Northeastern Wisconsin Scholastic Press Association
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NEWSPA evolves in 2009 conference

Something old, something new. Something borrowed, something blue.

While that adage may describe the popular wedding custom, it also comes close to describing the NEWSPA 2009 conference, which will feature both popular sessions from the past and new sessions on the evolving field of journalism.

The 2009 conference is slated for April 22, 2009 at Reeve Memorial Union on the UW-Oshkosh campus.

The Board of Directors decided at its Oct. 22 meeting to continue to offer sessions on writing — such as how to write features, news, reviews, columns, sports, leads, headlines and cutlines — as well as sessions on how to use InDesign and Photoshop and take better photos. But new sessions will be offered to give students insight into the evolving role multimedia is playing on journalism. Sessions will be offered on podcasting, blogging, using YouTube, MoJos or mobile journalists and other multimedia topics.

NEWSPA board members, from left, Kellie Pribbernow, Wendy Falk, Rick Koon and Trent Scott discuss possible improvements to the annual high school journalism conference.

"The board really looked closely at advisers and students' comments after last April's conference," said Barbara Benish, NEWSPA Executive Secretary, "and they made changes based on those comments."

For example, NEWSPA will have students work on computers instead of just watching a PowerPoint when having technology-based programs such as InDesign and Photoshop.

As suggested, the conference will add programs on broadcast journalism, advertising design and Adobe Illustrator, a computer drawing tool that allows users to explore more innovative ways to design and create logos, headlines and more. In addition, Benish will be working closer with presenters to make sure their sessions focus on how to do things, rather than just showing examples.

But NEWSPA is also planning to add sessions on what it takes to become a Pulitzer Prize winner and investigative reporter and how to deal with publication censorship and avoid getting sued.

In addition, we'll be bringing back popular sessions, including Grammar Smackdown, a Jeopardy-type game where students can earn sweet treats for answering grammar questions correctly. Other sessions that will be back at your request include yearbook trends, yearbook themes, and roundtable discussions.

Many advisers surveyed said they also wanted to go to both keynote speakers in 2008, and so the board voted to go with one keynote speaker in 2009 — Lindsey Thomas, editor with MTV News, who as a student at Oshkosh North High School attended the NEWSPA conference.

"We also thought another keynote speaker would have a hard time competing with Lindsey," Benish said. "We didn't want to bring in another speaker from afar and have few students attend."

In addition, the board decided to make the conference more hands-on for the students, with opportunities to write or photograph the sessions they attend, and then have those published on the NEWSPA Web site.

Benish said she hopes that 2009 conference will help to get students even more excited about their work on high school newspapers and yearbooks. The rewards for doing so go far beyond putting out great publications, she said.

"Research by the Newspaper Association of America Foundation shows that student journalists earn better high school grades, perform at higher levels on college entrance exams, and receive higher grades in college writing and grammar courses than students who lack that experience," she said. "High school journalism advisers do a great job of teaching their students. I hope the 2009 NEWSPA conference not only expands on that teaching but provides students with insight and enthusiasm about the field."

FROM THE PRESIDENT

By Wendy Falk

As I write this letter, I'm up to my eyeballs in pink.

Yes, you read that correctly, PINK.

Homecoming week at Oshkosh North always calls for the highest displays of school spirit, and so here I sit, head to toe, a perfect amalgam of Barbie Dolls and cotton candy.

Falk

But I don't need to tell publications advisers what school spirit is all about, do I? You know well the meaning of spirit when sacrificing time with families and loved ones so you can perfect the features section before publication. You know school spirit when students meet you at school at 7 a.m. to check out the very first issue, fresh from the printer. You know school spirit when your students are planning the perfect yearbook theme, when they take the perfect picture, or write the perfect headline.

No one does school spirit better than those who work on school publications. Period.

As we delve into the 2008-2009 school year, it is my most sincere hope that this same type of pride and spirit will breathe new in our NEWSPA organization as well. With many new faces on the NEWSPA board, and even more fresh faces serving as advisers, our potential as an organization knows no bounds. When we draw on the talents and expertise of those around us, those who, like us, sacrifice so much for our students and our schools, all students and publications benefit from it. Investing in NEWSPA means investing not only in the students in front of you, but those across the state who value our organization and the opportunities it offers.

Of course we know it starts with us. The NEWSPA board is dedicated to providing the very best in journalism education for high school students at our annual spring conference, in addition to providing opportunities for student recognition. We will continue to strive to reach new heights in our preparations as the conference draws closer.

But we need you, too. NEWSPA cannot function alone, and it is incumbent on all of us to provide what we can, when we can. Perhaps you feel like you could offer an excellent session at the conference. Or, maybe your students have an idea for a new category for competition. Some may simply wish to shoot us an e-mail offering feedback from last year's conference. Anything you can do, and everything you do to help NEWSPA is appreciated.

Photo courtesy Wendy Falk

Wendy Falk, right, and Sara Marquardt show their school spirit during Homecoming week.

To show your NEWSPA pride, no wigs or dress up clothes, cheers or chants are necessary; just be there. And we'll be there for you.

Photo courtesy Wendy Falk

Wendy Falk, left, and Sara Marquardt dress in green and gold for Homecoming week.

NEWSPA aims to become a year-round resource

Many think of NEWSPA as just a yearly conference for high school journalists. But the Board of Directors aims to make it a resource that yearbook and newspapers advisers can use year-round.

At the Oct. 22 meeting, the Board agreed to create adviser resources on the Web site. The site will be unveiled at the April 2009 conference and will include lesson plans, PowerPoints and links to professional organizations and resources.

Board President Wendy Falk, an English teacher at Oshkosh North High School, will lead the effort.

In addition, she and other board members will create a student-centered guide that will be available on the NEWSPA Web site to enhance students' learning at the conference.

If you have ideas for either, contact Falk at wendy.falk@oshkosh.k12.wi.us.

Former student to give keynote

Oshkosh North graduate is editor for MTV News, line edits articles for Web

By Meghan Plummer
PR Assistant

Ten years ago, Lindsey Thomas attended NEWSPA as a student. In 2009, she will attend NEWSPA again, this time to give the keynote address.

Thomas, 27, grew up in Oshkosh and graduated from Oshkosh North High School. She moved to Minneapolis to attend the University of Minnesota and earned her degree in journalism in 2002.

After graduating from college, Thomas became an intern at City Pages, a local alternative weekly publication, working her way up to becoming the music editor. In 2006, Thomas moved to New York and worked as a freelance writer while looking for a job. MTV News hired her as an editor in July 2007 and she is still there today.

> "I think it's great that students from different schools have a chance to meet, get recognized for their writing and hear from people who are working in the field."
>
> *-Lindsey Thomas*

At MTV News, Thomas copyedits, checks facts and line edits articles before they are posted to the Web site. She also writes headlines and proofreads video and photo captions, promotional copy, and other text on the site.

> "When I was 15, I decided I wanted to be a music writer ... so I know how much a little advice and encouragement can mean."
>
> *- Lindsey Thomas*
> *2009 NEWSPA Keynote Speaker*

"It's a big change from editing for a newspapers because the turnaround is much faster, but I think it's helped me become a better, more efficient editor," Thomas said.

Although she hasn't yet decided what her keynote topic will be, Thomas says some of her speech will include how the field is changing.

"Since I work for a Web site, it seems like something on how the Internet is changing journalism is in order," Thomas said.

This may be Thomas's first time speaking at NEWSPA, but she has attended before—as a high school student.

"I remember going to the NEWSPA convention and being really excited about winning an award for a profile I did on the star of our school play," Thomas said. "I think it's great that students from different schools have a chance to meet, get recognized for their writing and hear from people who are working in the field."

Thomas doesn't hide her appreciation for events like NEWSPA.

"When I was 15, I decided I wanted to be a music writer, despite not having the vaguest idea of how to go about it, so I know how much a little advice and encouragement can mean."

Keynote speaker's presentation will again be podcast on iTunes

If you miss Lindsey Thomas' speech this spring you can catch it after the conference. Her podcast, as well as previous speakers' presentations, are available on iTunesU.

The easiest way to get to the presentations is to go to the NEWSPA Web site at http://www.uwosh.edu/journalism/newspa/index.php and click on the link. You can also go directly to the link at https://deimos.apple.com/WebObjects/Core.woa/Browse/uwosh.edu.

Currently, only the 2007 keynote speakers are available as podcasts, but we will continue to expand with each year.

Keep updated on what's happening: Regularly check out our Web site

As speakers become confirmed for the spring 2009 conference, we will regularly be updating the NEWSPA Web site at http://www.uwosh.edu/journalism/newspa/index.php. So be sure to check back there regularly for the latest information.

We continue to tweak the Web site to make it more user friendly.We have now included a "Latest News" category that easily lets you see what parts of the site have been recently updated, as well as gives other important news.

But if you can't easily find information or if you have suggestions how the site can be further improved, please let us know. E-mail your comments to Executive Secretary Barbara Benish at benish@uwosh.edu.

Thanks for your help and support.

VandeHei: Internet news can have impact

By Phillip Martinez
Journalism Student

With a growing number of people turning their attention from the newspaper to the computer screen for their news, keeping up with the rapidly evolving technology is a must for aspiring journalists.

This was the message from Jim VandeHei, University of Wisconsin Oshkosh alumnus and one of two keynote speakers at the NEWSPA conference on April 23.

While many of his peers are feeling nervous about the future of journalism, VandeHei is optimistic as a political journalist in Washington, D.C.

"With the dominance of big network newspapers eroding, there are more opportunities for properties [online] that can have influence," said VandeHei, the executive editor of Politico, a multimedia source for political news. "You no longer need to work for a big newspaper to have an impact."

VandeHei

VandeHei, an Oshkosh native, has been covering politics in Washington, D.C. for 13 years. He graduated from UW Oshkosh in 1995 with a double major in journalism and political science and started interning for U.S. Sen. Herb Kohl. This is where his interest in politics turned into a passion, and as a result, he relocated to Washington, D.C. to cover politics on the national level.

In 2002, the Washington Post wooed VandeHei away from his job at the Wall Street Journal to cover Congress, presidential campaigns and the White House. It was during his time at the Washington Post that VandeHei and his boss John F. Harris started to notice a change in journalism. They observed that new voices in the media via the Internet and other small publications were having more impact than previously thought.

VandeHei and Harris left their jobs at The Washington Post to head the Allbritton Communications-funded multimedia political source named Politico.

According to Politico's mission statement, its goals are to find and focus political journalism on the back stories of Washington. The publication has gained readers worldwide while distancing itself from other news publications.

Photo by Megan Sheridan

Jim VandeHei speaks to students at the 2008 conference.

VandeHei said that Politico wants to provide facts, not ideology, and stick to the unbiased and balanced approach that many large newspapers preach but do not practice. This approach to political coverage, teamed with its use of television, print, online and radio as news mediums, has transformed Politico into one of the most trusted political news outlets since its conception in January 2007.

VandeHei's adaptation to his changing surroundings is what has made Politico successful. In his NEWSPA speech, VandeHei used his experience to show why young journalists should be excited about the opportunities the changing landscape of journalism will offer.

The opportunities may be more abundant, but employers have also raised the bar to what skills they want young journalists to be equipped with. In today's market, employers place a premium on those candidates who can boast of more than just a portfolio filled with print articles, he said.

"Ten years ago, journalism school wasn't essential," VandeHei said. "What mattered then was experience, but now that's just not good enough because the tools you need have expanded from just writing and reporting to audio, video and other technological advances."

With expanding media, VandeHei told the audience, there are going to be more possibilities to have an influence on people's lives. He said for reasons like that, he considers being a journalist the greatest job in the world, and prospective journalists should not only be as optimistic, but as excited as he is.

"That kind of thing would have never happened before a few years ago," VandeHei said. "The only way stories would come out was if the New York Times or Washington Post released them."

> "Since my first day in journalism to this day, I still think I have the coolest job."
>
> *-Jim VandeHei*
> *Politico executive editor*

The speech struck a chord with students in the audience. Fifteen-year-old Sheboygan Falls High School sophomore Heather Reilly reflected on the importance of keeping in pace with technology. "Journalism is a lot more fun than I thought," Reilly said. "I thought the political coverage would be more serious, but the people are really just like everyone else."

This is the kind of reaction and optimism that VandeHei was looking for as he reiterated how his passion for politics and adaptation to the changes around him have kept him going for the past 13 years.

"Since my first day in journalism to this day, I still think I have the coolest job," VandeHei said.

De Sisti provides insight into evolving news industry

By Ainsley Rubbert
Journalism Student

The Internet provides a variety of multimedia tools that interact readers with news in ways print media can't. The reporters and photographers gathering the news are finding themselves doing more than writing and taking photos.

"The future of journalism is changing," said Mike De Sisti, multimedia picture editor at the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel. "It's just a matter of knowing which direction to go in."

De Sisti provided insight into the changing news industry and how students who desire to enter into the field of journalism need to keep up.

Later, De Sisti explained the evolving world of journalism and the tools students need to compete.

"It's not easy and the competition is fierce," said De Sisti. "There may be a time where there won't be print newspapers anymore. Students need to learn blogging, learn YouTube and learn Flash," he added.

De Sisti

De Sisti began his career in journalism as a news photographer. He was always interested in video, so transitioning from still photography was natural, he said.

Taking his interest in video, De Sisti began shooting video along with his photographs to be put on the Internet. The newspaper he was working for had a Web site, but it wasn't a key component.

"We didn't do a lot to enhance the Web site," said De Sisti. "More people were still getting their news from the print newspaper and circulation was great. But we had this Web site and I thought 'Hey why don't we put this [video] on our Web site.'"

De Sisti took video for the newspaper, edited it and suggested putting it online.

Photo by Megan Sheridan

Mike De Sisti, multimedia picture editor at the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel, shows examples of his work.

"We kept it going and kept it evolving and we continued putting videos on our Web site," said De Sisti.

The Internet evolved with Web sites like YouTube, so newspapers began embracing the Internet and have tried to draw readers to the Internet ever since, according to De Sisti.

Creating videos to draw readers to the newspaper's Web site is important. However, video shouldn't replicate a news story.

"You want to have the story in the paper and then have the video as an extension of the story," De Sisti said. "Stuff you can't get in the story can go into the video."

As a multimedia picture editor, De Sisti trains editors, writers and photographers how to use video to go along with their story.

"It's about being able to gather a story," De Sisti said. "The goal is to try to make reporters self-sufficient in their multimedia capabilities. Ideally, we're striving toward having reporters go out with the tools they'll need to tell their story, whether it's an audio recorder, camera, or video recorder."

For high school students, De Sisti's presentation was informational.

"When he talked about the shift from print newspaper to multimedia it was interesting," said Nate Winter, a Green Bay East senior.

"It was interesting when he talked about filming someone and that it's important to just ask the question and then be quiet," said Shaun Aeteske a junior from Green Bay East. Graduating a year early, Aeteske is interested in photojournalism. Learning how to transition from still photos to video intrigued her the most.

The job market is shifting, making it important to know more than one form of media, De Sisti said.

"Just wanting to be a writer isn't going to work anymore," said De Sisti. "Even for photographers you have to have multimedia skills to get a job as a photographer at a newspaper. More and more content is being put online."

To be successful in the media industry students need to be creative.

"Be creative, come up with new ideas," said De Sisti. "It's like the Wild West out there. People are just waiting for something, someone to come up with a new idea that is going to work in spreading news and information."

Stewart gives lesson on sports writing

By Jon Feyen
Journalism Student

The Wisconsin Badgers beat writer at the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel said his co-workers refer to the sports wing of the newspaper as the "toy department" because he gets to have all the fun.

"I get paid to travel all over and watch guys shoot a basket," said Mark Stewart while speaking at the 2008 NEWSPA conference.

Stewart started working at the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel in 1992 and began covering the Wisconsin football and basketball teams in 2000. He said he doesn't mind following the team on road trips, including one the basketball team took to the Virgin Islands this past December.

With all of the traveling he does, Stewart said he makes sure he always has his laptop computer, notebook, cell phone and tape recorder with him. "Everywhere is my office," he said.

Stewart keeps up with all of today's technology, including the Internet. He said that in today's world, there is no longer a news cycle because people don't wait for the paper to come. Stewart added, "The Internet has turned the journalism world upside down."

Mark Stewart

Stewart said that online journalism makes it tougher to come up with fresh ideas.

"The Internet forces me to be more creative and more secretive. You have to stand out," Stewart said. "It's not how well you write, it's what stories you get."

A close relationship with the players and coaches is essential to finding stories that other writers can't come up with. He said that the best sources tell you more if you have a good rapport with them. "There's a great story on every team. You just have to find it," said Stewart.

Finding a human element in each article is the key to being a sportswriter. Stewart said giving a story personality is important because in the end, "It's all about the people."

Sports are good theater and he likes the controversial topics because those stories usually write themselves.

"The beauty of sports writing is that many people can have many different interpretations of the same game," Stewart said.

Most importantly, Stewart pointed out, writers have to be versatile. He told a story from his early years when he had to cover the beauty pageant at a pork festival. If a writer has the ability to cover varying events, it makes them more attractive to potential employers.

"It's not about what you learn in school," he said. "It's the experiences that you get."

Pabst: Find sources impacted by issues

By Mariah Haberman
Journalism Student

The United States is rapidly transforming into a cluster of citizens from around the world and this change affects the newspaper business as much as any other business, said a reporter who is a third generation Mexican-American.

Georgia Pabst, a reporter from the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel, spoke to students during the NEWSPA conference to stress the importance of incorporating minorities into newspapers.

Just take a look at the presidential race, said Pabst. Racial changes are evident, especially now that 40-something, white males are no longer the only presidential nominees.

Still, there's clearly a lack of representation of minorities. The typical case in which Latinos appear in articles is what Pabst brands a "piñata" story. A "piñata" story is one in which a reporter writes about things most Americans are already aware of.

If newspapers are reporting redundant information, they're probably not seeking diverse sources for their stories either.

> "Everyone has a story to tell. If you talk to someone long enough, you will find their story."
>
> *- Georgia Pabst*

"Journalists often fall into the trap of going to the same source," said Pabst. It's easy to go to a definite source that will give information and a good quote or two.

But why not venture a little further to find a source that is directly affected by American issues? These sources, argued Pabst, will often be minority groups.

By and large, it's what the reporter brings to the story that makes it special and different. Pabst also warns to not forget the fun. Although a lot of the newspaper industry is serious, fun is an essential factor too.

Pabst wanted students to know that they should seek stories that involve an array of racial groups. They should be unique and out of the ordinary.

"Everyone has a story to tell. If you talk to someone long enough, you will find their story," said Pabst.

Session leader attends ASNE institute

By Jessica Rickert
PR Assistant

Sometimes even teachers benefit from going back to school.

Spring 2008 NEWSPA conference session leader Kay Huxford, an English teacher at Green Bay West High School, was one of the 136 instructors from 39 states to complete the American Society of Newspaper Editors Reynolds High School Institute in July.

Kay Huxford

The institute is a tool for high school journalism advisers to learn more about effective ways to help their students to create optimum publications.

"In some ways, it emphasized the need for good, direct writing. Whether in paper or online, readers want information immediately, and need it delivered in an organized and yet entertaining fashion," Huxford said in an e-mail interview.

In addition to learning about journalistic trends, educators also learned about the level of involvement necessary to advise students in creating their own publications.

"I'd say I just need to let go of the reigns more often. As an adviser, my role is to oversee, but not to create. I must guide, but not edit or direct," Huxford said.

Would she recommend the program to other educators?

"YES, YES, YES!" said Huxford.

"The portfolio of work we compiled and the project we completed with others gave me experience I needed to act as a leader for my students."

Newspaper professionals and journalism leaders supplemented university faculty at each institute, adding a variety of perspectives and experiences to the education experience.

The institutes annually take place at five university journalism schools across the nation. Huxford attended the institute at Kent State University in Ohio. She received academic credit, and all expenses were covered through a Reynolds grant.

Her involvement in the institute benefits Green Bay West High School as well. The school received numerous subscriptions to various media outlets, as well as contributions to a journalism library.

Huxford will be leading a session at the 2009 NEWSPA conference. In her session, she will discuss the necessity of publication policies, staff manuals and codes and contracts.

"If we wish to raise generations of informed and capable youth, we need to offer them the tools and necessary support necessary," Huxford said. "I know that journalism is one of those tools."

Want to apply?

Does the ASNE Reynolds High School Institue sound like something you'd be interested in attending?

Then go to their Web site — http://hsj.org/Content.cfm?id=3 — to find out more. Information about the 2008 sessions is currently posted, but it should be updated shortly about the 2009 program.

Cummings joins NEWSPA board

By Alyssa Volkman
Journalism Assistant

Jason Cummings is a North Star adviser working for the English Department of Oshkosh North High School. He plans to bring a fresh perspective to NEWSPA.

Cummings, an Oshkosh native, wasn't quite sure what he wanted to do for a living, but one thing was for certain: he wanted to work with people that he could help.

In college, he loved his English classes and decided he wanted to teach.

This is his third year teaching sophomore English at the high school he graduated from. He loves his job because the students are great and the job is challenging.

There is nothing better than helping kids grow academically and mentally, he said.

His fondest memory was when a student came back to thank him for treating her the way he did. She was a junior in his freshman English class and was present for a third of the year.

Jason Cummings

When she did show up, Cummings told her what she missed and put the responsibility on her to catch up. The student enrolled at the alternative high school and was able to graduate on time.

"To know that we teachers have this kind of influence is why we teach," he said. "It's so exciting working with kids; you never know what the day will hold or when you will realize the effect you have on your students."

Other board changes include the return of Lauren Alfonsi, yearbook adviser at Port Washington High School, and Trent Scott, newspaper adviser and English teacher at Oshkosh West High School. They will both do another three-year term.

Dawn Hogue receives Zacher award

By Kasey Thompson
PR Assistant

Photo by Megan Sheridan

Dawn Hogue speaks to advisers as Judy Schultz presents the Zacher Award.

Oshkosh just can't seem to get rid of Dawn Hogue, and NEWSPA officials are glad about that.

Hogue attended her first NEWSPA conference in the spring of 1990 and has not missed one since.

At the 2008 conference, Hogue received the Skip Zacher Friend of Scholastic Journalism Award. Every year this award honors someone who has made significant contributions to NEWSPA.

Hogue served on the NEWSPA board from 1994 to 2000 and 2003 to 2004. She was board president from 2004 to 2006.

At Sheboygan Falls High School, Hogue has advised the school yearbook for 18 years and was the school newspaper adviser on and off for six years.

"I fully believe in NEWSPA's vision," said Hogue. "I loved it from the start, all those kids mingling and talking about their newspapers and yearbooks."

While attending Lakeland College, Hogue was the editor of the student newspaper, *The Mirror*, for two years.

"There aren't many opportunities for student journalists to network with their peers, and the spring conference provides that for them," said Hogue, who thinks that journalism is a thriving field that students should consider for their careers.

"These days, there are so many different ways to take a journalism career," said Hogue. "It is exciting for students."

Through NEWSPA, Hogue helped redesign the yearbook judging form and suggested that there be a table at the conference for students to share their publications.

Hogue also pushed for NEWSPA to have a greater presence on the Web.

"Everyone who serves on the board impacts NEWSPA in a positive way through their energy and ideas," Hogue said. "It's really a group effort."

> "Everyone who serves on the board impacts NEWSPA in a positive way."
>
> *-Dawn Hogue*
> *Award winner*

Since becoming an adviser at Sheboygan Falls, Hogue has been bringing her yearbook and newspaper staffs to NEWSPA every year.

"It is part of our yearbook and newspaper culture now, and I am proud of that," said Hogue.

NEWSPA board members clearly realized Hogue's pride for journalism by giving her the Zacher award.

"She's been an adviser for many years," said Judy Schultz, academic department associate at UW Oshkosh and 2007 recipient of the Zacher award. "She's always there and willing to help us."

"The Zacher award says to me that my interest in and my efforts toward helping student journalists in what ever way I could over the years was appreciated," said Hogue. "Who doesn't love to be appreciated?"

Past winners

2001 - Ron Harrell
Oshkosh North High School

2002 - Dale Yakaites
Marshfield High School

2003 - Dave Wiegand
Wausau West High School

2004 - Kim McCollum
Plymouth High School

2005 - Heather Vande Sande
Cedarburg High School

2006 - Bob Esler
Sheboygan

2007 - Judy Schultz
Oshkosh

2008 - Dawn Hogue
Sheboygan Falls High School

Hansen: Convergence affects us daily

By Samantha Marx
Journalism Student

Web 2.0, viral advertising and widgets. These terms are just some examples of the evolving media that once consisted solely of television and print news.

Sara Hansen, a keynote speaker at the spring conference, teaches about media as an adjunct professor at the University of Wisconsin Oshkosh and is pursuing a Ph.D in interactive media at the University of Wisconsin School of Journalism and Mass Communication.

"We're all individuals in this culture and society, and convergence is affecting our daily lives," Hansen said.

Hansen explained that a news article may traditionally have words and a picture, but with convergence, reporters tell the news with video, mini blogs and links as well.

To express the term "convergence" to her audience of mostly high school students, she showed a popular video called "Shoes," by comedian Liam Kyle Sullivan.

The video caught major attention on YouTube, where Kelly, a comedic character of Sullivan, professes her love for shoes. The video has been viewed more than 15 million times, according to Hansen.

"You're going to see the convergence lived out by Kelly, by people who watch Kelly, people who are fans of Kelly and how that happened," Hansen said.

All different kinds of media have taken advantage of the popularity of the video, Hansen said. Truman State University in Missouri had Sullivan appear and perform different skits, which was broadcast on their campus television station as well as the Internet. "Kelly" can be seen in the MTV virtual world, and many different social networking sites have links to the "Kelly" videos.

These platforms for convergence, such as blogs, virtual worlds, YouTube, MySpace and Facebook were just some of the types of new media the students were familiar with, but what was less familiar was their hidden purpose.

Photo by Megan Sheridan

Sara Hansen shows students examples of convergence during her keynote speech.

For example, Hansen said that the videos students may find humorous and may forward on to friends are really a form of advertising an underlying product. According to emarketers.com, $1.6 billion is spent on social networking advertising, which may not even include viral advertisements.

"People have to think critically about the media choices in front of them and how content is being served up," Hansen said. "And when you see someone dressed up like Kelly, you have to ask, 'Are they trying to get me to forward this e-mail that also has a link to an ad?'"

Although this rapid improvement in technology may seem exciting, it may also create gaps between different age groups, Hansen said.

Port Washington High School senior Allison Gerrits understands that she is a part of the media, whether it is creating it or being the target of it.

"Everything you do everyday is a part of the media," Gerrits said. "It's all around us, with TV and news and the Internet and music."

Along with the new platforms and content, also comes an expectation from the younger generation.

"I think knowing how to reach people, even with Facebook and our friends, is a big part of how the word gets out," Gerrits said.

People want to know right away things that are happening in a crisis situation, and Web 2.0 has allowed this to happen, with videos being sent in from people all around the world to hard news sites, Hansen said.

"You have a chance to actually provide images and information thanks to the technology that's available. That can influence what our society sees and understands," Hansen said.

Convergence can create many opportunities for future journalists, and Hansen said that all students need to do is draw on knowledge from people in the field, and find their own talents and interests, but still be critical as a consumer.

"When you think critically you see content and how it is sent to you, but you need to think about the motives of the institutions involved, the technology providers involved, and the people in your network," Hansen said. "Embrace what you know about convergence for smart participation in society and creation of new media."

Capturing the Conference

Photos by Megan Sheridan

Want to see your photos here and on the NEWSPA Web site?

This spring, students can write about and take pictures of the conference. To see them online, e-mail them to news-pa@uwosh.edu.

Students receive candy during Grammar Smackdown.

Participate

Pulaski High School students present a session during the 2008 NEWSPA conference.

Learn

Justin Zyduck of the Oshkosh Northwestern talks to students during his session.

A high school student receives an award for her work.

Get Recognized

Tayler Overschmidt receives scholarship through NEWSPA.

Learn

Students listen to the keynote speaker during the conference.

Participate

Students work together to answer grammar questions during the Grammar Smackdown session.

A team anxiously waits for the next question during the Grammar Smackdown session.

Lisa Anderson receives an award through NEWSPA.

Get Recognized

A student receives one of many awards at the 2008 conference.

Northeastern Wisconsin Scholastic Press Association NEWSPA and Department of Journalism, University of Wisconsin-Oshkosh

2008-2009 Board Members

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Warrior's Word (newspaper) & Aurora (yearbook)
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Trent Scott (2011)
Index (newspaper)
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