in a small office. While that may be true for start-ups, once I started to consider the size of different companies it was obvious that they would need to both larger, and more structured like a traditional news organization. When considering online media, I rarely considered the idea of all the ancillary functions that would be needed for a corporation of any size - I only really thought about the people writing or editing the content, but overall, that would probably add up to a minority of the people working at a media outlet.

One issue that I found very interesting was the discussion of revenue breakdown under the economics section. The idea that online media companies derive a great deal of their revenue from advertising (which is, as described, a broken system) means that as a long term plan, advertising is unsustainable as a growth stream. Other companies rely on subscription plans (and a smaller amount on hybrid ad/subscriptions), but the quality of content has to have enough value to make the subscription cost worthwhile. An example of this would be Netflix - while primarily an entertainment company, it is also a content aggregator and producer. It's easy to conclude that Netflix's value exceeds its cost in the eyes of many consumers, as it is doing very well.

To conclude, this course not only gave me an overview of how these media outlets are structured, but also gave me lots of information to consider about different aspects that I hadn't thought of.

Assignment Part 2 - Be A Reporter

This exercise was fun, like a video game. I love detective novels and movies, so I really enjoyed this. My story was about children at a school getting sick due to toxic cheese. As it turned out, 2 tons of cheese was contaminated by smoke/melting plastic in a warehouse fire, and the GM of the salvage company re-routed the cheese to another of his enterprises: a food wholesaler. The toxic cheese ended up in the warehouse and was later delivered to the school, disguised as “Smoky” flavored cheddar cheese, making multiple children sick. I was able to get a little bit of an appreciation for the amount of fact-checking and legwork (both real and digital) that must be required for reporters to fact-check their sources and make sure all their bases are covered. Even though I fulfilled all of the game’s requirements, I still felt like I didn’t get all of the story.