

## RESEARCH STATEMENT

By Sue Burzynski Bullard

My research agenda largely revolves around editing and digital media, two topics that have increasingly become intertwined. In fact, as journalism changes to adapt to an increasingly online world, the role of editors also is changing.

The two overarching changes are:

- The demand for immediacy and 24/7 news updates has led to fewer layers of editing in most newsrooms. As a result, all journalists need to become better self-editors. They can no longer count on copy editors as the final eyes on their work. All journalists need a basic grasp of editing skills.
- Editors no longer simply edit text and write headlines. News outlets produce news across multiple platforms. Editors must understand the basics of editing for print and online. They must know how to edit text, photos, audio and video. They must understand how to write headlines for both print and online. They must understand how to curate coverage effectively and how to use social media tools.

My research and publication emphasis, therefore, focuses primarily on these areas, which align with my main teaching responsibilities. As CoJMC's primary editing teacher, it is essential that I understand how the roles of editors change so I can use the research to better inform my teaching.

In 2011, I completed a beginning editing textbook, "Everybody's an Editor: Navigating Journalism's Changing Landscape." Great River Technologies published the book digitally in late 2011 and I began using it in beginning editing classes in January 2012. In 2014, I updated the book and a second version was published. It is now being used at several universities around the country.

Appropriately reflecting journalism's move to digital platforms, each chapter of the book includes video and other interactive sections. A chapter on headlines, for instance, includes video I shot of Jane Hirt, managing editor of the Chicago Tribune and a UNL graduate, talking about what makes a good headline.

Each chapter goes beyond traditional editing and addresses new tools and techniques every student or journalist must understand. The chapter on headlines, for instance, addresses writing headlines for both print and the Web and includes a primer on search engine optimization. The headline chapter also includes a section on Twitter as headline practice and as a communication tool. The accuracy and fairness chapter not only addresses traditional ethics, but also examines the problems posed by digital publishing. One section, for instance, discusses the practice of "scrubbing" errors in online stories and the ethical problems the practice raises concerning transparency, credibility and accountability. Even the style

chapter addresses digital platforms. A Q and A with AP Editor David Minthorn explains AP's decision to add a social media section to the AP Stylebook.



The book addresses both traditional editing skills and new realities in today's journalism world. Chapter 1, The Role of an Editor, discusses the challenges of a 24/7 news cycle for today's editors. It also looks at new ways of covering news from Twitter to CoveritLive for breaking news. The final chapter, Edit Yourself, offers practical lessons for today's students. It explains how and why they should edit themselves – in stories, resumes, cover letters, portfolios, and social media – as they hunt for jobs and internships.



I'm also publishing work related to my research in other venues. Again, these articles largely focus on journalism's changing role, editing and digital media. In addition to the book, a sampling of my work includes:

- [“Adding Twitter to Editing Classes,”](#) published on the PBS Education Shift website.
- [“@Twitter is Where Journalism Students Need To Be,”](#) published in Professor's Corner at Harvard's Nieman Reports. It explains how I use Twitter in beginning editing classes because it mimics headline writing and because it's a practical way to introduce students to the uses of Twitter as journalists, given the widespread use of the service by major news organizations. It included a sidebar on ways other professors are using

Twitter as a teaching tool in journalism classes.

The screenshot shows the 'Professor's Corner' website. At the top, there is a search bar and social media icons for Twitter and Facebook. Below the header, there is a navigation bar with 'Professor's Corner | About'. The main content area is divided into two columns. The left column is titled 'TEACHING TOOLS' and contains a list of articles with red arrow icons: 'The Elements of Journalism', 'J-School Partnerships: Engaging Students in Producing News', 'Visual Journalism', 'What's Next? Mapping Journalism's Future', 'Investigative Journalism: Being a Watchdog, Getting Paid', 'Climate Change: Objectivity vs. Scientific Accuracy', 'Journalism and Trauma', and 'Journalists: Risks, Courage and Performance'. At the bottom of this list is a 'View Archive >' link. The right column features an article titled '@Twitter Is Where J-School Students Need to Be' by Sue Burzynski Bullard, dated March 2, 2011. The article's text discusses student skepticism about Twitter's value in journalism. To the right of the article is a 'PRINT' button and a 'SHARE' button.

- A [package of stories](#) and a video about editing breaking news online, published on the American Copy Editors Society website. The stories and video detail how publishing breaking news online is different than publishing in print. It includes tips and techniques from professionals in a variety of

news venues.

## Resources and tips for editing online

As news breaks, be it a tornado, flood or the announcement of the death of Osama bin Laden, today's copy desks find themselves facing dual tasks — reworking print packages while getting the news up fast and accurately online. When it comes to approach, online editing follows the same basic principles, but in a different form.

Journalism professors Sue Burzynski Bullard of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln and Jan Leach of Kent State University have compiled online editing resources for ACES that will help both students and seasoned professionals. The package covers:

- [The shape of the story changes online](#)
- [Ethics in the digital age](#)
- [Video lesson: Online editing tips from a pro](#)
- [Eight tips for editing online](#)
- [Online editing exercises and resources](#)

The package is available at the [ACES Resources Archive](#) (click on headlines to open files.)

- A presentation on [Twitter for Editors](#) at the national American Copy Editor's Society in Phoenix in March 2011.
- [“Blogs: An Essential Teaching Tool,”](#) published in Professor's Corner, at Harvard's Nieman Reports. The article highlights the use of blogs in journalism classes and contends that journalism students must understand the basics of blogging for a better chance of succeeding in today's newsgathering world. After all, 95 of the top 100 newspapers use reporter blogs. And many journalism professors use them to reinforce traditional skills. The article says: “In fact, there are many journalism professors who contend that they are an absolute necessity if students are going to have marketable skills for potential employers. Or for those students who head down the entrepreneurial path, a blog can be the lifeblood of that enterprise. In creating and using blogs, students become aware of—and familiar with the use of—a popular and ubiquitous and (virtually) no-cost digital platform on which journalists work these days. For them, it's like collecting “clips,” only without having to clip anything. “

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**TEACHING TOOLS**

- ▶ Visual Journalism
- ▶ What's Next? Mapping Journalism's Future
- ▶ Investigative Journalism: Being a Watchdog, Getting Paid
- ▶ Journalism and Trauma
- ▶ Climate Change: Objectivity

### Blogs: An Essential Teaching Tool

Students 'find themselves thinking about course content in ways they might otherwise not have taken the opportunity to do so...'

By Sue Burzynski Bullard, *Classroom Blogs*

October 6, 2010

- ESPN links to a sports blog created by a journalism graduate student at Arizona State University and offers a potentially huge readership.

PRINT

SHARE

- ["Twitter for Journalists,"](#) published by editteach.org, a website for editing professors, students and professionals, originally created with a Knight Foundation grant. I was invited to contribute my work to the site after presenting the idea of using "Twitter for Editors" at the Breakfast of Editing Champions at the AEJMC conference in Denver.

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» Online

RESOURCES

Twitter for Journalists

## Teaching Twitter

Sue Bullard | *University of Nebraska-Lincoln*

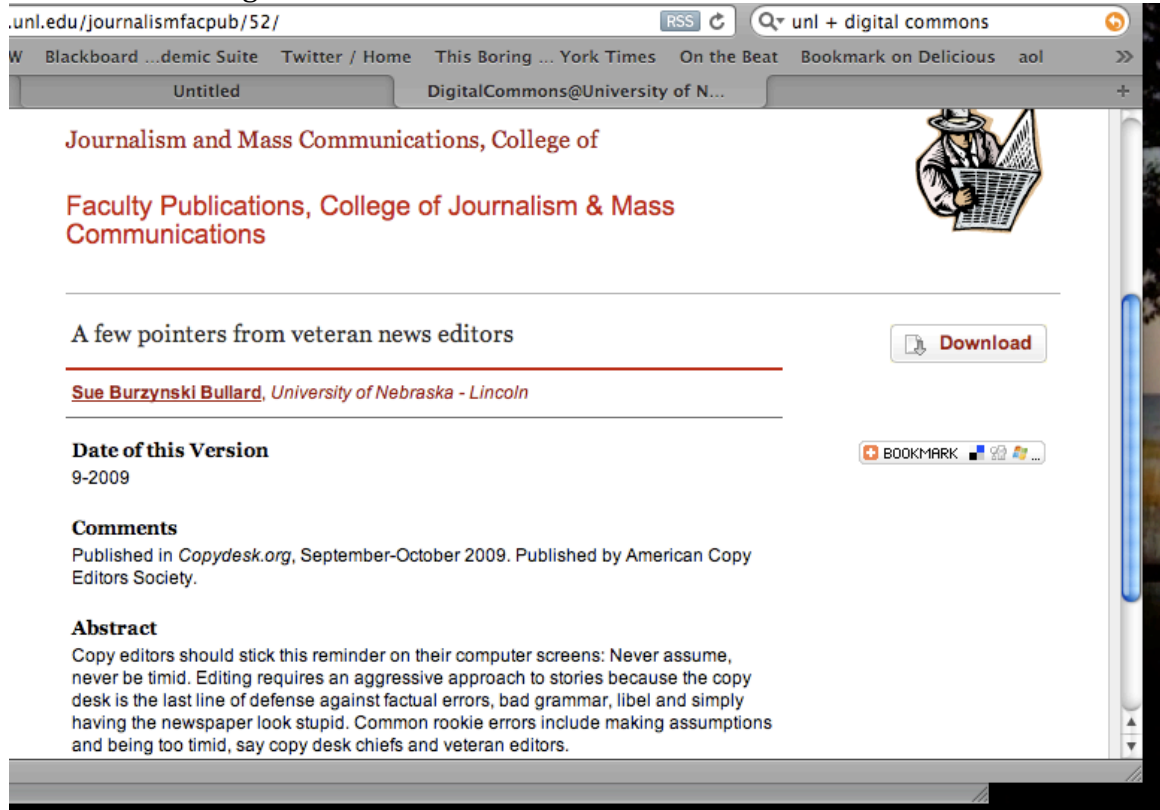
With this exercise, students learn how journalists can use Twitter as a communication tool. They learn how to use Twitter to improve headline writing, to gather information, to share content and to stay informed. Its 140-character limit forces students to write focused Tweets that get to the point quickly.

I provide an introduction to Twitter, using a PowerPoint (downloadable at left) that includes many examples of journalists using Twitter in a variety of ways. The presentation includes information on how a good Twitter post is similar to a good headline (tells the story in a few key words, makes the reader want to know more).

- A presentation on Twitter for Editors at the American Copy Editors Society (ACES) regional conference, held at UNL in October.
- Several articles in the American Copy Editors Society national newsletter related to editing and digital media. ACES is the largest group of copy editing professionals in existence. My article, "Regret the Error, but who admits it?," includes an interview with Craig Silverman, "Regret the Error" author, on



how online corrections are handled. Another article, "Packing all that editing encompasses into lessons," delved into the challenges of editing professors who try to address editing on new platforms without diminishing attention paid to the basics. Another article, "A few pointers from veteran news editors," was based on an informal survey of news copy editors from around the nation offering advice to new editors.



.unl.edu/journalismfacpub/52/

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Journalism and Mass Communications, College of

Faculty Publications, College of Journalism & Mass Communications

A few pointers from veteran news editors

[Download](#)

[Sue Burzynski Bullard, University of Nebraska - Lincoln](#)

**Date of this Version**  
9-2009

**Comments**  
Published in *Copydesk.org*, September-October 2009. Published by American Copy Editors Society.

**Abstract**  
Copy editors should stick this reminder on their computer screens: Never assume, never be timid. Editing requires an aggressive approach to stories because the copy desk is the last line of defense against factual errors, bad grammar, libel and simply having the newspaper look stupid. Common rookie errors include making assumptions and being too timid, say copy desk chiefs and veteran editors.

All of this work aligns with my teaching philosophy and emphasis. And many of the articles I've written required me to interview leading editors in the industry, which helps me stay current as an editing and multimedia professor. In other words, my students see real benefits from my research. I post some of it on class blogs that I have created and use as a teaching tool in all of my classes.

As an example, my beginning editing students were assigned to read [the Q and A](#) I conducted with David Minthorn, one of three editors responsible for updating the AP Stylebook. Typical was this student's response to the assignment: "I found the Q and A with David Minthorn to be very interesting. I have used the AP Stylebook in many classes previous to this one for a variety of purposes, but I have never really stopped to think about how it has come into being. It was very interesting to learn that there are three main people who contribute to the changes made to the AP Stylebook each year. It is also very interesting to learn that these changes happened after years of discussions and sometimes even when decisions are finally agreed upon, people still complain about the rules in the book."

