

# COLUMBIA JOURNALISM REVIEW

With every issue, CJR produces a study guide for journalism students to delve into the areas we've covered, providing topics for classroom discussion and additional activities to test the ideas put forward.

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**1. GROUNDHOG DAY (pp. 15–17):** Health care coverage has failed to heed the lessons of 1993's debate.

- a) Have all members of your class write down what they think is the difference between a single-payer model, a public-plan option, and private insurance. What does this indicate about the quality of news coverage?
- b) If you were covering the current health care debate in Congress, what would you choose to focus on: the plight of the underinsured, experts' opinions on the effects of proposed policies, the history of health reform, or some combination? What are you most interested in reading?

**BEYOND THE CLASSROOM:** c) Evaluate one paper, and read its recent coverage of the health care debate. Does it evaluate reform proposals on the merits of the ideas, or the likelihood that they will get approved? Does it provide data on how these proposals have worked in specific states or other countries? d) Find one or two journalists who covered the 1993 debate and are following the story now. Ask them whether or not they think the discussion has changed from 1993 and, if so, how?

**2. EXPENSIVE GIFTS (pp. 22–24):** What does artist Shepard Fairey owe to the photographer whose image he adapted for his Obama "Hope" poster?

- a) If you were a freelance photographer, what restrictions would you want placed on how an artist could reuse your work? What about artwork based on print journalism, such as a play inspired by a newspaper article that the playwright read?
- b) Have you ever copied software, movies, or music without paying for it? Did you consider whether the rights holder was a "big guy" or "little guy," whether consciously or unconsciously?

## In This Issue

There's widespread agreement that for journalism to survive in the Internet age, newspapers will need to figure out how to turn Internet eyeballs into paying customers — to "monetize," as the buzzword has it, what so far has been a market enthusiastic to read the news, but not to pay for it.



This issue of CJR tackles the thorny issues around making Web work pay. Alissa Quart looks at the case of Obama poster artist Shepard Fairey, and whether he should have shared the wealth — or at least the credit — with The Associated Press freelancer whose photograph he appropriated. Peter Osnos calls on Google to ensure that the sites that generate news content, not just those who aggregate it, get a fair share of revenues. Michael Shapiro explores the free/paid hybrid, in which readers are charged only for the specialty content that they can't do without. And *The Wire* creator (and former *Baltimore Sun* journalist) David Simon calls on *The New York Times* and *Washington Post* to lead the way in doing what no paper could do alone: Start charging for access to their Web sites, to ensure that quality journalism will have a firm financial footing.

There are also reports on spreading the word on why journalism matters: the campaign for "news literacy" in our schools, and how journalists can do more to help us understand the ongoing health care debate. With any luck, promoting a better understanding of quality journalism will help build support for solutions for the problem of how to pay for it.

- c) Is giving credit a solution to the issue of artistic reuse? Should artists be allowed to appropriate other's work so long as they indicate what inspired them?

**BEYOND THE CLASSROOM:** **d)** View Mannie Garcia's original Obama photo and Fairey's poster side-by-side (viewable at [web.mac.com/manniegarcia](http://web.mac.com/manniegarcia)), and listen to Garcia's interview on NPR's Fresh Air ([www.npr.org](http://www.npr.org)). Write an op-ed explaining whether you consider Fairey's work "appropriation," "transformation," or something else. What do you think the law should be in this case? **e)** Read about the Creative Commons license ([creativecommons.org](http://creativecommons.org)). Do you think this help could resolve the issues raised by Fairey and Garcia? Is limiting reuse to "noncommercial" outlets a clear enough distinction?

**3. OPEN FOR BUSINESS (pp. 29–35):** Newspapers should embrace a hybrid of free content and paid subscriptions on the Web.

- a) Do you subscribe to any magazines or Web sites, and which ones? What do you think your subscription choices say about what sort of content newspapers could safely charge for?
- b) Gordon Borrell found that only about 12 percent of most markets sought out local news on the Web. Do you think this will change? Where do you get your local news?
- c) What are the risks of charging only for content that people are willing to pay for? Have everyone in your class write down three topics that they see as must-have news, then list the top ten vote-getters. What kind of newspaper would this make?

**BEYOND THE CLASSROOM:** **d)** Are stories about zoning disputes inherently dull? Write a compelling 200-word lede about a zoning issue (real or imagined). **e)** Using Nexis or library archives, read the local coverage in your hometown newspaper today, and on a day twenty years ago. Has it changed? What might be some of the factors that contributed to the changes you observed?

**4. LEAP OF FAITH (pp. 41–45):** "News literacy" courses attempt to build a community of educated news consumers through in-school programs.

- a) What was your earliest impression of journalism? What helped you learn about how journalism really works, and how would you convey that your less news-savvy peers?
- b) What are the most important questions to ask when reading a news story? Do you often do this when reading an article?
- c) Do you agree that focusing on political bias or advertiser influence is a distraction from an evaluation of excellence in journalism? Is an overreliance on government sources, for example, an ideological or a quality issue?

**BEYOND THE CLASSROOM:** **d)** Visit the News Literacy Project's Web site ([thenewsliteracyproject.org](http://thenewsliteracyproject.org)). Could it be doing more to use the Web to educate young readers? Draft a one-page memo suggesting ways to reach those without news literacy classes in their schools. **e)** Select a short news story and circle every fact. Make a list of what sources you would use to fact-check the piece. Do you think that fact-checking these items would be enough to guarantee that the article was accurate, and if not, why not?

## Quick Takes

Read these short articles in class and discuss:

- 1) Global Village (pp. 8–9):** Do you think readers genuinely aren't interested in global issues? Write a short op-ed column on a global issue, attempting to make connections to readers' own lives.
- 2) What's a Fair Share in the Age of Google? (pp. 25–28):** Do you think any of Peter Osnos's ideas for sharing Web revenue are workable? Does it make a difference to his argument that Google News doesn't itself contain ads?
- 3) Build the Wall (pp. 36–40):** If you're among the 20 million monthly visitors to the New York Times site or the 10 million to the Washington Post site, do you usually read multiple stories each day, or just isolated articles? How much would you pay for an online subscription, or per article? Would this change if bloggers continued to post summaries of the news in these papers?
- 4) "The Greatest Liar" (pp. 51–53):** If "Never Invent" is the journalist's most sacred rule, where do you draw the line between invention and recollection?
- 5) Edifice Rex (p. 63):** How important is it for readers to have a physical connection to their news sources? Where did you go to experience major events in recent history: a public place, an online gathering space, or somewhere else? How did it help shape your experience?