



Digital Training Comes of Age

**How Knight journalism fellows and trainees benefit –
and why they want even more**

By Michele McLellan and Eric Newton



Introduction

Does the digital age present a "do-over moment" for continuing education in newsrooms?

Journalists want to learn new digital tools and techniques. Will they be comfortable learning those things digitally, using webinars, e-learning and self-directed classes? If online education is easier to provide than ever, are news organizations rising to the occasion?

In its search for answers, this new Knight Foundation report details the Web-survey responses of 660 active alumni from the roughly 3,000 journalists who received Knight-branded professional development within the past two years.

This report is Knight's fourth in a decade on newsroom training. A chronology puts the recent findings in context:



- In 2002, *Newsroom Training: Where's the Investment?* surveyed journalists who said they were not getting enough training in their newsrooms. Newsroom leaders agreed, saying money and time were barriers.



- In 2007, *News, Improved* showed how newsroom-wide training helps create a learning culture, speeding skill and knowledge growth. (It noted that only 31 percent of the nation's newsroom training budgets were growing.)



- *The 2011 NPR Digital Training Program Assessment* reported what worked and did not in the digital transformation of one newsroom.



- Now, *Digital Training Comes of Age* returns to the starting point, asking again if basic training needs are being met, but through the lens of the most demanded type of training: digital.

We study training because we care deeply about journalism excellence in the digital age. Knight Foundation has invested more than \$150 million in journalism education and training projects during in the past 10 years.

Our grantees, including two dozen Knight Chairs at leading universities, each year teach and train thousands of journalists of all ages. Recent alumni from the following endowed programs were included in this year's *Digital Training Comes of Age* survey: the Knight Journalism Fellowships at Stanford University, the Knight-Wallace Journalism Fellowships at the University of Michigan, the Knight-Bagehot Fellowships in Economic and Business Journalism at Columbia University, and the Knight Science Journalism Fellowships at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

Also included were active alumni from these grant-funded programs: Knight International Journalism Fellowships, run by the International Center for Journalists; the Knight Latin American Nieman Fellowships at Harvard; the Knight Center for Journalism in the Americas at the University of Texas, and the Knight Digital Media Centers at the University of Southern California and the University of California, Berkeley.

The Knight fellows and trainees surveyed are telling us that yes, the digital age does offer a do-over moment for continuing education in newsrooms.

By large margins, Knight alumni say they want more training in digital tools and techniques, and large numbers are happy getting that training online.

Since time and money remain barriers, journalists appear to be getting an expanding amount of education they need in their workplaces through lower-cost virtual programs. Nearly half of the U.S. alumni surveyed have received at least some of their training through online distance learning, up from only five percent of U.S. journalists reporting such training in 2002, when Web video was in its infancy.

Online distance learning is popular with a third of the U.S. journalists surveyed and with a whopping eight in 10 journalists from outside the United States, where training of any kind is relatively scarce.

Education so improves their work, eight in 10 of the trainees surveyed say they share what they learn with others. Those who trained others reported helping an average of 36 colleagues each. In all, the active alumni who responded reported teaching more than 18,000 others. Like ripples in a pond, Knight-sponsored training spreads beyond our ability to fathom it.

In 2002,
only 5% of
U.S. alumni
used online
distance
learning.

In 2012,
that number
had increased
to almost 50%

On average
each trainee
trained 36
colleagues.

Training is shared because it works. The survey showed mid-career training and education helped journalists learn the multimedia skills needed to create new, engaging story forms. It provided the entrepreneurial skills needed to start new local news ventures. It taught university professors the digital fluency needed to teach the latest best practices. Training helped journalists investigate wrongdoing and prompt policy change.

In short, *Digital Training Comes of Age* shows that training – though still undervalued by the news industry – can make a big difference, propelling journalists to find new ways to create journalism that stands above the work of their colleagues in both technique and impact.

Consider The Seattle Times. Its top editors attended leadership sessions in 2008 at the Knight Digital Media Center at USC Annenberg. “It is difficult to overstate the impact those five days have had on our organization,” said executive editor David Boardman. “We won both a Pulitzer Prize and the Associated Press Managing Editors Innovator of the Year award (in 2010). I have doubts we would have won either had Kathy (Best) and I not attended the KDMC workshop.”

After the training, Boardman said, “we were turbo-charged,” integrating digital thinking throughout the newsroom.

The Pulitzer was awarded for Times coverage of a 40-hour manhunt for the suspected murderer of four police officers.

The suspect, killed during a routine traffic stop, had been granted clemency by the governor in an earlier case. Because of the KDMC training, the Times had integrated Twitter and other social media tools into its coverage, and they greatly helped the community understand, and cope with, the tragic news story.

Though *Digital Training Comes of Age* focuses on Knight-funded training, we believe its insights are relevant to all who care about journalism training’s best practices.

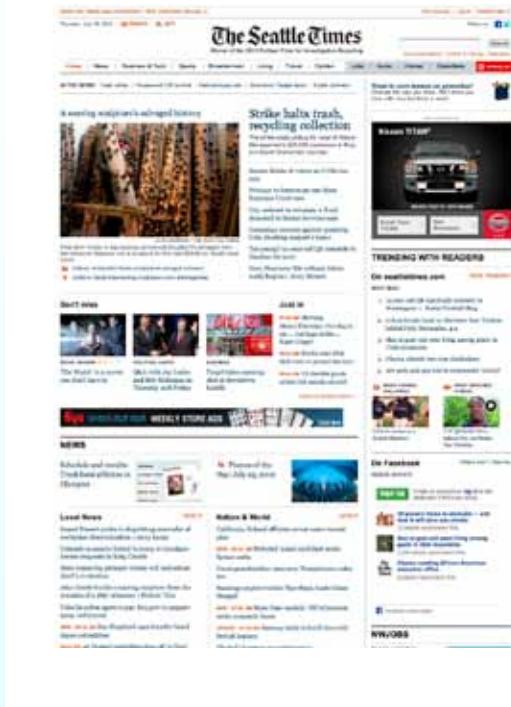
Professional development will play a key role in the transformation of the news landscape. Not all news organizations will survive the transition to the digital age. The ones that make it will be nimble, adaptable. They’ll have learning cultures, where training is built into the daily routine.

But only half the journalists surveyed agreed with the statement, “My news organization is keeping up with the pace of technological change.” With good reason, these journalists worry about the future. These results may actually be more optimistic than average, since the journalists who responded to the survey appear to be training enthusiasts with generally optimistic attitudes.

We’re grateful to the journalists who responded to this survey. If you are trapped in a newsroom without training, we hope you will try to change that or escape it. In either case, a way to start is with the free training on News University, newsu.org. Find out what you can do for yourself – and the community that needs your news.

Michele McLellan, consultant, Knight Foundation

Eric Newton, senior adviser to the president, Knight Foundation





Executive summary



- *Digital Training Comes of Age* shows a growing demand for training as journalists adapt to the 21st century's evolving media ecosystems. Journalists want more training in digital tools such as multimedia, data analysis and technology. Most give their news organizations low marks for providing training opportunities.
- Digital classes are gaining popularity as a cost-effective way to reach more trainees. Significant numbers of journalists who have participated in online classes say they are as good as, or better than, conventional training in the classroom.
- Training organizations are adapting to the digital age. They are providing more training online and rethinking how their programs can foster the transformation of journalism.
- Professional development has impact. Training helps journalists adopt new digital tools, create change in their organizations, or find new ways to be part of the news ecosystem.
- Continuing education drives change in forward-looking organizations. Training and staff development helps them achieve their goals and become more adaptive.

KEY SURVEY FINDINGS

1. Lack of training is a major source of job dissatisfaction.

Nearly one journalist in four is dissatisfied with the opportunities for training. As we found a decade ago in *Newsroom Training*, discontent about continuing education is the number one newsroom complaint, topping even salary, chances for promotion and job security.

Now, 10 years later, nearly 24 percent were very or mostly dissatisfied with training opportunities available to them, a figure only slightly higher than the percentage dissatisfied with pay and benefits, the next highest concern.



The percentage of those concerned about job security is worth noting. It has nearly doubled since 2002 survey, from 11 percent to nearly 21 percent, reflecting the layoffs, buyouts and bankruptcies brought about by the "creative destruction" of traditional media economics in the digital age.

All in all, Knight-trained journalists are a satisfied group. More than three quarters are very or mostly satisfied with their jobs overall. Fewer than 4 percent of those responding said they were very or mostly dissatisfied.

Please tell us how satisfied you are with your current job in each of the following areas:

	Overall	Training Opportunities	Pay & Benefits	Job Security	Chance for Promotion	Influence Work Decisions	Contribute to Society
Very satisfied	31.5	19.7	12	22.7	17	35.1	55.8
Mostly satisfied	45.3	29.4	29.5	31.8	32.9	33.7	33.3
Somewhat satisfied	19.5	27.3	35.6	24.8	29.1	22.5	4.6
Mostly dissatisfied	2.2	14.5	15.9	12.7	13.3	6	4.4
Very dissatisfied	1.5	9.2	7	8	7.6	2.7	2

KEY SURVEY FINDINGS

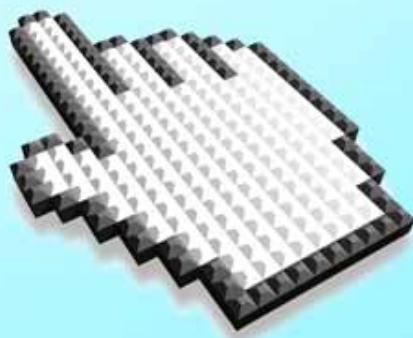
2. Overwhelmingly, journalists say they want more training.

Fully 85 percent of the journalists surveyed say they would benefit greatly or very greatly from more training and staff development.

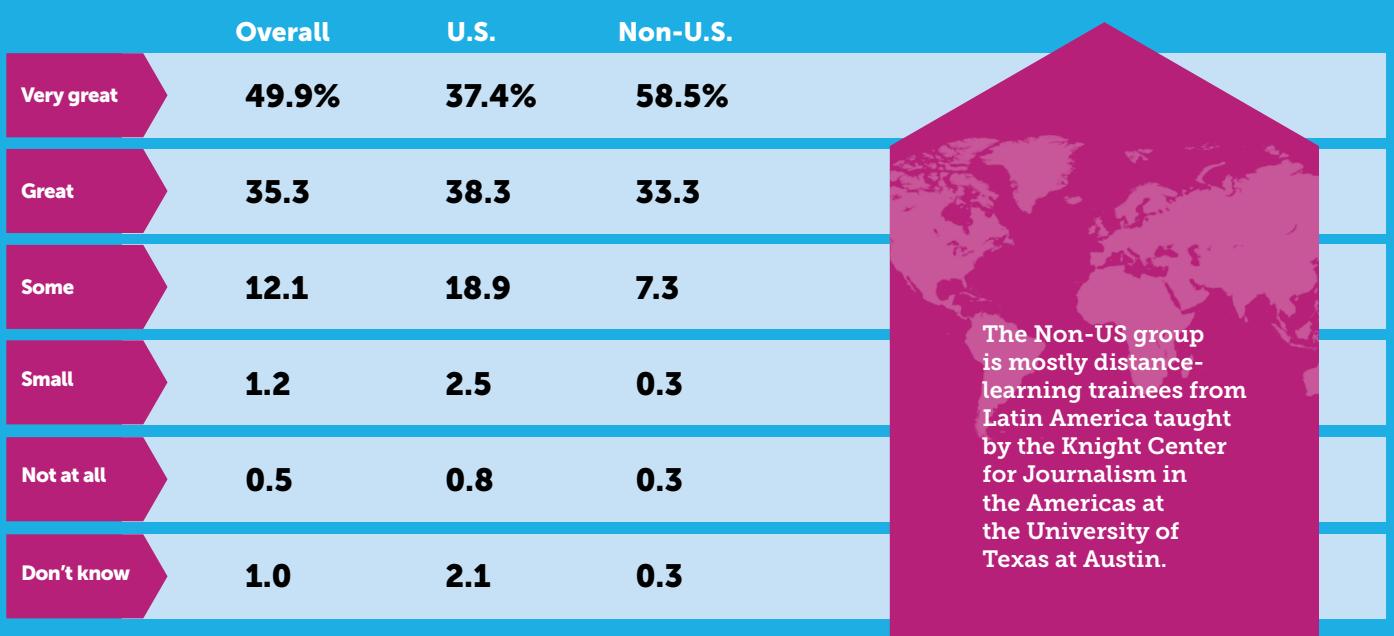
International journalists, mostly Latin American distance-learning alumni of the Knight Center at the University of Texas, were more likely to say they would benefit from additional training. Nine in 10 said they would benefit greatly or very greatly.

Even among U.S. journalists, the rate of great and very great benefit was 75 percent. This shows growing demand from the 2002 *Newsroom Training* survey, when only 54 percent of journalists said they would benefit a lot from training.

Overall, only 3 percent of the journalists surveyed see little or no benefit in training, or say they just don't know. There is almost total agreement – 97 percent of the respondents – that training would benefit them in some way, with half saying they would receive very great benefit.



To what extent would you benefit from additional training?



KEY SURVEY FINDINGS

3. Increasingly, journalists want digital-tools training.

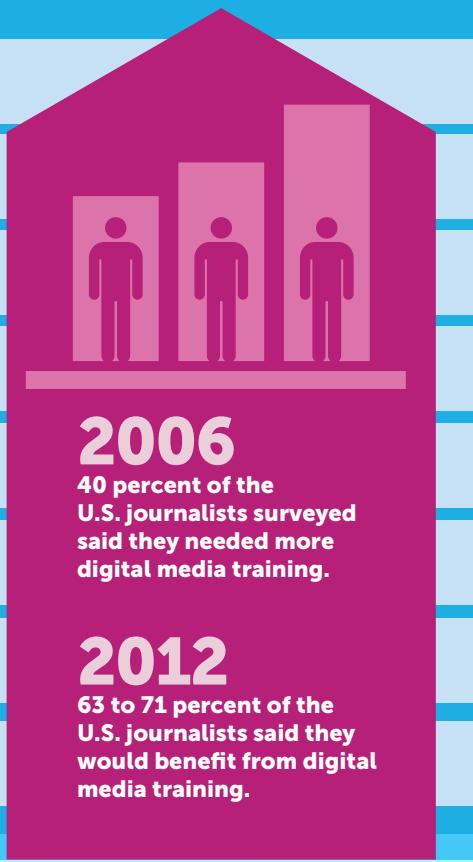
Survey respondents see the greatest benefit in training that focuses on multimedia, data analysis and technology. That said, most also want training in topic expertise, leadership and ethics. But fewer than half want reporting and other traditional training.

Journalists from outside the United States are more interested in traditional training in areas such as topic expertise, traditional writing, editing and ethics.

Demand for digital media training has increased sharply since the 2006 survey we reported the following year in News, Improved. Then, only some 40 percent of the U.S. journalists surveyed said they needed more digital media training. But in the latest survey, 63 to 71 percent of the U.S. journalists said they would benefit from digital media training, including technology, multimedia and data skills.

Journalists reporting they would receive very great or great benefit from training in the following areas:

	Overall	U.S.	Non-U.S.
Technology	78.8%	71.1%	84.1%
Multimedia	76.8	63.6	86.0
Data skills	75.3	67.6	80.0
Leadership	70.1	62.4	74.9
Topic expertise	61.7	44.8	74.1
Ethics, legal	51.0	24.6	69.3
Reporting skills	46.2	18.9	36.2
Traditional skills	46.0	18.8	65.0



KEY SURVEY FINDINGS

4. Journalists say they aren't getting the training they most need.

On average, only about one journalist in four reported that her or his news organization provided much regular training. In particular, technology and data training fell low on the list; the most demanded training is the least provided.

Journalists from outside the United States were much more likely to say their organizations were providing training. In some topics, including technology and data training, the rate at which international journalists say the training is provided to a great or very great extent is nearly double or triple the U.S. rate.

Organizations providing regular training or professional development activities to a great or very great extent in these categories:

	Overall	U.S.	Non-U.S.
Leadership	27.1%	22.9%	29.8%
Topic	23.7	17.0	28.7
Multimedia	23.0	18.1	26.2
Ethics	21.7	13.3	27.6
Traditional	21.2	10.4	29.0
Technology	20.6	10.4	29.2
Reporting	17.4	7.7	24.1
Data skills	16.9	11.6	21.2



10.4%
of the U.S. journalists surveyed said the news organizations they worked for provided regular training or professional development activities.

29%
of the international journalists surveyed said the news organizations they worked for provided regular training or professional development activities.



KEY SURVEY FINDINGS

5. Most journalists give their news organizations poor marks for training.

Fewer than four in 10 of the journalists who work in newsrooms give their organizations an A or B when it comes to meeting training needs. The majority, about six in 10, rank their news organizations as C or worse. Grades have gone steadily downward in the three Knight surveys, with a greater proportion of Cs, Ds and Fs this year than ever before.

What letter grade would you give your organization for its overall performance in providing training and professional development for news staff members?

A – Excellent	8.1%
B – Good	30.3
C – Average	31.6
D – Poor	20.8
F – Fail	9.2

KEY SURVEY FINDINGS

6. Journalists used their training and are likely to recommend it.

Training is useful. Nearly 96 percent said they applied what they learned to their work at least to some extent. Three-quarters of the journalists surveyed said they used their training to a great or very great extent.

To what extent have you used what you learned in your work?

Very great	32.9%
Great	42.3
Some	20.7
Small	2.5
Not at all	0.9
Don't know	0.6

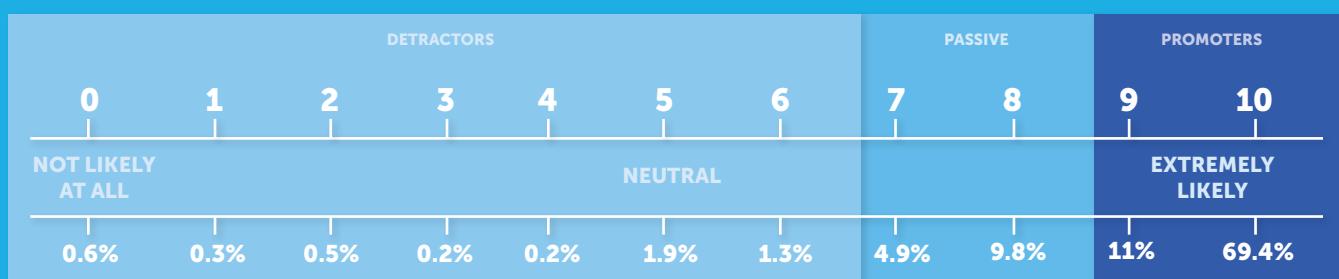
Journalists from two programs reported using what they learned at least to some extent at a rate above the overall average. Making the most use of their new skills were those who received digital transformation training from Knight Digital Media Center at USC Annenberg (97.7 percent) and digital skills training from the Knight Center for Journalism in the Americas (96.7 percent).

Two thirds of the journalists surveyed said the training helped them bring greater depth to their work or create more engaging journalism. More than half said it helped them do work that made an impact in their communities.

Eight in 10 journalists who received training shared what they learned with others. In all, 518 journalists said they trained a total of 18,641 others, an average of 36 trained per journalist. Knight-Bagehot's business journalism fellows reported training the most people, an average of 130 per fellow surveyed, an outsized figure because it included a podcast that reached hundreds. Stanford fellows reported an average of 85 and international fellows 80.

Fellows were highly likely to recommend their training or fellowship program to others. The chart below is significant because the people who score a program 9 or 10 on this scale are considered "promoters" who will act on their belief and actually recruit others to participate. In all, eight in 10 of the active alumni surveyed were in this category. Of all the programs, the yearlong Knight-Bagehot and Stanford fellowships drew the highest recommendation ratings. All of the Bagehot fellows and 94 percent of the Stanford fellows gave a 9-10 rating on the likelihood that they would recommend it.

How likely are you to recommend the training to others? (Scale of 0-10)



KEY SURVEY FINDINGS

7. Online training is growing more popular, especially internationally.

Overall, seven in 10 journalists who participated in online learning said it was as good as, or better than, in-person training. Those high ratings are driven by strong approval from international journalists.

Eight in 10 international journalists – most of them Latin American journalists who took online classes at the Knight Center for Journalism in the Americas – said the training was as good as, or better than, in person-training. Among U.S. journalists, a third said online training was as good as, or better than, the in-person type, but nearly 62 percent said online training was not as good as in-person training.

The Knight Center for Journalism in the Americas programs were especially highly rated: nine in 10 trainees there rated the online classes as good as, or better than, traditional classroom training. This could mean the Knight Center training is high-quality, or, because the measure is relative, it could also mean that traditional training in Latin America is of poor quality or simply does not exist.

Training programs are offering more online training, including self-directed classes, webinars and conference calls. In the United States, 49 percent of the journalists surveyed said their class included at least some virtual training, and 12 percent said the training was virtual to a great or very great extent. By contrast, in 2006 only 10 percent of U.S. journalists got online training. And in 2002, only five percent of journalists in that survey¹ had participated in online training. News managers were more excited about trying online training than any other type. But their staffs strongly preferred leaving the office for off-site training.

¹ Newsroom Training: Where's the Investment? Council of Presidents of National Journalism Organizations and Knight Foundation, 2002. www.knightfoundation.org/publications/newsroom-training-wheres-investment

How did your distance-learning experience compare with in-person training?

	Overall	U.S.	Non-U.S.
Better	22%	4.1%	28.5%
About the same	48.5	30.1	55.2
Not as good	24.6	61.8	11.0
Have not had in-person training	5.0	4.1	5.3

2012

49% of the journalists surveyed said their class included at least some virtual training.

2006

10% utilize online training.

2002

5% utilize online training.

KEY SURVEY FINDINGS

8. Many journalists pay for their own training.

Nearly half of the journalists reported using their own money to pay for training in the previous 12 months in amounts ranging from \$27 to \$10,000. The journalists who specified an amount reported spending an average of \$751 on training during the previous year.

International journalists (57 percent) were more likely to pay for training than journalists from the United States (38 percent). Many Knight-funded fellowships and training programs are offered free of charge, but the Knight Center for Journalism in the Americas has begun charging nominal amounts for its online classes. Those fees were reflected in the responses.



In addition, News University, the online training portal Knight Foundation launched with the Poynter Institute, also offers paid as well as free training.

Journalists frequently count conference attendance as training. At larger newspapers, conference attendance once was routinely encouraged and reimbursed. But professional journalism organizations have noticed increasing numbers of their members paying their own way to conventions.

In the past 12 months, did you pay for any journalist training or professional development out of your own pocket?

	Overall	U.S.	Non-U.S.
Yes	49.2%	38.2%	56.8%
No	47.6	59.3	39.5
Don't recall	3.2	2.5	3.7

\$751
Average amount spent by journalists annually on training.

38%
U.S. journalists who paid for their own online training.

56.8%
International journalists who paid for their own online training.

KEY SURVEY FINDINGS

9. News organizations must become learning organizations.

More than nine in 10 journalists in 2012 say their organizations “must become learning organizations and establish a culture of experimentation and adaptation to survive in the digital age.” But fewer than six in 10 see that happening.

Only around half of the journalists surveyed believe their organizations are keeping pace with technological change. Only half are optimistic about the future of traditional news organizations, and the U.S. journalists are much less optimistic than their international counterparts.

News organizations need to establish a culture of learning and experimentation.

Total	U.S.	Non-U.S.
94.6%	95.7%	94%

My news organization has established a culture of learning and adaptation.

Total	U.S.	Non-U.S.
58.2%	59.7%	57.3%

My news organization is keeping up with the pace of technological change.

Total	U.S.	Non-U.S.
54.5%	54.1%	54.8%

I am optimistic about the future of traditional news organizations in the digital age.

Total	U.S.	Non-U.S.
53.9%	44.3%	60.3%

Doing a good job with training correlates to having an adaptive learning culture, according to journalists in the survey. Among those who gave their organizations an A or a B for providing training, nearly eight in 10 said their organization had a culture of learning and experimentation. Among those rating their organization's training with a C or lower, only four in 10 said the culture was adaptive.



KEY SURVEY FINDINGS

10. Work focus shifts to digital and combined media.

Nearly two-thirds of the journalists in the survey report that they work primarily in online media, or with a mix of media. As an area of focus, print comes in third.

This reflects a shift of the focus of traditional journalists to a combination of their original medium and multimedia/digital work, accelerated by the reality that their job changes are sending them looking for training.

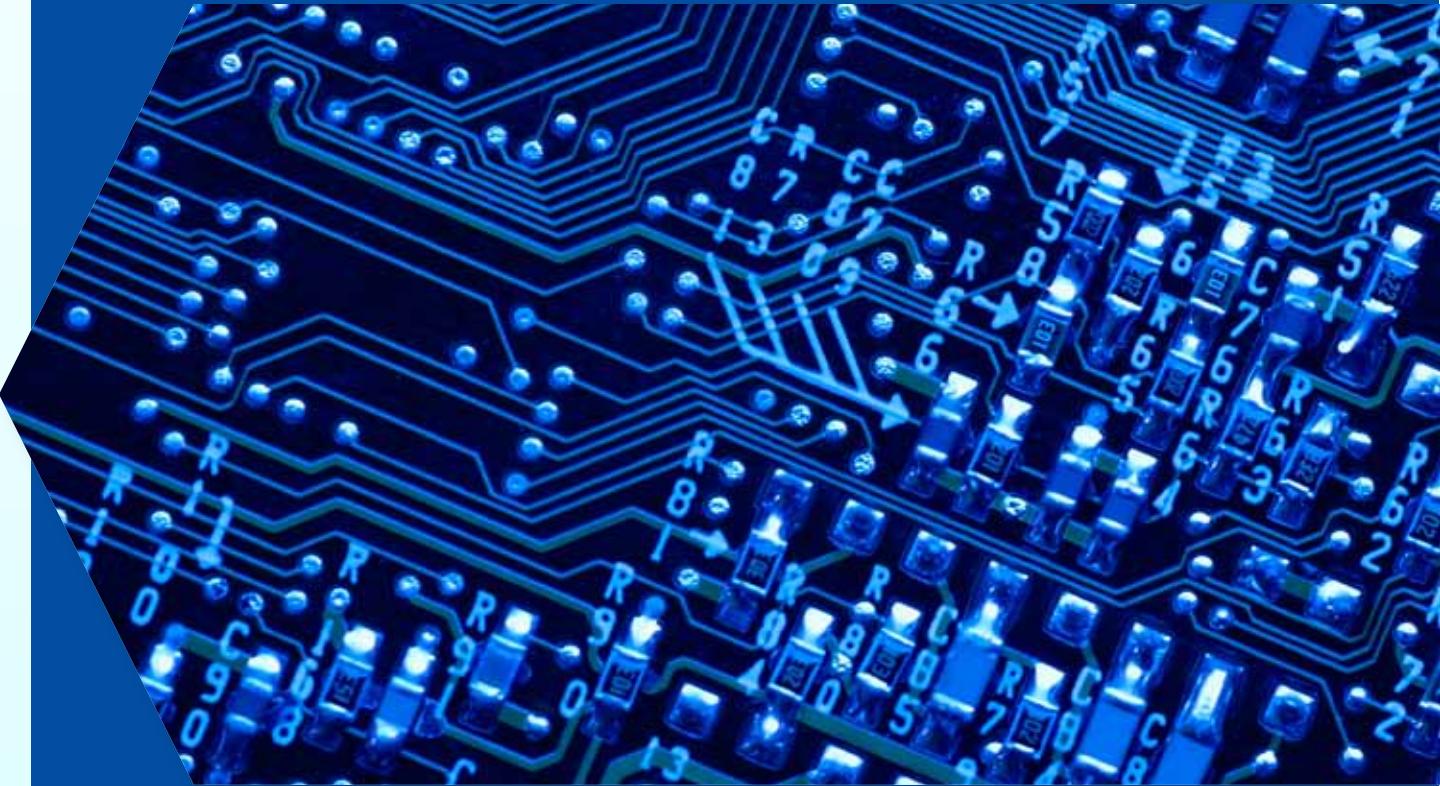
Three programs – the Knight Center for Journalism in the Americas, the Knight Stanford fellowships and Knight Digital Media Center at USC Annenberg – trained the highest proportion of journalists working in digital or a mix of media – six out of 10 or higher. More than 86 percent of the KDMC trainees said they worked in digital or a mix.

The Knight Science and Wallace fellowships included the most print journalists – more than half the total.

While some might assume that digital media might attract younger journalists, the survey showed no significant age differences between the different types of media focus.

Do you work primarily in:

Mix of media	34.3%
Online/digital	30.8
Print	24.7
Broadcast	10.2



In the field

Training adapts in the digital age

Like the journalists they serve, training and fellowship programs are changing to become more effective in a highly dynamic digital environment.

Judging from the survey results and other research², online distance learning can be an effective, economical tool to support professional development, particularly in combination³ with in-classroom learning.

² "The No Significant Difference Phenomenon," Thomas L. Russell, North Carolina State University, 1999.
http://www.amazon.com/Significant-Difference-Phenomenon-Reported-Summaries/dp/0966893603/ref=sr_1_1?ie=UTF8&qid=1334693187&sr=8-1

³ "Evaluation of Evidence-Based Practices in Online Learning, U.S. Dept. of Education, 2010."
<http://www2.ed.gov/rschstat/eval/tech/evidence-based-practices/finalreport.pdf>

A variety of factors seem to be driving journalists' growing acceptance of online training – necessity, convenience, cost and improved quality among them. The fact is, journalists today are simply more comfortable with online work of all types than they were a decade ago, when online training was a fledgling platform.

That has certainly been the case at the Knight Center for Journalism in the Americas. Charged with helping far-flung Latin American journalists improve their work, the center has innovated with online programs. Rosental Calmon Alves, Knight Chair in International Journalism and the center's director, says one key factor is the "crazy schedules" of journalists. "Online training offers flexibility, especially the asynchronous aspect" which enables participants to dip in when they can.

The center has trained nearly 6,000 journalists since it started in 2003, including more than 2,500 journalists in 2010 and 2011. Training was free until 2011, when the center began charging \$30-\$60.

The programs are highly rated: more than three quarters of the alumni said they used what they learned, about the same rate as those who received in-person training.

Ana D'Onofrio, an Argentine journalist whose training with the center was a catalyst for major digital changes in her newsroom, says online classes provide exposure to experts from whom journalists otherwise would never have been able to learn.

"The opportunity to learn remotely from trainers that are working in the best places, in experience and knowledge, is something we value the most from this training, especially because it's a skill or discipline that you can't learn in a university, at least in our countries," D'Onofrio said. One example: a webinar by Aron Pilhofer of The New York Times led her newsroom to invest heavily in developing databases to share with users.

Alves explains that the Knight Center, based at the University of Texas at Austin, was redesigned to use digital tools to teach new digital practices. The center expanded in the Americas in areas such as entrepreneurial journalism, data journalism and visualization, the best use of social media by journalists, digital tools for investigative reporting.

How online training changed a print-centric newsroom

It began in 2008 with Ana D'Onofrio's participation in a virtual class with the Knight Center for Journalism in the Americas. Since then, some 300 journalists from the Argentine news leader La Nación have taken online and in-person training, learning to use digital tools for investigative and multimedia reporting. Classes included writing for the Web, audience interaction, blogging, social media and multimedia.

That training, in turn, brought major changes to the newsroom.

"We decided the goal was to introduce our print newsroom to digital journalism," said deputy managing editor D'Onofrio, "

integrating some tasks, enhancing coordination and opening spaces for blogs, mobile journalism, video or social media

by which print journalists could produce multimedia content and interact with their users."

The training helped big changes happen. La Nación's online newsroom "moved to the center of the print newsroom and was included in the daily cycle of production of the print edition," D'Onofrio said.

Since the training started, unique visitors to the newspaper's website have increased 23 percent, with a peak in April of 9.2 million visitors. After the training began, D'Onofrio said, staff members began asking to blog. Before the training, there were three blogs; after there were 50.

More recently, the newsroom decided to move into data journalism. After seeing a webinar by Aron Pilhofer of The New York Times, staff members at La Nación began creating data sets and produced a dashboard of data on different topics as well as a data blog.

He noted the center routinely uses interactive chats and webinars for training, and even virtual worlds to teach reporting in simulated environments. "The digital revolution constantly pushes us," he said, "to think of different ways we can provide instruction and materials."

News University at the Poynter Institute is perhaps the best known online training pioneer serving journalists. Launched in partnership with the Knight Foundation in 2005, NewsU has more than 215,000 registered users from more than 200 countries. It has created more than 275 e-learning courses, including webinars and self-directed training modules as well as instructor-led virtual classes. Many of the modules are free or low-cost.

Howard Finberg, who led the creation of NewsU and is now Poynter's director of training partnerships and alliances, said surveys show more than 80 percent of NewsU course participants are "likely" or "extremely likely" to take another online class. "Once folks have a taste of effective e-learning, they are likely to continue or be willing to try again," he said.

Finberg calls NewsU "the first journalism-based e-learning project that took full advantage of the power of the Internet" and said its successful formula includes "a learning environment that recognizes the need for 'just-in-time' training and for courses that are valuable for all types of participants, not just professionals. And we still try to add a dash of fun."

He sees the growing adoption of e-learning in the past decade as a logical extension of "the tremendous growth of all things online/digital and the development of tools and methods that allow for more engaging online training." Feedback is key to improving the interactive experience, he said.

In 2011, NewsU held a contest, called Stories Campaign, asking NewsU alumni to share stories of how the training had changed their lives. More than 100 people submitted stories. The grand prize went to Deborah Stever of Deposit, N.Y., who told how her NewsU training enabled her to transition from being an educator to being a reporter for a small-town newspaper. Thanks to the training, Stever wrote, "my articles are more interesting and our news sales have increased."

Elevating talent – and employment

A Knight-Wallace Fellowship at the University of Michigan propelled James Thomas to a job at The New York Times. To accept the fellowship, Thomas said, he had to leave his job as Web editor at The Detroit Free Press because the news organization no longer supported participation in such programs.

"If my first college stint helped me find my creative and analytical strengths, the second – the K-W Fellowship – equipped me to use those strengths with much more currency and impact," Thomas said. "The Web development and design work I've been doing since completing the program builds directly on methods I learned in my U-M classes that year."

The university classes focused on design and coding technologies that were not being used at the Free Press, Thomas said. For example, at U-M, he learned HTML5 Canvas for graphics and animation while the Free Press was invested in Flash. At U-M, he also learned to use Java

These online distance learning programs, typically nondegree programs based at nonprofit educational centers, are different from the for-profit online degree or certification programs, some of which have been controversial.

The popularity of online training is not limited to journalism programs. Lynda.com has emerged as a go-to source of tech training, and YouTube⁴ has seen a boom in educational content as well. The Khan Academy boasts 3,200 video lessons taught more than 155 million times.

Higher education may be the next frontier for e-learning. In a 2012 survey by the Pew Research Center, technology stakeholders predicted that by 2020 opportunity, economic concerns and student and parent demands would cause university-level education to adopt new methods.⁵

The information revolution has brought change to journalism fellowship programs. These yearlong programs began as fellowships offering "a free year" for journalists to sample classes and open their minds, away from the fray of newsrooms and deadlines. But some fellowships have broken with that tradition in recent years.

In 2009, the Knight-Wallace Fellowship at the University of Michigan began to require fellows to participate in a series of multimedia workshops. Fellows get multimedia kits that include a camera, tripod, recorder and headphones, said assistant director Birgit Rieck.

The Knight International Journalism Fellowship also integrates digital tools and practices. This fellowship is unique in that each fellow takes on a project with a specific goal, such as starting a journalism school or a health reporters group. The fellows use training as one means to reach that goal. Director Elisa Tinsley said a 2010 evaluation⁶ of the fellowships showed that digital projects were more likely to produce lasting impact. "Mobile phones reach many more people in developing countries than other media," she said, "and authoritarian regimes tend to regulate traditional media more than the Internet."

⁴"Education is a big hit on YouTube," Benton Foundation, 2012. <http://benton.org/node/112116>

⁵ The Future of Higher Education, Pew Project Internet & American Life Project, Pew Research Center, July, 2012. <http://pewinternet.org/Reports/2012/Future-of-Higher-Education.aspx>

⁶"20-Plus Reasons Why Investing in Media Creates Lasting Change," International Center For Journalists, 2010. <http://www.icfj.org/blogs/20-plus-reasons-why-investing-media-creates-lasting-change>

and Objective-C to make mobile applications. At the Free Press and other Gannett organizations, mobile applications were made by a third party so he did not have an opportunity to learn those languages.

The fellowship also connected Thomas with a top editor at The Times, who assessed him based on the portfolio of work he assembled during his fellowship year. Thomas joined The Times' Interactive Team in March 2012 and will work with the content management system to make it easier to get The Times' data-intensive projects onto nytimes.com.





International fellows, in developing their plans, "now incorporate social media, crowd sourcing, citizen journalism and technological innovations to drive the delivery of quality news and information to more people," Tinsley said.

Perhaps the most radical and the most important program response to the digital revolution took place at the Knight Journalism Fellowships at Stanford, which decided to totally reinvent itself. Beginning with the 2009-10 fellowship year, Stanford focused on journalism innovation, entrepreneurship and leadership. "Each of our fellows comes to Stanford with an "innovation proposal" – projects they work on that are intended to produce something of use to other journalists and/or to journalism," said James Bettinger, director of the program.

No longer would the Stanford program educate journalists who would lose their jobs in the midst of the fellowship. No longer would it train people for jobs that no longer existed. The "range of people" considered suitable for a Knight Fellowship began to include younger and older candidates, Bettinger said, "many different kinds of people ... some from less traditional journalism backgrounds."

The fellowship proved to be a turning point for Burt Herman, a longtime foreign correspondent who used his time at Stanford to study entrepreneurship in Silicon Valley and apply the lessons to journalism. The result is Storify, a highly popular social storytelling platform, used by major media organizations and expanding into several languages.

The Knight Digital Media Center at USC Annenberg has broadened its programs and the pool of potential participants as well. Initially focused on helping newsroom executives move traditional print and broadcast organizations to multiple platforms, KDMC in 2009 began training news entrepreneurs in partnership with the university's business school. Building on its annual News Entrepreneur Boot Camp, the center in 2010 started training representatives of community foundations and nonprofits making their first forays into news and information projects.

"Our core focus is digital strategy and how to lead the implementation of strategy," said director Vikki Porter. "As the news ecosystem has changed, we have changed and broadened our definition of what leadership looks like in news. Journalist-entrepreneurs and community nonprofits and foundations are becoming key players along with traditional media."

Porter said KDMC programming has evolved from "buffet-type" conferences that raise digital awareness to a focus on helping fellows develop and implement projects based on what they learn in the program.

For example, Melanie Sill, then executive editor of The Sacramento Bee, participated in a KDMC class on social media strategy for news organizations. She used her new expertise to lead development of Sacramento Connect, an innovative network of local blogs, that burgeoned and quickly began to produce revenue.

KDMC's training and coaching in digital strategy and change management prompted many participating editors, including leaders from The Wichita Eagle, The Atlanta Journal-Constitution and The Christian Science Monitor, to significantly change the structure and processes of their newsroom to support new, digital work.

In assessing their shift to a more digital focus, the training and fellowship program leaders stressed the need to constantly adapt as well. "The most important lesson that we have learned is that it is essential to keep evolving. That means not just adding new things but getting rid of old ones," Bettinger said. "We now aim to shed 5-10 percent of what we do in any given year, freeing up time and energy to add things."

In another change, the struggles of the news industry have made it harder to recruit participants to long-form programs. Getting away for a year is particularly challenging for journalists who work for news organizations with depleted staffs.

Rieck, assistant director of the Knight-Wallace program, said two journalists opted for the 2010-11 fellowship even though it meant leaving their jobs at the Detroit Free Press. Each believed the fellowship would "help their professional development to the extent that they would find new positions afterwards," she said. It happened: One became a special projects reporter for The Associated Press and the other a technologist for The New York Times.

The Knight Science Fellowship program at MIT has seen a dramatic change in the mix of fellows in the past five years, according to director Philip Hilts. "In the past, the majority were journalists from major mainstream newspapers and magazines. Now, the majority of our fellows are freelancers or bloggers and work for a full array of media." Hilts' program now offers fellows multimedia and Internet training, including hands-on training in video, audio, data visualization and social media.

From stories to 'Storify'

A John S. Knight Journalism Fellowship at Stanford University was a turning point in Burt Herman's journey from traditional journalist to news entrepreneur.

A foreign correspondent for The Associated Press, Herman used his 2008-09 fellowship to lay the groundwork for Storify, a popular and innovative social storytelling platform. Storify had 1.2 million visitors in March 2012, and its stories were seen 14 million times, including through major news organizations like The Washington Post. It is now expanding into Spanish, French and Arabic. Storify won the Knight-Batten Grand Prize for Innovations in Journalism.

"At Stanford, I studied innovation and entrepreneurship so I could learn what makes Silicon Valley tick and apply those lessons to journalism," Herman said.

After the fellowship, he remained in the San Francisco Bay Area to "experiment with my own projects and find partners who shared my passion for the intersection of media and technology."

Storify started with the idea that more people are creating massive amounts of content using the new digital and social media tools, but it's not always easy to organize it in ways that are useful and engaging.

"We're flooded with Tweets, YouTube videos, Flickr photos and everything else. Everyone can be a "reporter" when an event happens. But not everyone is a "journalist" – making sense of an issue and giving the context," Herman said. "So we built a system to help people do this, take the best of social media and make it into a story – to "storify" it."

¹ "Hacks/Hackers: Bringing Journalists and Technologists Together," Burt Herman, Nieman Reports, Summer 2010. <http://www.nieman.harvard.edu/reportsitem.aspx?id=102421>

² "Storify's Burt Herman on the Evolution from Journalist to Entrepreneur," Online Journalism Review, Oct. 10, 2010. <http://www.ojr.org/ojr/people/webjournalist/201010/1894/>



Why training matters

Members of the staff of The Tuscaloosa News went from training to tweeting to a Pulitzer Prize for their breaking news coverage of a tornado that ravaged their Alabama town on April 27, 2011.

Just a couple of weeks before the tornado, about 20 journalists – roughly two thirds of the newsroom staff – were taught Twitter and Facebook basics by two colleagues, according to city editor Katherine Lee. When the tornado knocked out phone service, the staff used Twitter to report the news.

Pulitzer juror Kathy Best told Poynter.org⁷ that the use of real-time tools such as Twitter was a factor in the selections of finalists in the breaking news category.

Small training. Big results.

Participants in the Knight programs consistently report high levels of satisfaction with the training they receive. That said, the impact of training – and the impact of the journalism produced because of the training – are more meaningful ways to measure of its value.

The survey asked about impact in two ways: Did the journalists use it to do better work? Did they share what they learned with colleagues and others?

Participants in the programs reported a wide range of outcomes for their work.

Some deepened their reporting on important topics and drove change and reform. Others built or revamped Web sites or started new sites that fill gaps in community news. Some developed new understandings of the digital media environment and used them to shape the strategy of their news organizations. Others developed multimedia skills that enriched their reporting or learned social media techniques that help them deepen their connections to communities.

Some programs sought to create impact from the top down, others from the bottom up. Improved multimedia skills for front-line reporters and photographers was the primary goal of Knight Digital Media Center at the University of California at Berkeley and participants reported they used what they learned enliven online reports. That training “is like a life preserver for journalists adrift in the sea of new media,” fellow Sara Steffens said. “I recommend it highly for anyone who’s ready to take their future into their own hands and reinvent their career.”

Many trainees become “change agents” upon their return to the newsroom by demonstrating the power of digital media and teaching others how it can be done.

An example of this bottom-up approach to transformation happened at the StarNews in Wilmington, North Carolina. After staff member Jim Ware attended a workshop in Berkeley in December 2008, he developed newsroom training on social media for audience engagement and pushed for other improvements in digital, according to a report prepared by KDMC at Berkeley.

⁷ “How The Tuscaloosa News’ post-tornado tweeting helped bring home a Pulitzer Prize, Jeff Sonderman, Poynter Online, April 2012. <http://www.poynter.org/latest-news/media-lab/social-media/170607/how-the-tuscaloosa-news-post-tornado-tweeting-helped-bring-home-a-pulitzer-prize/>



Training turns a 'wannabe' into a community journalist

Online courses at Poynter's News University taught Deborah Stever of Deposit, N.Y., what she needed to know to transition from a private-school education specialist to a small-town reporter.

With no formal journalism education, Stever said, she turned to NewsU. "I slowly transformed from a clueless wannabe journalist," she said. "My opening lines got more interesting and much shorter as I learned about attention grabbing openers, inverted pyramids and graphic, power verbs and adjectives. Dialogue got easier to write, and suddenly I knew what questions to ask in an interview."

Now a reporter at the Deposit Courier in New York, Stever said that as her stories got better, "our news sales have increased. ... Thanks to the instruction available at Poynter, we have raised the bar for news reporting in our small-town corner of the news world and continue to be a viable outlet for information for our community."



Ware said his what he learned at KDMC prompted or contributed to a number of key developments in the newsroom. These included development of two innovative online sites that received recognition in the Knight-Batten Awards for Innovation in Journalism, as well as key changes in the way the newsroom handled breaking news.

The newsroom expanded use of in social media as well, and saw an an eight-fold increase in referrals of traffic from Twitter and Facebook, according to Ware, who was promoted to a digital leadership role in 2010.

"It was a cultural change as well as a coverage change, but it paid off in dramatic increases in Web traffic," Ware said.

By contrast, KDMC at USC Annenberg sought to help leaders change their organizations from the top. "The leadership training was about setting and implementing strategy. Those skills have been immensely important in developing strategy and new products and in informing all of my work," said Michael Skoler, vice president of Interactive Media at Public Radio International. Skoler, who is leading PRI's digital transformation, participated in a seminar for news executives at Knight Digital Media Center at USC.



Training can improve the flow of news and information on the grassroots level as well as at the policy level. For example, foundation-funded projects such as The Rapidian in Grand Rapids, Michigan, and The Akronist in Akron, Ohio, are training citizen contributors to help tell the stories of their communities on their websites.

On the other side of the planet in Malaysia, Knight International Fellow Ross Settles helped a leading news website, Malasiakini, train hundreds of citizen contributors to help cover communities that do not have mainstream news sources.

Journalism training also produces significant impacts on governments and policy, as is evident abroad in the work of the Knight International Journalism Fellowships.

Saving lives with health journalism

A team of Nigerian health reporters who were trained and led by Sunday Dare, a Knight International Journalism Fellow, alerted their government and their fellow Nigerians to a serious, looming threat of highly contagious lassa fever.

As Dare explains in his blog post,¹ it started in February when he saw two tiny newspaper reports of four deaths from the fever. His research was quick and shocking. He found lassa fever “unsparring,” its attack total. Mostly spread by rats, it can become airborne. “In contaminated areas, every breath of air represents a risk. Victims cough violently and vomit blood.”

Dare got to work with his health journalism team at the Daily Trust, the most widely read newspaper in northern Nigeria. The fever spread so rapidly that by the time their story appeared, 36 people had died. “Our story made the dangers clear,” Dare said. “At the current rate of infection, one chief medical officer said, Nigeria was on track to have three million people sickened by the disease within the year, with a death toll as high as 58,000.”

The government acted. Within days, health officials distributed over 750,000 doses of Ribavirin as well as protective garments for health workers. Two months later, the outbreak had been contained.

Dare formed the Daily Trust health reporting team as part of his fellowship. He trained the team in everything from reporting basics to investigative techniques and social media, with a focus on using health data and the epidemiology of diseases.

Training is the reason his team could outrace a deadly fever. “Our coverage was a significant departure from the reactive reporting of the past,” Dare wrote, “and it demonstrates the life-changing impact good journalism can make.”

¹ “How Health Coverage Helped Warn of Deadly Lassa Fever in Nigeria, Sunday Dare, Knight International Journalism Fellowships, 2012. <http://www.icfj.org/blogs/how-health-coverage-helped-warn-deadly-lassa-fever-nigeria>

Math plus research equals a corruption investigation

Online training in math and investigative techniques for journalists enabled Mabel Rehnenfeldt to expose corruption in Paraguay.

One example: An investigation for ABC Color, Paraguay's top newspaper, titled "The President's Man." Rehnenfeldt revealed that the director of an electric company held more assets than you'd expect, given his earnings.

For that story, Rehnenfeldt said, she used for the first time techniques she learned in two online courses: "Mathematics for Journalists" and "Digital Tools for Investigative Reporting." The classes, offered by the Knight Center for Journalism in the Americas, enabled Rehnenfeldt to conduct "advanced Internet searches that allowed me to find data that others were trying to hide."

The story won the prestigious award for Best Investigative Journalism Report on Corruption from the Press and Society Institute/Transparency International. Authorities are investigating the case.

Rehnenfeldt also used her training to:

- Expose how an advertising agency related to the president of Paraguay received lots of government contracts and evaded taxes. "The numbers I crunched showed that they were misusing funds," she said.
- Be part of a transnational project with the International Consortium of Investigative Journalists that revealed a booming trade in cigarette smuggling. "In Paraguay there are no official figures, but it was possible to find data on my own country on international sites."

Rehnenfeldt has become a leader in her newsroom. In 2010, ABC Color put her in charge of ABC Digital, and she has trained many of her colleagues in techniques she learned from the Knight Center's online training.

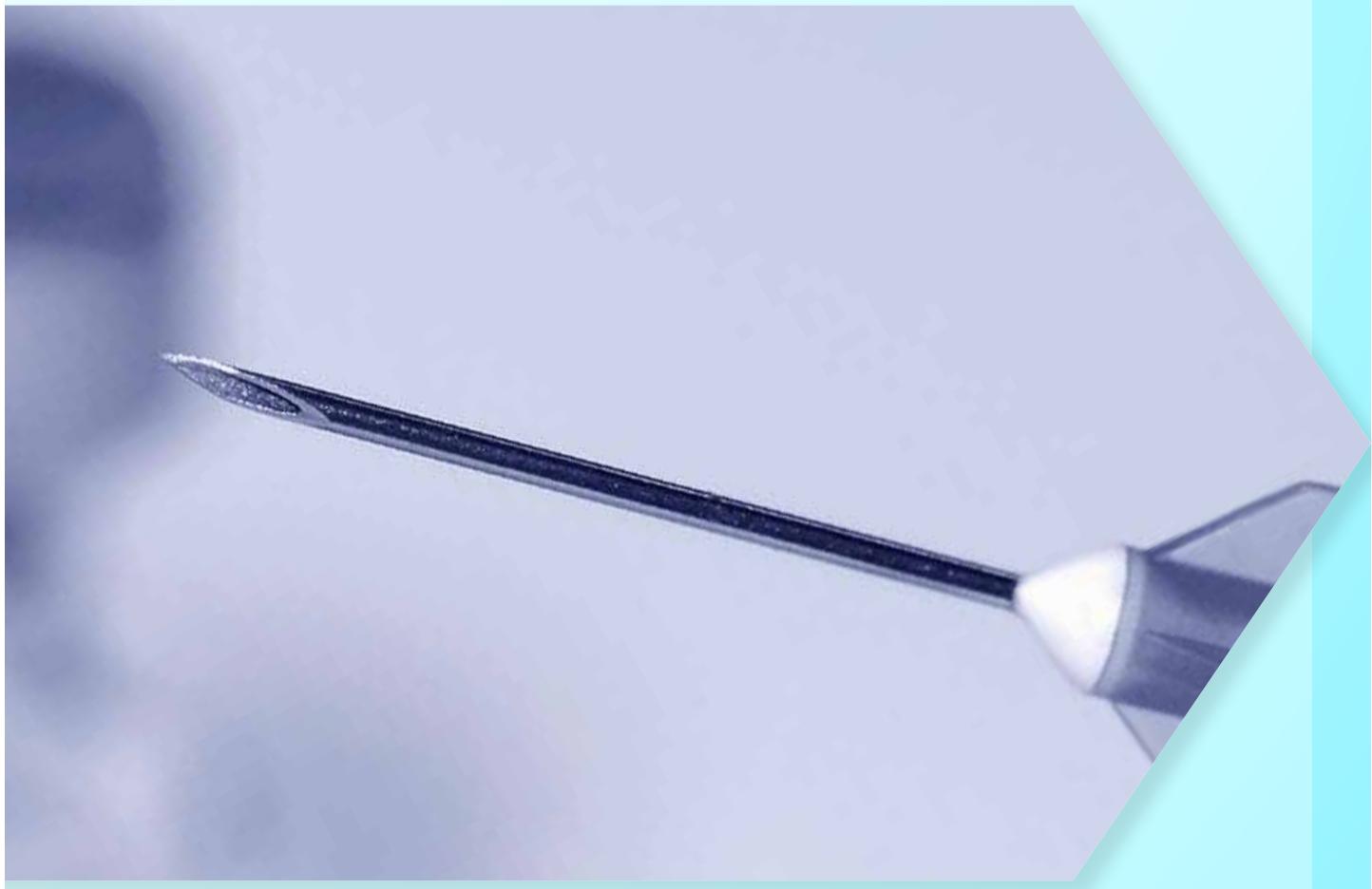


In 2010, an independent evaluation reported that the work of its fellows and the journalists they trained had resulted in at least 20 governmental policy changes or other actions in 19 locations.

Among them:

- In Uganda, reports by trainees prompted the government to release \$1.4 million for polio vaccines. The vaccination rate increased to a record 80 percent.
- In Kenya, a series on shoddy care in public hospitals produced by health journalism trainees resulted in \$7.5 million to improve care.
- In Indonesia, a series by trainees on medical waste prompted the government to order hospitals to build their own medical waste treatment facilities.

Since that evaluation was completed, Tinsley estimates that the work of the fellows and their



trainees has prompted more than 100 major impacts and created new channels for news in places that previously had little or no access. Overall, Tinsley estimated that the 39 international fellows in 2010 and 2011 trained about 3,200 others.

Many training and fellowship participants go on to train colleagues in the newsroom or students in their classrooms. Monica Almeida, a 2009 Nieman Latin America fellow from Ecuador made training part of her leadership role as an editor. "I am always asking the reporters to go further in their coverage, to explore different angles and concentrate on the subjects that are important for our readers. ... My team is very motivated because I have also prepared a training program for them," Almeida said.

Training at Berkeley, "inspired a series of training sessions for the group I lead: SF Bay Area Journalists. We've trained our members in video, photos, social media, WordPress and other areas – but emphasized more commonly available tools, such as pocket cameras and MovieMaker," said Tom Murphy.

In 2011, Knight-Bagehot Fellows Jill Barshay and Seth Stevenson reached hundreds of people with a series of business podcasts, "Slate's Negotiation Academy," which hit number one on the iTunes business charts. Barshay said the series was based on a Columbia Business School class, Managerial Negotiations, taught by Aaron Wallen.



Creating an adaptive news organization

Training for individual journalists is critical, as this new survey confirms. At the same time, news organizations also must learn and evolve, especially in times of crisis.

Training that is strategic, training that focuses on goals, training that involves entire newsrooms can improve both the content and the culture of news organizations. Good professional development, by its very nature, emphasizes communication and breaks down internal barriers.

That helps people become more flexible, more achievement-oriented, less defensive. Creating a "learning culture" can be as important as skill training because most traditional news organizations historically are highly change averse and they must become more adaptive and open to change to succeed in the digital world.

*News, Improved: How America's Newsrooms Are Learning to Change*⁸, explores these principles and distills the insights gained in the \$10 million Knight Newsroom Training Initiative from 2003 to 2007. The initiative funded a half dozen training programs, several with a research component to help the news industry understand how training could help it adapt to new digital realities.

News, Improved said much of the training going on in the news industry was "Episodic, rather than continuous. Random, rather than strategic. Long on talk. Short on measurable impact." Working with 17 newspaper newsrooms, one project demonstrated how training that helped journalists understand and implement practices that helped the organization meet clearly articulated goals could not only elevate skills but improve newsroom culture as well.

The project, Tomorrow's Workforce, helped organizations envision a strategic framework for their training programs. It "encourages more goal-oriented training and more group training (of colleagues together), things that we are convinced help journalists produce the intended results." The book *News, Improved* details how newsrooms used these concepts to build more effective training programs.

⁸ "Inside Newspaper Culture," Readership Institute, Northwestern University, undated. http://www.readership.org/culture_management/culture/insideculture.asp

'Huge' digital awakening for new magazine editor

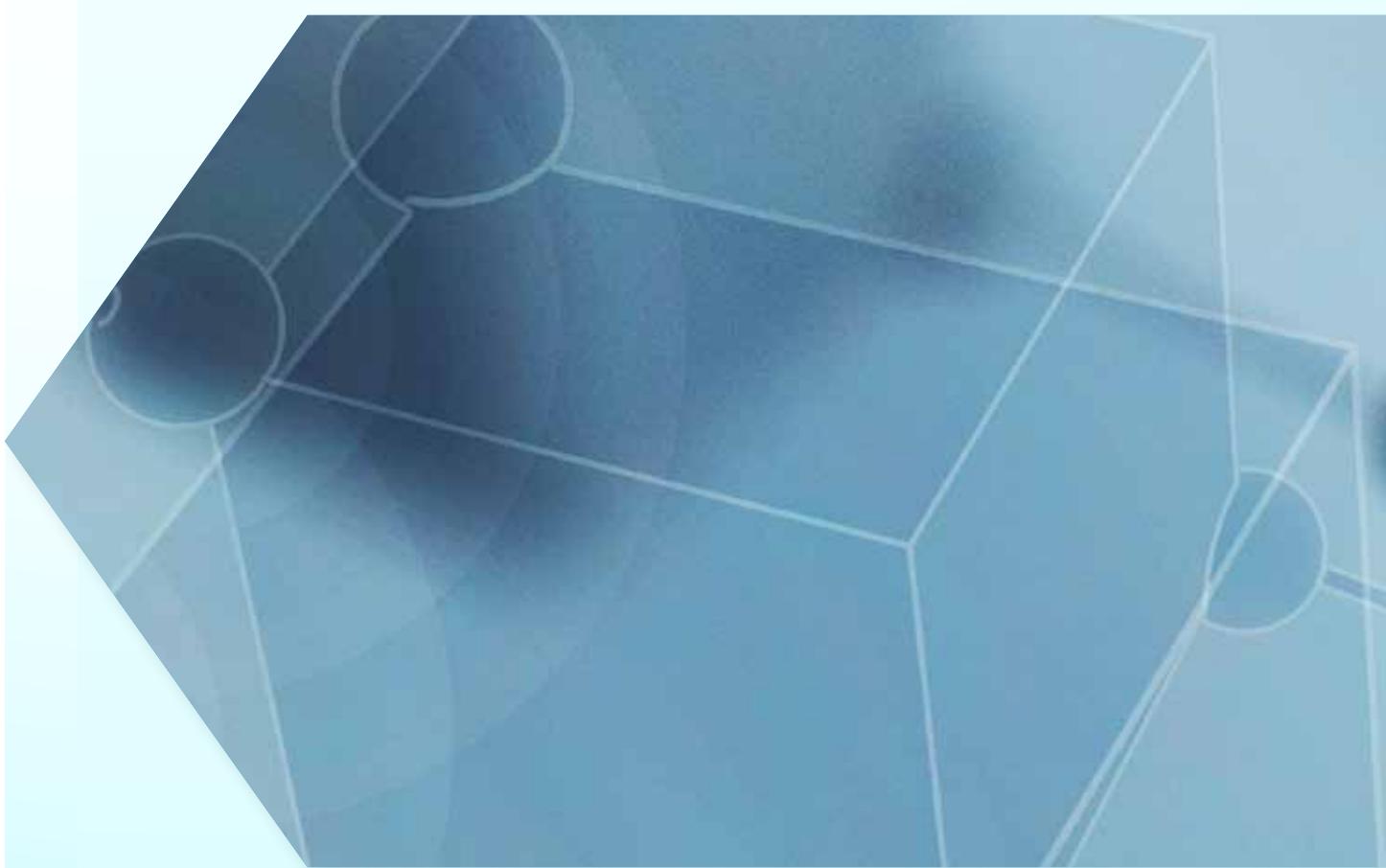


Three online classes in digital media enabled longtime print journalist Thania Urias to cross the digital divide. Urias took classes on writing for the Web, editing and digital project development with the Knight Center for Journalism in the Americas. Just in time, too. She was about to become the editor of an online magazine but she had no online experience.

El Salvador Magazine is an online publication of El Diario de Hoy, one of El Salvador's major newspapers. The magazine is for the estimated three million Salvadorans living outside their country, she said.

"The new job was a big move for me, since I had been a print journalist with no experience with online products. I have over 15 years of experience in journalism, but ... I had never participated in an electronic medium, so the new responsibility meant a huge challenge for me," Urias said.

"I learned about the huge differences between the two media. And my experience is similar to several of my colleagues who suddenly had to migrate from the print to online even when they were unprepared," she said.



More recently, National Public Radio embraced these principles as it sought to become a multiplatform news provider. An evaluation last year of NPR's program described the massive effort, which began in 2007 and was funded by a \$1.5 million grant from Knight: "Achieving that transformation required staff members to improve their digital skills and to understand the relevancy of NPR's digital news strategy and structure to their own work. In addition, it required a culture shift in the organization to break down barriers and encourage collaboration between radio and digital staff."

Train to transform the newsroom, or die

The Knight Digital Media Center at USC Annenberg's leadership programs have helped editors change the structure and processes of their newsrooms to support digital journalism, creating new jobs, duties and approaches.

In Wichita, editor Sherry Chisenhall says training is a key part of her newsroom reorganization. Every job description has been rewritten to reflect a multiplatform newsroom, where Web and mobile publication come first and print is at the end of the work cycle. The key to the success of her restructuring was a training plan designed "to help every person learn, on their work time, how to do the job now expected of them."



"NPR initiated the most comprehensive training in its history. Six hundred staff members, including reporters, producers and editors, were taught to write for the Web, create digital products including videos and photographs, and use the latest audio production tools."

Several years into the effort, the evaluation concluded, the training had "resulted in a positive shift in individual and organizational attitudes toward digital news. Best practices to improve both individual and organizational outcomes included providing hands-on relevant training, applying it immediately and offering support after the training." In other words, the more the training can apply right away to a journalist's work, the better.

The newsroom set a goal – every employee gets at least 30 hours of training a year – "because what gets measured gets done." Chisenhall says it can be done without a large budget by using online services such as Lynda.com (at \$2,000 per year for unlimited use), peer training, inexpensive webinars and seeking scholarships for outside training. This past year, she said, 80 percent of the staff met the 30-hour goal.

Chisenhall said training is essential to progress. "It's imperative to be more creative about how you define training, and to start with the position that it's fatal for the newsroom and for people's individual careers to do without it."





News industry investment is still lacking

Few traditional news organizations undertake significant, strategic learning initiatives like the one at NPR.

A 2001 survey⁹ for the Council of Presidents of National Journalism Organizations found that fewer than one in 10 newsrooms had someone who devoted most of her time to training. The number was much higher in large news organizations – about two-thirds. It wasn't that the news executives surveyed didn't value training – the executives that had coordinators said they were pleased with their effectiveness.

But strategic, comprehensive training has never been a priority for the news industry in the United States. Even before digital disrupted traditional news media, the industry made little investment in training. A decade ago, U.S. companies on average were spending about 2.3 percent of payroll on training – about five times the estimated amount that newspapers were spending.

⁹ Newsroom Training: Where's the Investment, Council of Presidents of National Journalism Organizations and Knight Foundation, 2002.
<http://www.knightfoundation.org/publications/newsroom-training-wheres-investment>

In 2006, a survey conducted by Knight Foundation found that about a third of news organizations had increased their training budgets in the previous five years¹⁰, while 20 percent were spending less. No recent industry figures are available, but it's doubtful that average spending has increased since 2008-09, the years of the worst economic meltdown in news industry history. Certainly, the economic decline of the mainstream news industry has made it more difficult for training programs to bring trainees in the door. The Poynter Institute has seen demand for its trademark in-person seminars at the institute decline (while demand for its News University online classes has climbed). Another longtime training organization, the American Press Institute merged in 2012 with the Newspaper Association of America Foundation because of declining revenues.

Professional journalism associations continue to operate training programs launched under the Knight training initiative. The Associated Press Managing Editors, for example, offers NewsTrain, a traveling curriculum for midlevel editors that was launched as part of Knight's Newsroom Training Initiative. The Southern Newspaper Publishers Association raised \$8 million to support ongoing professional training. Other organizations, such as the Online News Association, Investigative Reporters and Editors, and the Society of Business and Economics Writers offer well-regarded training programs.

To be sure, money is not the only factor in enabling news organizations to train their journalists. Sherry Chisenhall, editor of The Wichita Eagle, notes that it is possible to maintain a culture of learning in the newsroom without a big budget by relying on peer training and services such as Lynda.com. Even without much money, 80 percent of her newsroom staff last year met a goal of participating in 30 hours of training, she said.

Still, it appears that large numbers of journalists do not have even that opportunity. When asked in the 2012 Knight survey whether their organization provides training on different topics, 30 to 40 percent said "not at all" depending on the topic.

The 2012 survey results echo *Newsroom Training, Where's the Investment?* a decade earlier, which also found that lack of training was the top reason for journalists' dissatisfaction. At that time, fully a third of journalists cited dissatisfaction with training opportunities.

News organizations might take a lesson from other industries that have found that training contributes to business success. For example, as *News, Improved* reported, a study of 5,200 organizations by Roberts, Nathanson & Wolfson found that strategic training enabled organizations to become more constructive and more flexible and had a significant impact on business results¹¹.

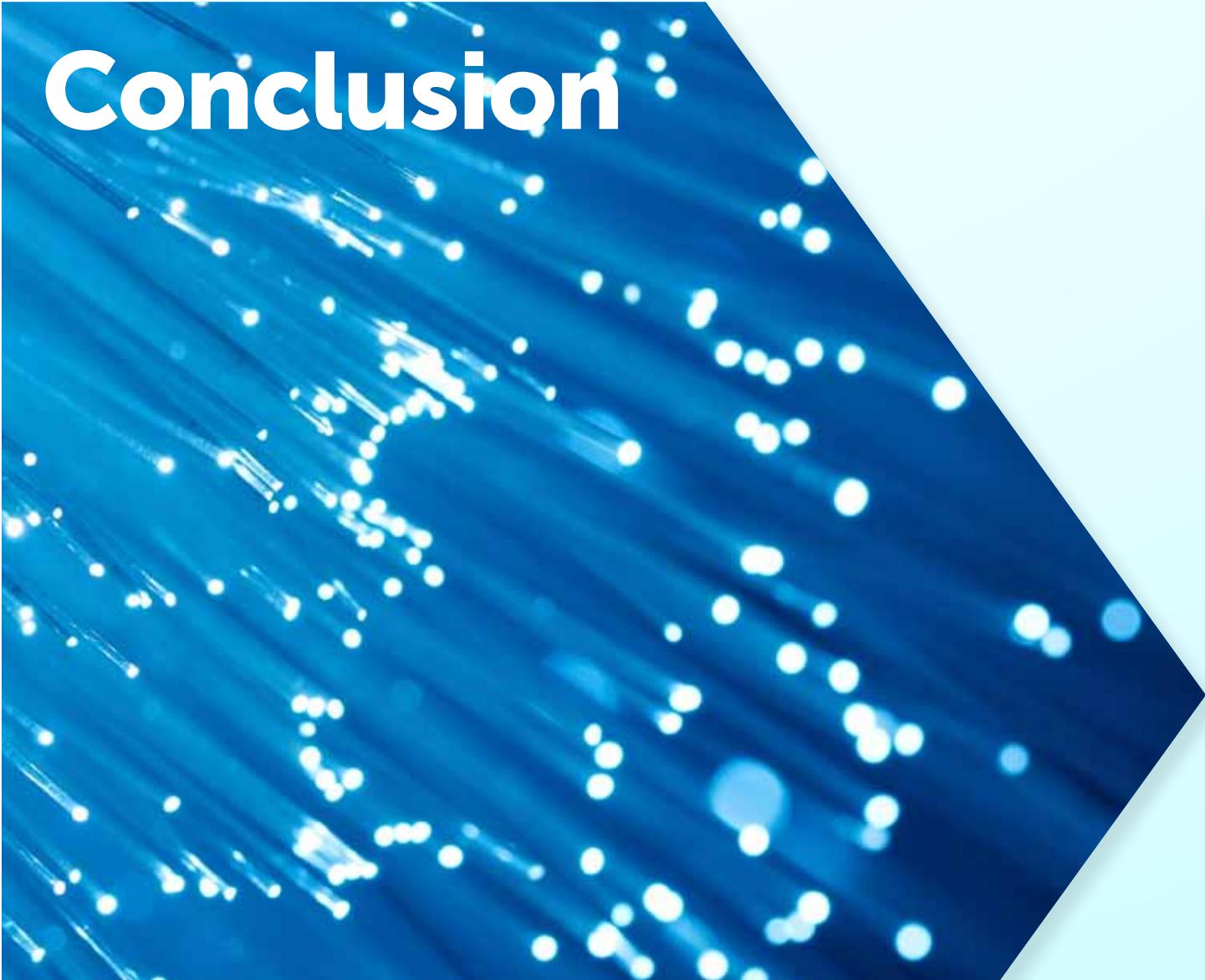
Thinking about the role of training in the highly disrupted journalism ecosystem, insights from *News, Improved* still hold true: "As newspapers strive to become dynamic competitors in a fierce information economy, good editors know they must find an edge to distinguish their news products from the glut of other media offerings. The skill, energy and motivation of a newsroom staff can be the difference between a newspaper that successfully reinvents itself and one that doesn't."

Strategic training helps make that difference.

¹⁰ *News, Improved*, 2007.

¹¹ *News, Improved: How America's Newsrooms Are Learning to Change*

Conclusion



Does the digital age present a do-over moment for newsroom training? That was our question when we launched this survey of journalists trained in Knight programs. Our alumni have answered yes.

By large margins, they want to learn digital tools and techniques. They are increasingly willing to learn those techniques digitally. Training, they assert, gives them the tools to tell stories that matter, news that helps people run their communities and their lives.

We frame this moment as a chance to hit the reset button because of the bad news in *Digital Training Comes of Age*. More than half the journalists surveyed say their newsrooms do not meet their training needs. Half say their newsrooms are being left behind by accelerating technological change. By itself, of course, training will not solve all of their problems. But it is difficult to imagine a successful 21st century media organization that doesn't train.

The good news is that the reset button has never been easier to hit, nor has it ever been more powerful. The digital age has made it simpler than ever for modern day journalists to teach their peers. By putting the sum total of human knowledge at the tips of our fingers, the Internet has opened up better ways of sharing and using that knowledge. There's more to learn, but teaching is easier.

Consider this:

- Ten years ago, only five percent of the journalists surveyed had taken training digitally. Today, nearly 50 percent said they had.
- A decade ago, there was virtually no distance learning for journalists. Today, News University has 215,000 registered users.
- Then, mid-career training programs made journalists incrementally better. Now, they help innovators create new tools like Storify.
- Once, a newsroom like NPR's was slave to a single medium. Now, using strategic digital training, it is becoming a multimedia powerhouse. Today, a newspaper like La Nación in Argentina set up a digital-first newsroom after training its journalists online with the low-cost distance learning from the University of Texas at Austin.

These are hopeful changes. Though e-learning can't teach everything well, this study shows it can help journalists use the power of the digital age to improve their work. Combined with professional development programs like NewsTrain, by the Associated Press Managing Editors, e-learning has become a must-use tool for those who seek to move from the one-way assembly-line mass media age to the two-way networked computerized digital media age.

There's more to it than technology, of course. Before Michael Maness came to Knight Foundation to lead its Journalism and Media Innovation work, he was in charge of innovation and design for Gannett, the nation's largest newspaper group. He's come to believe three elements are essential to successful media enterprises, be they traditional or startups. His elements of success are:

- **Transformational Leadership** – Being willing to take risks, ego-free, respecting how much you don't know.
- **The Ability to Iterate** – Being able to "fail forward," that is, to learn from mistakes and rapidly and continuously refine products.
- **Economic Pragmatism** – Being rational economic thinkers, willing to stop some things to pay for new things.



These characteristics describe the “learning organization,” the ever-changing, open-minded workplaces we think will thrive in the digital age. Five years ago, in *News, Improved*, we said everything about journalism was being turned upside down and inside out: who journalists are, what a story is, which mediums work and how journalists must engage their communities. Today, we still think that’s true. But we’d add that we have entered an era of continuous change. That only intensifies the need for news organizations to become learning organizations.

Individual mastery of journalism technique and values is no longer enough. We must learn and work in teams. Traditional newsroom culture, with its hyper-perfectionism and oppositional thinking, can beat down supportive, achievement-oriented workers. That too must change. If military combat units and hospital emergency rooms (more defensive even than newsrooms) can figure out how to use new tech tools, so can the most independent-minded journalists.

The secret to culture change is strategic training. As *News, Improved* reported, training should not be a random perk but an organized effort to achieve goals. If the news industry were to treat training as other industries do, its activity in that area would increase fivefold. How can the news industry afford that, you might ask, when in recent years some 15,000 professional journalists in the United States have lost their jobs? Given the dropping cost of training, soaring demand and a need for fewer to do more, a better question might be, how can they afford not to?



Ask Michael Berens and Ken Armstrong. Authors of "Methadone and the Politics of Pain," a 2012 Pulitzer Prize winner, they donated their \$10,000 award to Investigative Reporters and Editors to provide training for fellow staffers at The Seattle Times¹². Berens told his colleagues that training had helped him learn nothing less than how to hold the powerful accountable: "It really is the fire-starter."

A vibrant digital training program does not guarantee success, but if the training dies, watch out: the health of the entire enterprise can be seriously questioned. Or as Berens might say, you just can't get very far without fire.

Change creates winners and losers. Some news organizations will not survive in the digital age. America, for example, started the 20th century with roughly 2,500 daily newspapers and ended it with about 1,500. But if historic patterns hold, at least some of our traditional media organizations should be all right. We think the nimble, flexible one will be the mammals of future media ecosystems; the slow, rigid ones will be the dinosaurs.

Since news organizations are not born but made, they can be remade. The near universal demand for digital training from journalists opens the door to further increases in distance learning on all subjects as well as the more intensive strategic newsroom training that helps leads to reinvention. Let's hope we can pack a lot of doing into this do-over moment.

¹² "IRE members donate Pulitzer Prize money for training," IRE blog, April 2012.
<http://www.ire.org/blog/ire-news/2012/04/23/ire-members-donate-pulitzer-prize-money-training/>



Survey details, participant demographics

The survey detailed in this report was conducted online in February and March 2012.

The Web survey drew 660 responses. But we don't think they represent "typical journalists." Instead, we would describe the responders as the "active alumni" from the Knight network of fellowship and training programs.

Here's how we got to the 660:

We started with the roughly 3,000 journalists trained in nine Knight-named programs:

- Knight-Bagehot Fellowships at Columbia University
- Knight Center for Journalism in the Americas at the University of Texas
- Knight Digital Media Center at the University of California, Berkeley
- Knight Digital Media Center at the University of Southern California
- Knight International Journalism Fellowships
- Knight Nieman Latin American Fellowships
- Knight Science Fellowships at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology
- Knight Stanford Fellowships at Stanford University
- Knight-Wallace Fellowships at the University of Michigan

In 2010 and 2011, the directors of these nine training and fellowship programs had participants fill out a Web survey with basic demographic information. Six months after their training, participants were asked to fill out a follow-up survey. Of the original 3,000, a little less than half, some 1,400, responded to those surveys. These trainees represent what we call the "active alumni" of Knight-supported training programs.



They are the group we focused on when seeking more detail about training experiences.

The 660 responses represent 47 percent of the 1,400 active alumni asked to take the survey. Since not everyone answered every question – freelancers, for example, were not asked questions about news organizations – the number of responses to any given question might be less than 660.

The demographics of the survey participants lined up well with the overall demographics of those taking Knight training.

In general, the survey respondents were more likely to be white, women, between the ages of 30 and 49, working in small newsrooms and reporting their medium as “mixed.”

For the first time since Knight Foundation has been doing these training studies, this survey includes a significant number of journalists from outside the United States.

Here are the demographic details:

Age

Under 30	12.1%
30-49	67.4%
50-64	19.7%
65 or more	0.8%

Race

Asian /Pacific Islander	2.7%
Black	4.5%
Hispanic	34.6%
Native American /Indigenous	1.7%
White	48.9%
Other	7.6%

Gender

Female	52.6%
Male	47.4%

Workplace

Newsroom –more than 75	11.6%
Newsroom – 30-75	8.9%
Newsroom – less than 30	20.0%
Nonprofit, not a news organization	9.5%
School or university	14.1%
Self-employed/freelance	17.5%
Unemployed	1.6%
Other/not specified	16.7%

Location

From the U.S.	38.7%
From outside the U.S.	61.3%



Knight-Bagehot Fellowships at Columbia University

Testimonial:

"The Knight-Bagehot program was extremely useful for me. It helped flesh out my knowledge of business and finance, and I strongly believe that it will make me a better reporter in the future."

– Alexander Osipovich

Program Details

Mission: To improve news coverage of business.

Website: www.journalism.columbia.edu/page/247-knight-bagehot-fellowship

Number of fellows in 2010 and 2011: 18

Results of the 2012 survey of active alumni:

To what extent have you used what you learned in your work?

Very great	60%
Great	10%
Some	20%
Small	0%
Not at all	0%
Don't know	10%

Have you trained or briefed others in what you learned?

Yes	80%
No	20%

Approximately how many others have you trained or briefed?

Trained	By	Average
1,043*	8	130

*includes Podcasts

How likely are you to recommend the training to others?

Those ranking 9 or 10 are considered "promoters."

10	80%
9	20%

Have you recommended the training to others?

Yes	100%
No	0%

Program Details

Mission: To use digital technologies to teach great journalism using digital tools to journalists in Latin America and the Caribbean.

Website: knightcenter.utexas.edu/

Number of participants in 2010 in 2011: Approximately 2,500

Results of the 2012 survey of active alumni:

To what extent have you used what you learned in your work?

Very great	30.0%
Great	47.2%
Some	19.5%
Small	1.2%
Not at all	1.7%
Don't know	0.3%

Have you trained or briefed others in what you learned?

Yes	76.2%
No	23.8%

Approximately how many others have you trained or briefed?

Trained	By	Average
11,644	257	45.3

How likely are you to recommend the training to others?

Those ranking 9 or 10 are considered "promoters."

10	74.0%
9	10.8%

Have you recommended the training to others?

Yes	92.2%
No	7.8%



Knight Center for Journalism in the Americas, University of Texas at Austin

Testimonial:

"Knight Center is like a compass in the sea of information that is the Internet."

– Lenara Guadagnin Londero, Brazil



Knight Digital Media Center, UC Berkeley

Testimonial:

"Knight Digital Media Center training is like a life preserver for journalists adrift in the sea of new media. I recommend it highly for anyone who's ready to take their future into their own hands and reinvent their career."

– Sara Steffens

PHOTO COURTESY OF MINESWEEPER

Program Details

Mission: To offer workshops to help midcareer journalists improve their multimedia skills.

Website: multimedia.journalism.berkeley.edu/

Number of participants in 2010 and 2011: Approximately 200

**Results of the 2012 survey of active alumni:
To what extent have you used what you learned in your work?**

Very great	29.1%
Great	40.0%
Some	26.4%
Small	4.5%
Not at all	0%

Have you trained or briefed others in what you learned?

Yes	94.5%
No	5.5%

Approximately how many others have you trained or briefed?

Trained*	By	Average
2,255	97	23.5

How likely are you to recommend the training to others?

Those ranking 9 or 10 are considered "promoters."

10	71.2%
9	16.2%

Have you recommended the training to others?

Yes	90.9%
No	9.1%

Program Details

Mission: To provide digital leadership and strategy training to news executives, entrepreneurs, foundations and their nonprofit partners.

Website: www.knightdigitalmedia-center.org

Number of participants in 2010 and 2011: Approximately 200

Results of the 2012 survey of active alumni:

To what extent have you used what you learned in your work?

Very great	32.2%
Great	42.2%
Some	23.3%
Small	1.1%
Not at all	0%
Don't know	1.1%

Have you trained or briefed others in what you learned?

Yes	87.9%
No	12.1%

Approximately how many others have you trained or briefed?

Trained*	By	Average
992	80	12.4

How likely are you to recommend the training to others?

Those ranking 9 or 10 are considered "promoters."

10	50%
9	7.6%

Have you recommended the training to others?

Yes	76.7%
No	23.3%

Knight Digital Media Center, Annenberg School of Communications and Journalism, University of Southern California

Testimonial:

"I had high hopes for this program, and it wildly exceeded my expectations. The experts' information was useful, the coaches incredibly supportive, and the participants inspiring in their challenges and solutions."

– Jane Stevens

Knight International Journalism Fellowships

Testimonial:

"I think the training is essential to orient you to the work ahead, to prime you to think, focus and organize in preparation for environments that will require a high degree of diplomatic as well journalistic skills."

– Brenda Wilson

Program Details

Knight-Nieman Latin American Fellowships at Harvard University

Mission: To support journalism excellence and press freedom in Latin America.

Website: www.nieman.harvard.edu/NiemanFoundation/NiemanFellowships/MeetTheFellows/KnightLatinAmericanFellows.aspx

Number of fellows in 2010 and 2011: 4

Testimonial: "I completed the first business plan of my life and discovered the entrepreneur inside of me. I had no idea it existed before the Nieman year."
– Juanita Leon, Colombia

Survey sample too small to be relevant.

Program Details

Mission: To improve the free flow of news and information in the public interest around the world.

Website: www.icfj.org

Number of fellows in 2010 and 2011: 39

Results of the 2012 survey of active alumni about their weeklong fellowship orientation:

To what extent have you used what you learned in your work?

Very great	21.1%
Great	36.8%
Some	26.3%
Small	10.5%
Not at all	5.3%
Don't know	0%

Have you trained or briefed others in what you learned?

Yes	68.4%
No	31.6%

Approximately how many others have you trained or briefed?

Trained*	By	Average
1,154	14	82

How likely are you to recommend the training to others?

Those ranking 9 or 10 are considered "promoters."

10	36.8%
9	10.5%

Have you recommended the training to others?

Yes	63.2%
No	36.8%

*The program estimates its fellows trained 3,200 journalists and citizen journalists between 1/10 - 5/12

Program Details

Mission: To provide digital leadership and strategy training to news executives, entrepreneurs, foundations and their nonprofit partners.

Website:

www.knightdigitalmediacenter.org

Number of fellows in 2010 and 2011:

24

Have you trained or briefed others in what you learned?

Yes	61.5%
No	38.5%

Approximately how many others have you trained or briefed?

Trained*	By	Average
81	7	11

To what extent have you used what you learned in your work?

Very great	53.8%
Great	15.4%
Some	15.4%
Small	15.4%
Not at all	0%
Don't know	0%

How likely are you to recommend the training to others?

Those ranking 9 or 10 are considered "promoters."
10 76.9%

Have you recommended the training to others?

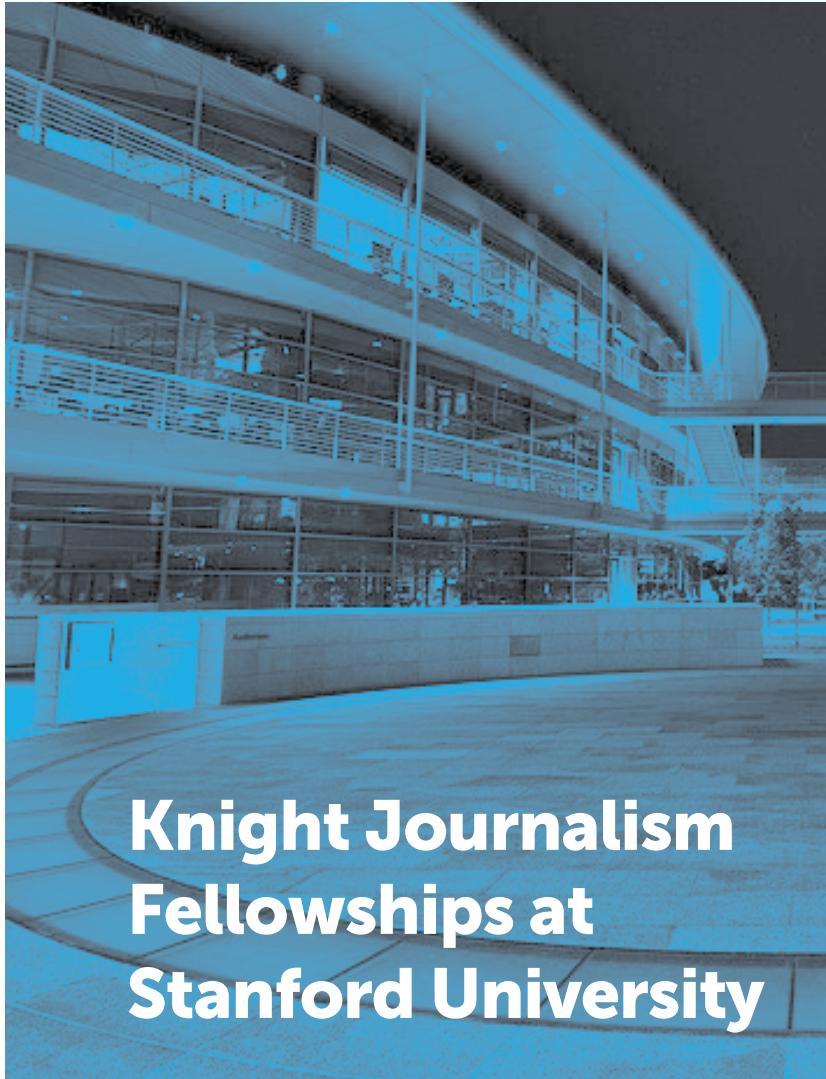
Yes	92.3%
No	7.7%

Knight Science Fellowships at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology

Testimonial:

"No joke: the Knight Fellowship changed my life. For the first 10 years of my career as a generalist covering health, I floated around like a stem cell, full of potential but unsure of my role. Then I got to MIT. It was the right environment, I guess, because I fell in love with a scientific field that I now plan on building my life around – which is to say I differentiated!"

– Mary Carmichael



Knight Journalism Fellowships at Stanford University

Testimonial:

"My Knight Fellowship at Stanford has been the most powerful experience in my entire career."

– Martin Pallares

PHOTO COURTESY OF NINOTWENTY11

Program Details

Mission: To foster journalistic innovation, entrepreneurship and leadership.

Website: <http://knight.stanford.edu/>

Number of participants in 2010 and 2011: 40

Results of 2012 survey of active alumni:

To what extent have you used what you learned in your work?

Very great	70.6%
Great	17.6%
Some	5.9%
Small	5.9%
Not at all	0%
Don't know	0%

Have you trained or briefed others in what you learned?

Yes	100%
No	0%

Approximately how many others have you trained or briefed?

Trained	By	Average
1,450	17	85

How likely are you to recommend the training to others?

Those ranking 9 or 10 are considered "promoters."

10	76.5%
9	11.8%

Have you recommended the training to others?

Yes	100%
No	0%

Program Details

Mission: To invest in human growth in service of the audience of news.

Website: <http://www.mjfellows.org/>

Number of fellows in 2010 and 2011: 42

Results of 2012 survey of active alumni:

To what extent have you used what you learned in your work?

Very great	46.4%
Great	35.7%
Some	10.7%
Small	3.6%
Not at all	0%
Don't know	3.6%

Have you trained or briefed others in what you learned?

Yes	78.6%
No	21.4%

Approximately how many others have you trained or briefed?

Trained	By	Average
226	20	11.3

How likely are you to recommend the training to others?

Those ranking 9 or 10 are considered "promoters."

10	82.1%
9	3.6%

Have you recommended the training to others?

Yes	96.4%
No	3.6%



Knight-Wallace Fellowship at the University of Michigan

Testimonial:

"This program enriched me not only professionally, but also personally – and both on a deeply profound level. Being surrounded by such amazing talent pushed me in ways I wasn't expecting, and the tools, training and seminars offered through the program forever changed my approach to journalism."

– Amber Hunt

RECOMMENDED READING

20-Plus Reasons Why Investing in Media Creates Lasting Change, International Center For Journalists, 2011.

Corporate Universities, Lessons in Building a World-Class Workforce, Jeanne C. Meister, McGraw-Hill, 1998.

Evaluation of Evidence-Based Practices in Online Learning, U.S. Department of Education, 2010.

The Future of Higher Education, Pew Project Internet & American Life Project, Pew Research Center, Janna Anderson, Jan Lauren Boyles, Lee Rainie, 2012.

The Innovator's Dilemma, Clayton M. Christensen, FirstHarper Business Essentials, 2003.

Inside Newspaper Culture, The Readership Institute, 2000.

New practices shape transformative leadership in the digital age, Michele McLellan, Knight Digital Media Center at USC Annenberg, 2011.

News, Improved: How America's Newsrooms Are Learning to Change, Michele McLellan and Tim Porter, CQ Press, 2007.

Newsroom Training: Where's the Investment? A Study of the Council of Presidents of National Journalism Organizations, Eric Newton, ed., Knight Foundation, 2002.

The No Significant Difference Phenomenon, Thomas L. Russell, North Carolina State University, 1999.

NPR Digital Training Program Assessment, Knight Foundation, 2011.



The John S. and James L. Knight Foundation supports transformational ideas that promote quality journalism, advance media innovation, engage communities and foster the arts.

We believe that democracy thrives when people and communities are informed and engaged.

