SMALL/MEDIUM MARKET MODELS OF NEWSPAPER AND BROADCASTING CONVERGENCE IN THE MIDWEST

by

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A Thesis submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the requirements for the Masters of Science

Degree in Communication

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November 10, 2006

The University of Wisconsin-Whitewater

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Abstract

There is a large body of research on a recent movement in the news media referred to as convergence. This practice of sharing resources between media organizations takes many forms and is found in major markets. Research has, so far, given little attention to convergence models being put in place in smaller markets. This qualitative analysis uses interviews to examine various models for implementing and operating convergence between newspaper and broadcast newsrooms at three organizations in the Midwest. Interviews and site visits with managers at converged sites uncovered training challenges and the problems of overcoming cultural differences between newsrooms. An analysis using diffusion theory helps show how smaller markets prove to be a fertile testing ground for newsroom convergence because of their size, versatility, and need to economize resources. This study recommends increased small market convergence efforts and ways large markets can emulate small market management conditions by centralizing management of a converged newsroom in order to create a flexible and successful convergence model.

Small/Medium Market Models of Newspaper and Broadcasting Convergence in the Midwest

The newsrooms of broadcast and newspaper organizations are increasingly likely to be in partnership with other news organizations in their locality. These resources-sharing partnerships are referred to in research and the industry as convergence. In 2003, an estimated 52 newspapers in the United States had partnered with television stations (Dotinga, 2003). A nationwide survey of 72 newspaper editors in 2005 found 29% had a partnership with a television newsroom. More importantly, the survey also showed newsroom convergence was happening at all circulation levels (Demo, 2005, p. 18). This suggests convergence is possible in any media market. An examination of research on convergence shows a focus on large market examples of newsroom convergence models. There are small and medium market examples of newsroom convergence in various markets across the United States, and this thesis examined some examples from the Midwest to find some practical measures of implementation, operation, and goal achievement.

No two media groups form the same type of convergence (Quinn, 2005b, p. 19). This leaves open many variables for how convergence models can be developed, which is why this examination is qualitative in nature. For the sake of this study, there is a focus on newspapers working with broadcasters. This is because this is where you find the greatest cultural challenges between news staffs. Stereotyping between broadcast and print staffs can be strong given the fact that they have been culturally trained to see the other and their competitor (Singer, 2004).

The results of this study suggest newsroom convergence has a better change of succeeding if the companies participating in the arrangement are flexible about implementation. Further, smaller market examples of convergence may be more successful because of the flexibility inherent in smaller news companies. There may also be ways for a larger market company to successfully implement convergence by increasing flexibility and minimizing the issues of reporters' compensation, training, and cultural differences between newsrooms through the centralization of management.

Literature Review

There are many forces pushing the media industry towards convergence. Shrinking audiences and audiences who change their news consumption habits alter market forces among media groups (DeMars, 2004). The Internet has fragmented audiences into niche markets, prompting local media companies to attempt to retain what is left of their audiences in a market filled with alternative new technologies (Quinn, 2005a). Consumer demand also drives a need to feed an ever-growing number of media services for new technologies, including mobile communication devices.

Advances in news delivery because of new technology are driving new market paradigms. New technologies are stretching the traditional news cycles for print and broadcast to 24 hours. Audiences are no longer waiting for their morning papers to find out what is happening in the world because of the availability of the Internet and wireless news sources. This is forcing newspapers and broadcasters to use other technologies to reach their news consumers (More media...…," 2003). News consumers are now more active in becoming their own gate-keepers. New technology allows audiences to tailor information consumption based on their own needs and desires (Bulla, 2002). Media companies are monitoring this change in the marketplace, and convergence is viewed as a way for them to reach a more sophisticated audience through the creation of more comprehensive news coverage (Bulla, 2002).

Some in the media believe convergence is necessary because the audience is already converged, in the sense that they are using multiple media and devices to get their news (More media...," 2003). Quinn (2005b) writes, "Customers only care about what news and information they receive, not how they receive it" (p. 74). So, the philosophy for many converged newsrooms is that they want to be there with news and information whenever and however the customers want it. Consumer demands can be met through convergence efforts. This means using immediate media, like television, radio, or the Internet, to disseminate breaking news (Thelen, 2000). News organizations that are not the source of the fastest and most accurate information will find themselves open to competition (Safran, 2005). Of convergence, Quinn (2005a) writes, "It also protects an organization's journalistic franchise in the sense that multiple-platform publishing – increasingly a preferred phrase for the more nebulous term 'convergence' – allows wider coverage of an area and permits cross-marketing of a single product" (p. 30).

For some news organizations, convergence is viewed more as a means for survival than a force for advancement in media dominance. Quinn (2005b) connects convergence to media survivability by suggesting that the ability to reach the widest audience possible in such a fragmented market could mean life or death for an organization. As in many other facets of the capitalist economy, Quinn suggests the customer needs to be placed first. For many organizations, this leads to the conclusion that convergence is the answer to protecting a media market.

There are many different ways media organizations approach the idea of convergence, which ultimately leads to many different convergence models. In a survey by Duhe (2004), television news directors were asked to review a list of characteristics and mark all those they felt applied to their own definition of convergence. Of those who responded, 77 percent defined convergence as the sharing of news content with another medium within their own news organizations. Sixty-five percent defined convergence as the sharing of news content with other news organizations. Sixty-two percent said sharing of staff, both technical and talent, was a part of the definition of convergence. The same number of respondents chose “promoting of other media for which you produce content or receive content from” (p.92) as part of their definition of convergence. Forty-one percent reported that “the use of one fully integrated newsroom that acts as an information pool for all forms of media” as their definition of convergence (Duhe, p. 92). Researchers have their own ideas for the different ways convergence can be defined as well. Technology is a central factor for Lawson-Borders (2003), who suggests that convergence is the “realm of possibilities” (p.92) brought about when print and broadcast newsrooms work together to deliver their content through new multimedia formats.

Jenkins (2001) breaks the definition of convergence down in a number of different ways. Like Lawson-Borders, Jenkins highlights technology as one of the key issues to examine. He believes the digitization of news content is the fundamental reason the content is instantly relatable to new technologies. The digital format allows information to flow more freely because of the numerous ways it can be transmitted. But Jenkins also considers convergence from a social viewpoint. He points to the increased societal interest in the concept of multitasking and how that relates to the new information environment generated by new technologies. He also refers to this as organic convergence, which is what happens when media consumers gravitate towards getting media products in multiple formats simultaneously. There is also "cultural convergence," which Jenkins defines as the new ability of news consumers to not only customize their own consumption, but also their creative ability to produce their own content available to the rest of the world via media like the Internet. Media companies can use this cultural change to harness consumer loyalty and generate low-cost content. Jenkins says the multiple media generated by new technologies allows for new forms of storytelling which can involve media consumers, instead of making the consumer a simple end-user. Finally, Jenkins says the economic possibilities presented by the concept of convergence are attractive to companies, especially major media conglomerates. This issue also begins to relate to issues of media ownership and monopolies.

When examining how media managers or researchers define convergence, it becomes clear that there is no single and unified definition of convergence. This makes the research of convergence difficult to quantify. Dailey, Demo, and Spillman (2005) believe there are no "behavior-based definitions of convergence" (p.150) and also no instruments to measure convergence efforts. They believe this is hindering the ability to properly research convergence and draw accurate conclusions from comparisons of various convergence models. This, in turn, is making it harder for media companies to learn more about industry trends and make proper decisions about what might work best for their company. Dailey et al. (2005) have developed what they call the "convergence continuum," which is a scale of ways to define convergence that will be used in this thesis to try to categorize the various small market convergence models into a single scale.

In addition to debating how to define convergence, there is also rich debate about the merits of convergence. There are, for example, concerns about the impact convergence has on journalistic integrity. Tompkins (2002) says reporters who have to appear on TV, write a story for the newspaper, and create a post for the website will have less time to double check facts and generate new stories. While it is possible to ask for this type of work to be completed, Singer (2003a) notes that the result is often mediocre journalism. She suggests journalists be kept to working on the tasks for which they are trained. A survey conducted by Singer (2003b) shows great concern among reporters that upper management will not understand these tradeoffs. Huang, Rademakers, Fayemiwo, and Dunlap (2004) echo these concerns by suggesting that opponents of convergence worry about the quality of journalism when reporters are not allowed to focus on producing materials for a single medium and are spreading their responsibilities across multiple platforms. It is worth noting that a content analysis of one example of convergence in Tampa, Florida shows no negative effects on news story quality or quantity (Singer, 2004, p. 839). This concern about journalistic quality is extended to issues of newsroom economics if media companies put too much focus on using convergence efforts to save money rather than to improve service to the community.

More concerns about convergence arise when the issues of media ownership are discussed.

There are also numerous positive outcomes of convergence identified by researchers, some of which even answer concerns about a news organization's service to the community. Gromley (1976) says the public interest can be served through some cooperation. The example he provides is that if one reporter helps another correct important facts in a story, the public is well served. But more broadly, convergence can help shift the ownership of news information from the newsroom to the consumer (Tompkins & Colon, 2000). Many converged organizations view it as their mission to provide news in as many technological formats as possible so news consumers can access it in any way they want. A story on multiple formats has a wider reach and greater impact (Quinn, 2005b). Furthermore, the partnership of print and broadcast media helps broadcasters who want to tell a dramatic story within the ever-shrinking amount of broadcast time available due to pressures for more advertisements (Jessell, 2000). Print reporters have the space to tell these stories in a format that is better suited so the story need not be abbreviated for the audience (Schudson, 2003).

The news organization itself also benefits from convergence through the increased volume and quality of news products (Huang, Rademakers, Fayemiwo, Dunlap, 2004). The higher volume of news is especially true for broadcasters in convergence arrangements because of the considerable news gathering power newspapers typically bring into a convergence agreement (More media...," 2003). There is also more information about individual stories available to more reporters under convergence, which can mean higher quality stories for the news consumer (More media...," 2003). Journalism itself can be expected to improve under convergence, and improved journalism should be one of the goals going in, according to Quinn (2005b). Tompkins & Colon (2000) say converged organizations can become the information powerhouse in their market.

Ethical issues can frequently come up in a newsroom setting when it comes to ideas on whether to run a story or how to present a story. This too can be affected by convergence, according to Davis and Craft (2000). Under convergence, they believe a journalist's everyday decision-making process gets further removed from the office of the highest editors and this further separation helps to diffuse ethical issues. The assumption is that reporters have more independence with what they write under convergence because their oversight might be less than it was otherwise, freeing them from some level of institutional bias. This, of course does not eliminate a reporter's individual bias, but this does suggests convergence creates more independent reporters who are freer to make decisions on how to tell a story.

One of the major criticisms of convergence surrounds the issues that are raised when an owner who controls all media interests in a single market decides to converge. Researchers of convergence on a national corporate scale have raised concerns about a small number of media owners stifling a diversity of voices and advocating for the status quo. Major media mergers have called into question the credibility of some media organizations (Bagdikian, 2000; Compaine and Gomery, 2000; McChesney, 1999). Those questioning the credibility of merged companies believe too much editorial power is being consolidated among an ever-shrinking number of media owners. This perceived lack of diversity can have a homogenizing affect on the media's output, including its news output. Haiman (2001) is one of the skeptics. While he believes convergence may be good for business, he also believes convergence will distract journalists from their mission of keeping the community informed. This is based on concerns about journalists becoming more restricted by time and ethical pressures. Corrigan (2004) presents a hypothesis which holds that converged newsrooms create more work for news reporters, thereby giving them less time to stir up controversy. He claims that this plays into the hands of the media owners whose monopoly is at risk of being exposed. While the consumer's impression of these ownership situations is of paramount concern, Coulson and Lacy (1996) found many of the skeptics were actually working in newsrooms. They found newspaper journalists who believe competition – not convergence - promotes higher-quality news and more diversity of opinion. Their survey of reporters also found competition promotes sensationalism in news coverage.

Cross-ownership can be a strong reason for an organization to push for convergence on a local scale (Nerone, 2003). This is one of the reasons media owners are pushing lawmakers for a lifting of the so-called cross-ownership ban implemented in 1975 (Landers, 2001). Consumer groups fighting this possible change say that the status quo does a better job of preserving diversity in who selects and reports on local news. While these groups would prefer to see even more diversity than currently exists in the media, they defend the existing law because they are perceived as better than a relaxation of the cross-ownership rules. Repealing the ban will leave Americans at the mercy of fewer and bigger companies, these critics say (Landers, 2001).

There are others who argue that cross-ownership can be helpful for a local media company. Quinn (2005b) says a single owner makes management easier. In the case of a converged organization in Tampa, Florida, print, broadcast, and Internet cross-ownership helped remove serious roadblocks and aided in top-down support of the convergence model. In another case of single ownership convergence in Lawrence, Kansas, the single owner saw the arrangement as a way to serve the community by pooling their resources to produce a better news product (Quinn, 2005b). The FCC Chairman Michael Powell argued convergence could be good for journalism by creating more efficient coverage of local events. He thinks the coverage could be better than if it was covered by two different organizations individually (Landers, 2001).

In the end, the issue of cross-ownership may lie in the court of public opinion. Tompkins (2002) says we should not be surprised that the public is suspicious of media partnerships. He segregates the benefits of convergence between the benefits for the audience and the benefits for the company. He says the customers do not necessarily benefit from the cross-promotion which results from such an arrangement, although the company can. He says that while cross-promotion may boost readership or ratings, it does not necessarily end with the customer getting any additional or improved information. Tompkin’s conclusion is that the public will reject convergence if it is not about producing better journalism. There are fears among some cross-ownership companies practicing convergence that the public will grow concerned about a single owner controlling news content in a local market. Davis and Craft (2000) suggest that those companies concerned about the impressions left by cross-ownership should deal with the situation by expressly advertising their partnerships as a matter of full disclosure.

There is evidence to suggest that media organizations under cross-ownership are better equipped to experiment with convergence, but there is also evidence that it is not necessary for convergence to happen. Demo (2005) writes, “Because the early adopters and high-profile practitioners of television-newspaper partnerships tend to have common ownership, some people concluded convergence required corporate bloodlines. Not so. Of the 108 editors who reported having partnerships, 86.8 percent said they and their partner have separate owners” (p. 18).

While researchers have examined the concept of convergence, they have not paid much exclusive attention to smaller market examples of convergence. A survey of North American TV news directors suggests convergence is not happening in the smaller markets to the degree it is happening in the larger markets. Duhe (2004) found a statistically significant relationship (0.012) between experiences with convergence and market size. It should be noted that in this study, nine in ten news directors said they were practicing convergence, even though Duhe says many cases might be better defined as “cooperation” with other media organizations. Despite the lack of research, Quinn (2005a), points out that in the United States, convergence is more likely to involve a daily newspaper partnering with a local television channel than other configurations involving radio, television, and newspapers. Some researchers suggest smaller markets should be used as a sort of research and development lab for convergence. Killebrew (2002) suggests this would be a logical move for those interested in convergence. He says convergence in smaller markets should be investigated vigorously because of the division and antipathy the issue creates in larger markets.

Newsroom convergence can take on many different appearances. Singer (2003a) writes:

> Processes and outcomes vary widely among the dozens of markets in which the concept is being explored. For some, convergence emphasizes information sharing. For others, it involves newspaper reporters taping a voice-over for a newscast, or television reporters phoning in breaking news details to update a Web site (p.3).

This point is further illustrated through surveys of news executives. In a survey conducted by Demo (2005), 16 percent of news editors never share stories, 44.3 percent are selective in sharing, 17 percent share most stories but request that they run some stories before their partner runs them, 12.3 percent share most stories but hold back stories on which they have a competitive advantage over their partner, and 10.4 percent share everything (Demo, 2005, p. 19). Demo writes that the results show confusion about what convergence is and how to implement it. As mentioned earlier, a survey of television news directors shows that 90 percent are practicing convergence, but the survey results show a great divergence in what these convergence arrangements look like. It is this confusion that led Dailey et al. (2005) to develop the “continuum” to help categorize convergence models into a five stage scale. This scale was developed using past research and information from the industry to determine ways convergence could be behaviorally categorized.

The "continuum" developed as a behavior-based model scale which considers the actual practices happening in a news convergence arrangement. The five stages of convergence in the continuum are cross-promotion, cloning, coopetition [*sic*], content sharing, and full convergence. Dailey et. al. (2005) writes, "their placement on a continuum provides the flexibility researchers need to identify and measure the varying degrees of cooperation and interaction demonstrated by each organization's staff members as they work with their partners to develop and promote news stories" (p. 153).

The left side of the model (cross-promotion and cloning) suggests newsroom gatekeepers will continue working as they did before convergence, as opposed to those on the right side of the model who must agree on their news values and recognize their service to a single audience. This change in the role of the gatekeepers also applies to the routines of journalists. Under arrangements on the left side of the model, routines will remain the same, and will change the further you go down the right side of the scale.

At the left of the "continuum" is the "cross-promotion" stage. In this stage, cooperating media organizations simply promote each others' content through words or visual elements. This can include all media, but does not include any collusion on news stories or news treatment. This measure can include the placement of the publishing or broadcasting of a cooperating organizations' logo on a regular basis, verbal promotion on the air, suggesting the audience take advantage of exclusive material being offered by their partner, brief appearances by partnering reporters to promote stories, and news meetings focused on the best ways to promote the news product across media (Dailey, et. al., 2005, p. 155).

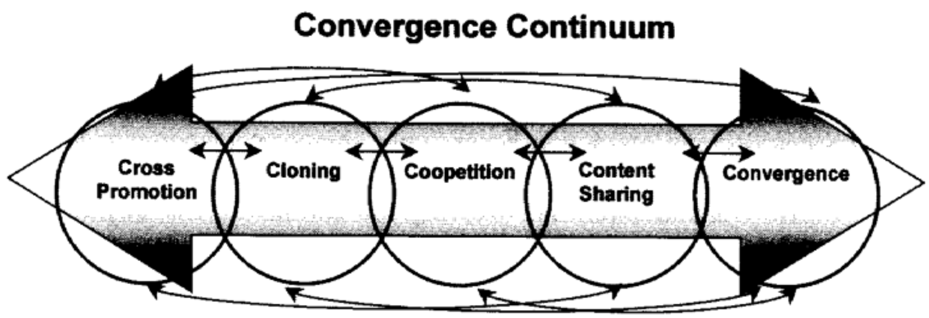

Figure 1. Convergence Continuum shows the range of appearances convergence can take when its behavior be being measured (Dailey et. al, 2005, p. 153).

Cross-promotion is seen by Quinn (2005a), as a cost-effective way to market media partners. Newspapers can expand their brand recognition on the air through cross-promotion of stories being presented in upcoming publications and broadcasters can become regular features in publications through content like editorials and weather forecasts (Ketterer, Weir, Smethers, and Back, 2004). Cross-promotion must be used cautiously however, according to Quinn. He notes some consumers find cross-promotion annoying, so it has to be used selectively.

To the right of "cross-promotion" on the "continuum" is "cloning." Dailey et. al. (2005) define this as republishing of the partner's news product with little editing. Information is shared between news partners, but not until after it has been collected and completed. Some activities to look for in categorizing this practice would be posting of the partner's content on a shared website or their own website or sharing a main website while also maintaining separate identities on the Internet (p. 155).

At the center of the "continuum," news organizations both cooperate and compete, which is why Dailey et. al. (2005) refers to it as "coopetition" [*sic*] (p.153). At this stage, news partners share and promote only some of the stories they are working on, but cultural differences between newsrooms remain a large hurtle to full cooperation and interaction. News partners at this stage will show a continued desire to compete. In the "coopetition" [*sic*] stage, researchers will likely find newspaper staff spending time on the air expanding upon a specific story, television reporters broadcasting from a newspaper newsroom, the sharing of resources, and the sharing of some limited content if the partner organization was unable to attend a news event (p. 155). Researchers could also find news staff sharing only selected stories (instead of the full line-up), questioning the quality of the partner's work, concerns that the partner does not value a newsroom's content as much as it should, and worry about viewer erosion if the news partners work too closely (p. 156).

In the "content sharing" stage of the "convergence continuum," media partners regularly share and repackage information for their own media. There may also be cooperation on special, investigative, or enterprise pieces. Partners may share news budgets and planning sessions. Ultimately, the newsrooms remain autonomous. Dailey et. al. (2005) say newsrooms at this stage will meet regularly to exchange ideas, provide feedback to each other, share the cost of special projects, and coordinate the release of special projects or investigations (p. 156).

At the far right side of the “continuum” is “full convergence,” which is when news partners cooperate in both gathering and disseminating news. The organizations work together to tell stories in the best way using the media available. Reporters from all newsrooms will work together to plan, report, and produce a story. Under full convergence one would likely find a common assignment desk and manager overseeing the news process. The manager is likely responsible for finding the most effective way to cover a story using all media available. There may also be teams formed to produce stories for multiple formats (p. 156). Under “full convergence” one may also find multimedia reporters who are trained to produce stories for all media involved in the partnership (Dailey et. al, 2005, p. 158). This form of convergence is often the most expensive, according to Quinn (2005b).

There are two benefits the “convergence continuum” provides, according to Dailey et. al. (2005). First, the “continuum” provides media managers considering convergence a series of options on a sliding scale. This will help media managers realize there is more than one way to approach convergence. Second, the scale can be used to help illustrate to reporters that they need not feel that they are the only ones puzzled by the concept of convergence. This allows greater trust and transparency between staff members at the onset of convergence efforts, and, consequently, better buy-in by staff.

Apart from measuring convergence, Dailey et. al. (2005) say the "convergence continuum" also serves as a measure of diffusion. They write, "The Convergence Continuum could be especially useful in identifying – in real time – how media organizations move through the stages as they adopt different behaviors that lead from one level on the continuum to the next" (p. 24). This view of the "continuum" suggests that each of the stages in the "continuum" are not a static end, but rather a step on the way to something closer to full convergence. Under this assumption, news organizations may undergo some level of convergence, but will not stop the diffusion of innovation until full convergence is achieved.

Each example of convergence being studied or implemented is unique not only in its place on the "convergence continuum" but also in the methods employed by management to oversee convergence efforts. Before convergence can even get off the ground, management has to buy in to the plan. Tompkins (2002) notes how, in some companies, there is a drive to push convergence between newsrooms of different formats with no communication of why this is something all staff should be interested in taking part in or what the end result will look like. Before making the decision to converge newsrooms, there are a number of factors stakeholders, managers, and owners need to examine to determine what impact their decisions might have on their corporate structure, credibility, and consumers. Quinn (2005b) writes, "The move must come from the top, which means that managers must lead by example, by attending training courses themselves" (p.154). Grant (2004) reinforces the need for management to lead the training effort. Because writing across media can be difficult to master, Grant says managers and editors need to be present to guide the training process. Managers must lead the effort, and must lead it by doing. It is still worth noting, however, that management buy-in is merely one of several prerequisites for convergence. Convergence additionally means having to win over the employees (Dotinga, 2003). Killebrew (2002) says management setting the stage for convergence means a reduction in anxiety for reporters and other employees. Getting managers involved in the process of planning convergence also reduces their own anxiety about the changes and increases their optimism about its success (Lowrey, 2005). It may also help implementation of convergence if there are champions for the cause among the managers leading the effort. There is evidence that the existence of opinion-leaders to put a face on efforts for change in an organization is one of the factors that can influence the innovation's rate of adoption (Rogers, 1983).

Once management is on board with the idea of convergence, there is the question of what convergence ought to look like. One aspect of this is how it is managed and whether or not the partnership should be led by a central editorial figure. This job position is titled in various places, "newsflow editor," "news flow manager," and "chief information officer." Whatever the title, this person is the overseer of how news enters a converged news organization and how it gets disseminated to the public. Quinn (2005b) says this manager is "like an executive producer with helicopter vision who oversaw all stories in all the media, ensuring that individual stories received whatever resources they needed" (p.91). In some cases, this person is also involved in hiring and budget-making (Fisher, 2005). LoCicero (2004) explains that this person is responsible for information management, accessibility, sharing, archiving, and retrieval. He compares the person to a librarian who can get the right piece of information at the right time using multiple information sources. He also sees the manager as an "enforcer" who embodies the mission of convergence to resistant reporters.

In other cases, there is no central convergence manager. At the converged newsroom in Tampa, Florida, each newsroom is managed independently and the convergence happens without a manager (Carr, 2002). In another case, an eight-member board oversees convergence (Dotinga, 2003). There are few conclusions drawn about which management style works the best, but this study examined small to medium market convergence to see if there was any consensus on this issue.

Once a management organization structure is established, planners must then decide how news will flow in a converged format. There are numerous ways to accomplish this and the growth of the Internet as an information source is adding new dynamics to the mix. In fact, most news organizations consider the Internet a major part of their convergence strategies. When considering instant access to information, the Internet can be just as important an outlet as television (More media...," 2003). In the case of the Tampa convergence model, the Internet is a primary media outlet:

> On breaking stories, like a hurricane, you immediately want reporters assigned to the Web. That's their job for the duration. They're like the old-fashioned wire reporter. They are sitting there all day long taking

> feeds from reporters everywhere. You need someone there who's a good, fast writer. ("Media General…," 2006, p. 39)

In Tampa, normal story dissemination involves informing the other media in the partnership of a news story once it is verified and legitimized. The newsrooms maintain autonomy and can deicide how they want to approach a story, or if they want to report it at all. Reporters often attend the news meetings of other newsrooms in the group so they have an idea of what stories other media are taking up. There is also flexibility in how stories are handled. They are not always disseminated in the same ways. There may be collaboration, there may be cross-media appearances by reporters, or online reporters might get involved ("Media General," 2006). In another example, Journal Communications in Milwaukee, Wisconsin has simple phone and e-mail communications to both alert newsrooms to breaking stories and coordinate cross-promotional opportunities. A camera was also installed into the newspaper newsroom so reporters could be used as "experts" on television news reports (Kaiser, 2000). Credit is given to the newsroom which breaks a story and each newsroom maintains autonomy. These are just two examples of how information can flow through an organization. Much like the management models, information-flow varies greatly between organizations and this qualitative study reconciles examples in research with the sample sites to determine what the best practices might be.

With convergence, changes to the physical structure of the newsroom to better accommodate news flow may also be necessary. These changes can be important, not only for helping manage convergence, but also to serve as a symbolic change to indicate a company's commitment to the change. Quinn (2005b) says it also serves to instill trust among reporters and can even result in the generation of new story ideas. Fisher (2005) says many organizations create a convergence desk to oversee the transfer process. This is mostly to get reporters into the habit of thinking of multiple media formats when they are considering the treatment of a story. In Lawrence, Kansas, newspaper and television reporters work side by side around a central horseshoe-shaped news desk. A managing editor says this desk is part of the process of changing the mindset for reporters (Moses, 2001). The Tampa model includes not only a centralized news desk, but also a whole new building constructed around the idea of a converged newsroom. While writing about the Tampa example, Tompkins (2002) states that he believes converging newsrooms should be in the same building. He says a converged newsroom has to be on the same page so they can establish a uniform ethical policy their consumers can understand. These examples serve to show the range of possibilities that physical representations of convergence can take.

One of the primary issues brought up by reporters when convergence is proposed in a news organization is the issue of compensation. Converged newsrooms have struggled with this issue as they find ways to maintain profit margins while also wanting to enhance news products through convergence efforts. Bulla (2002) writes, "From the reporter's point of view, resistance to convergence comes from concern that he or she is being expected to present information in more than one media without appropriate compensation" (p. 459). In the Tampa, Florida example, the issue of reporter compensation was not addressed (Tompkins & Colon, 2000). In many cases, reporters are not getting paid more to contribute to new media, and some resent the extra workload (More media...," 2003). There are other ways reporters can benefit from convergence without increased pay, according to Singer (2002a). She writes that convergence can be a personal benefit to reporters once they realize the marketability they receive by taking part in it. Diversified training can help them land other jobs in the future and experience in convergence itself can be attractive to a potential employer who is interested in the concept.

A survey by Lowrey (2005) shows that lack of compensation is also a problem for managers in many instances. His findings show that perceived economic benefits significantly predict managers' attitudes, but perceived news coverage benefits do not. This suggests managers are still interested in their own bottom lines, despite their outward concerns about how convergence can help promote their service to the public. In any case, very little research exists on how to deal with this problematic issue.

Part of the challenge of implementing convergence is getting reporters on board with the concept and training them to the point of being able to perform in a converged environment. Singer (2004) found journalists saw convergence as a shrewd corporate move aimed at saving the company money, but also applauded their employer's decision to take the risk. Reporters are concerned about how their routines will change under convergence. In particular, print reporters are forced to begin thinking in terms of a 24-hour news cycle. The process of writing a short paragraph for TV or the Internet was less of a burden and more an annoyance, according to the survey. In fact, some reported that it helped them better establish a framework for the longer story when they began writing the story. In Tampa, reporters also worried about having to think about the immediate need for information the broadcast newsrooms require instead of taking time to think a story through (Huang, et. al., 2004). Carr (2002) points out that convergence can frighten reporters who are concerned about whether their talents will be enough to get them through the changes. Training can help alleviate some of these fears. Singer (2004) found that many reporters believe their employers did not spend enough time and money on making sure they are properly trained (p. 846).

Singer (2004) suggests that reporters pay careful attention to who is behind convergence and react more positively if they see the idea originating from people like them in the company, as opposed to disconnected managers. Some reporters admit that new demands on their talents can be reenergizing for them. Reporters referred to the new challenges as fun and mentally challenging. Reactions by reporters in a newsroom could vary widely between finding a new sense of urgency in their work to having grave concerns about their workload and the integrity of their stories after they are shared on a different medium.

A major hurtle identified by researchers on the topic of convergence is cultural differences. This refers to the differences between broadcast and print reporters. Quinn 2005b) provides an example: “Print people dismiss broadcast folk as shallow, seeing them as poor spellers who skate over the surface of events and write ‘headline news’” (p. 47). Part of this is fed by education. Singer (2004) suggests print reporters have been socialized to see television journalists as competitors, which created challenges when they were suddenly asked to work together.

The cultural misunderstandings can go both ways between newsrooms, so, part of the challenge in converging newsrooms is to get reporters past any stereotypes they might have about the other reporters. One way to do this, according to Quinn (2005b), is to point out to reporters that they share the same core values of informing the public, no matter what their media. Tompkins and Colon (2000) say another strategy is to have reporters spend time in each others' newsrooms to see how they operate. Quinn suggests that print journalists come to a better understanding of what it takes to be a broadcaster once they give it a try. Singer also found that print journalists, over time, came to realize that their television counterparts have substance. She also found that print journalists in converged settings may, in fact, be learning that broadcasters have the same news values as they do. Further, the survey suggests that print journalists come to appreciate the need that broadcasters fulfill in keeping the public informed in a 24-hour news cycle and realize the once-a-day audience is no longer sufficient to keep the public well-informed (p.850). However, Singer also found that convergence in some organizations means as little contact as possible between the reporters. In such cases, information sharing is done electronically or through a select group of people, leaving very few chances to get beyond cultural stereotypes between news reporters.

Apart from encouraging reporters to realize they share core values, there are some other training strategies can help managers get their reporters past cultural differences. Thelen (2000) outlines three steps used in the Tampa model. First, they got reporters to begin socializing in each others' newsrooms. In these meetings, they talked about their future newsroom arrangements and protocols for cooperation. Second, they opened up numerous lines of communication between the newsrooms, which included the creation of a newsletter to help expose reporters to their common goals and values. They also had small and large group meetings to talk about language, assignments, competition, and goals. Finally, there was extensive cross-training to get reporters familiar with the fundamentals of using the technology that the other newsroom reporters were operating on a daily basis. Within these three steps used in Tampa are a number of ideas for how managers can get the process of converging newsroom reporters underway. It is worth noting that all these steps to integrate were taken by an organization which has fully immersed itself in convergence. Organizations with smaller staffs or which are converged to a lesser degree may not require such exhaustive measures.

Another way to address cultural issues and resistance to convergence is to start the process with reporters who are interested in the concept (Tompkins, 2002). Because all reporters will react differently to the idea of convergence, Thelen (Thelen, et. al., 2003) says there should be some practicality built into a converged newsroom. Perhaps the reporters who are more savvy with technology and more open to the idea may be the best to start an experiment in convergence. These reporters may also be the ones most open to the new training and may in fact be the best training leaders. Killebrew (2002) provides a profile of these people:

> Individuals should be identified who are organizational risk takers, who share similar values at both an individual and corporate level and are willing to take those risks when rewards are specific and worthwhile.
>
> They should write well, be easily cross-trained, and should be targeted for

> inclusion before the undertaking is announced. These people must be trained prior to the launch of the converged activities. Where possible, the organization should launch convergence in small markets. If that isn't possible, "*beta*" units could be created within the organization. However, management must take care to insulate these people from non-risk takers who might try to scuttle the new venture (p. 45).

Going forward, is it also important for a converged organization to consider these attributes when hiring. New hires in Tampa are expected to produce news for all three media (Huang, et. al., 2004). Through attrition, those interested and motivated by convergence will eventually make the change happen organically.

Researchers seem to agree that training, on some level, is essential for convergence to be successful, no matter what the model looks like (Tompkins, 2002). While not every reporter has to be trained in broadcast, print, and online journalism, reporters who are can be more valuable (Quinn, 2005b). While a focus on familiarizing reporters with needed technological equipment is warranted, some researchers point to a need to focus on writing fundamentals. A survey of professional journalists shows widespread agreement that good writing and is a top priority and secondary to the ability to write for multiple media (Singer, 2004, p. 839). Mohl (2004) says the training should instead concentrate on the fundamentals of reporting. This goes along with the idea of a converged newsroom trying to focus on serving the public instead of competing with internal newsrooms. Mohl sees this as a good opportunity to get back to basics. A survey of news directors illustrates a belief that journalists would need to obtain the ability to adapt news copy for use on multiple media (Duhe, 2004). Apart from writing, there is also the recognition that analytical thinking skills are also more important than training in convergence technology. This also extends to the use of the Internet, discovering and developing databases, and using the World Wide Web for critical research (Bulla 2002). Quinn (2005b) says there is no need for a reporter to master the craft of each medium. Instead, they must only understand the mindset for each medium. Training may be as simple as getting reporters from multiple media to job shadow with their counterparts to gain an appreciation for what they do and better understand the logistics that go into their daily routines. In any case, training for converged news reporters is likely, and "editorial managers have to be willing to foster an environment that facilitates learning" (Quinn, 2005a, p. 37). Further, managers themselves may need training to help lead reporters through the convergence process (Fisher, 2005). Prepared and well-trained management will reduce the stress during any transition period, in turn making it more likely that convergence will be successful (Killebrew, 2002).

A survey of news managers sheds some light on the role training plays in bringing convergence to reality for some companies. Duhe (2004) found more than half (53 percent) of the news managers he surveyed believed their staff would be able to succeed in the future because of their abilities to produce for multiple media, compared to the 27.4 percent who thought their staffs were not ready to produce for multiple media. Three quarters of the respondents (75.3 percent) "said the ability to adapt news copy for use by multiple media is a necessary skill for current staff to be successful in the future" (p. 97).

One key to ensuring the staff is well-trained for dealing with convergence is to make sure hiring practices reflect the future goals of the newsroom. When hiring in Tampa, Florida, "…producers and news directors are looking for good writers and critical thinkers. That's universal. But we do want reporters coming out of school that have some comfort level with all platforms" (p. 39). Reporters in Tampa are hired with the understanding that they will be writing news in a converged newsroom (Moses, 2001). This includes writing for the Internet, understanding the immediacy of the medium, and how converged companies use the Internet to grow their audience ("Media General…," 2006).

One of the more difficult variables to measure in this thesis is the "results of convergence". Successful convergence can be defined many ways, but researchers have identified what they consider negative and positive outcomes. The obvious negative outcome is when a convergence model fails, and formerly converged newsrooms return to working independently of one another. Demo (2005) found that some newspaper editors avoid partnerships with broadcasters because of a feeling that the broadcaster has more to gain than the newspaper. It is instinctual feelings like this that may be overlooked at the outset of convergence, but could ultimately create failure of a model. Another frequent factor in convergence failure is ownership. It is more difficult to implement convergence in separately-owned newsrooms because each company has its own norms and organizational structures (Ketterer et. al., 2004). A survey found that most news directors (61.1 percent) believe convergence put more pressure on journalists to turn out products for various media. Some news directors report models working out as they were suppose to. For 42.5 percent of the respondents, competition continued between converged newsrooms, which most commonly took the form of withholding breaking news from the partner newsroom. Differing newsroom values caused problems for 21.7 percent of the respondents (Duhe, 2004, p. 95).

Other researchers have tried to collect some data on the financial success or failure of convergence. Duhe (2004) found 20 percent of the respondents engaged in convergence reported increased advertising revenue or lower operating costs (p. 100). Fewer respondents to the same survey (13.2 percent) reported experiencing financial problems (p. 95). *The Tampa Tribune* in Tampa, Florida found its Sunday readership increased 14 percent over a 12 month period (the daily papers increased four percent) in 2003, after they converged with tbo.com and WFLA-TV. This was at a time when another Florida newspaper, *The Saint Petersburg Times*, a non-converged newspaper, followed the national downward trend hitting newspapers with a five percent drop in Sunday readership and one percent drop in daily readership. The managers in Tampa acknowledge that numerous factors influence newspaper sales, but convergence played a role in improving the print product with more urgent and in-depth coverage (Huang, et. al., 2004).

Some researchers appear to suggest that convergence is not a way to save money (Quinn, 2005b). Carr (2002) writes that convergence is about strengthening the product rather than cutting positions. Kaplan (Thelen, Kaplan, & Bradley, 2003) says the result in spending more money is a better product, more availability, and a sharing of all the advantages offered by each medium. Bradley also says the public has to be at the heart of convergence plans. He says a converged newsroom can be more focused on the needs of the citizen, and less on the competition, resulting in a better quality news product. Kaplan (2003) writes:

> While there are clearly advantages when a 100-reporter newspaper newsroom combines resources with a 10-reporter television news operation, those advantages dissipate when the news executives use convergence as an opportunity to cuts costs and cut manpower. For convergence to work properly, it will take an increase in resources (p.158).

The financial outcomes of convergence may, in some cases, be more important than the converged news product. Lowrey (2005) writes that managers may be more effected by the company's financial conditions than the quality of an organization's news coverage. Despite all the concerns about how convergence can impact a company's bottom line, the other major focus on outcomes brings attention to the actual news products made possible by convergence.

Researchers have used content analysis to determine whether news products were improved by convergence. Ketterer et. al. (2004) studied a convergence model in Oklahoma City between KWTV and *The Oklahoman* that was aimed at providing a better and more comprehensive news product. They found the stated objectives were not being met because television viewers were not being drawn to newspaper stories being promoted on the air in any significant numbers. Researchers blamed a difference in newsroom cultures for creating roadblocks to full sharing of information. While the cross-promotional aspect may have had some impact in this partnership, there is little evidence to support the notion that convergence did enough to improve the news products. This may be because the news consumers may have found the partnership erratic and inconsistent (Ketterer et. al., 2004). Despite the collected evidence, managers in the news operations believed in their mission to improve the product for the news consumer and believed news consumers were being drawn by the cross-promotion to other media in the convergence model (p. 4). The Oklahoma City example provides some evidence to suggest that convergence should ultimately produce a better news product to be successful. It also suggests that convergence needs to be invested in whole-heartedly to be successful, even if it is something less than a full convergence of newsrooms. Anything less than a fully sincere convergence partnership will ultimately add nothing to the news product being sold to the public.

Because convergence is a major change in operations and philosophy for newsrooms, diffusion theory can help in the examination of the situations in which convergence, as an innovation, is successfully implemented. Rogers (1983) defines diffusion as “the process by which an innovation is communicated through certain channels over time among the members of a social system” (p.10). As convergence is brought into a news organization, it starts with an individual or small group of people and must be disseminated to the rest of the organization, and how this is done can mean the difference between success and failure.

There are four main elements in the diffusion of innovations (Rogers, 1983). The first is the innovation itself, in this case, convergence. Innovation is defined as “a *process*, a sequence of decisions, events, and behavior changes over time” (Rogers, 1996, p.138). In diffusion theory, there are four characteristics of innovation. The first is "relative advantage" (Rogers, 1983, p. 15). For an innovation to be successful it has to bring some advantage that the status quo does not offer. For an innovation like convergence to survive, it must also be compatible with the values and experiences of the newsroom, and it must be relatively easy to use. Further, convergence has a better chance of surviving as an innovation if it is implemented in such a way that it can be experimented with. If convergence has observable results, it is also more likely to be a successful innovation.

Diffusion theory also brings up the issue of communication channels, which refers to the way innovations like convergence are eventually communicated to those who will be taking part in the implementation. Rogers (1983) writes, "the nature of the information-exchange relationship between the pair of individuals determines the conditions under which a source will or will not transmit the innovation to the receiver, and the effect of the transfer" (p.17). The way an innovation is communicated will determine how individuals in an organization will evaluate it. This extends to who the communication is coming from. Rogers says individuals in an organization are more likely to react positively to an innovation if it is brought to them by individuals like themselves. There needs to be some level of commonality between the innovator and individual players. Interpersonal communications are of the utmost importance in the diffusion of convergence (Singer, 2003a). Singer also used diffusion theory in the survey study of journalists in converged newsrooms. The study found "upper management has positioned convergence as an unavoidable part of the way the news business will be done but has largely avoided mandating how the transition will take place on an individual level" (p.13). This ambiguity in what individual journalists are suppose to do results in journalists simply ignoring convergence, especially in larger organizations (Singer, 2003a).

Time is also a factor in the diffusion of innovations. Rogers (1983) identifies a number of ways to examine the role time plays in diffusion theory, including discussion about the rate of adoption. The rate of adoption can vary depending on how the individuals perceive an innovation like convergence. Rogers says the rate of adoption will likely look like an s-curve, with a few individuals involved in the beginning, a mass of individuals getting involved in the middle, and another small group of individuals who will wait until the innovation is well entrenched before adopting it. It is important that those first individuals adopting the innovation find a way to explain how it will benefit the rest of the organization; otherwise the critical mass of individuals needed to take up the innovation in order for it to survive will not be achieved. (Williams, Rice, & Rogers, 1988). Singer (2003a) suggests those adopting convergence early give the perception that their embrace of the innovation can lead to career advancement.

Diffusion theory also takes into account the social system where the innovation is being implemented, which in this case, is a newsroom. A social system is defined as "a set of interrelated units that are engaged in joint problem solving to accomplish a common goal. The members or units of a social system may be individuals, informal groups, organizations, and/or subsystems" (Rogers, 1983, p.24). Within this social system, there are opinion leaders and change agents. Change agents are the primary instigators of innovations, which means they are also perceived as the most deviant members of the social system. While the change agent is needed to drive change, this person's low credibility among those skeptical of the innovation needs to be balanced in order for the innovation to move forward. Opinion leaders can act as an intermediary. This person is typically someone with a strong interpersonal network within an organization who can both empathize with individual members of the organization, while supplying the change agent with the credibility needed to move an innovation forward. Rogers (1983) writes, "change agents use opinion leaders within a given social system as lieutenants in diffusion campaigns" (p. 28). Individual adopters of an innovation put more faith in the reactions of their peers to an innovation than any level of scientific research on a subject (Williams, Rice & Rogers, 1988). Singer (2003a) writes that cultural clashes can be a major stumbling block to innovation, but physical and management structures can be put in place to mediate complications.

There are also a few other notes to diffusion theory that relate well to the evaluation of convergence as an innovation. Rogers (1983) suggests that the larger an organization is, the more diffusion there is to do. This makes change agents more necessary. The size of an organization also comes into play when you consider the ability for an innovation to be done on a limited trial basis to see how it will work. This flexibility needed for innovation to be successful can be more difficult in a larger organization. Singer (2003a) also discusses the size of an innovation project in the context of convergence in different market sizes. None of the organizations in Singer's study have fully implemented convergence, but Singer believes smaller markets are closer. Singer believes more study is needed on this issue, but suggests there are simply fewer people involved in the innovation, and the higher turnover found in smaller markets also means there are fewer entrenched habits. Singer also notes that diffusion theory seems to be a good match for examining convergence.

Method

Given all the research conducted on the issue of convergence and all the variables involved in determining what makes a successful convergence model, the researcher conducted a study to qualitatively study these variables in an examination of small to medium markets in the Midwest. The study seeks to determine how small and medium market convergence models operate and use their models to help determine ideal conditions for convergence, the most common hurtles faced by converged newsrooms, and plans of action for future convergence.

This study used seven variables to measure the level of convergence occurring at media organizations in small to medium-sized Midwest markets. Variables included include the location of the organization on the “convergence continuum,” reasons for convergence, training, cultural differences among reporters, reporters’ compensation, effectiveness, and cross-ownership concerns. The variables were derived from a review of the literature based on what appears to be the recurring issues converged newsrooms are forced to contend with.

RQ1: Placement on the “convergence continuum” is established through the questioning of managers at the subject sites on the arrangement of their convergence model to best determine where they fit on the “continuum.” The various stages on the “continuum” are operationalized in the previous section.

RQ2: Because this study will put the “convergence continuum” to the test, the researcher analyzed the effectiveness of this measure to determine if it is precise enough to measure varying types of convergence.

RQ3: The variable related to “reasons for convergence” remained open-ended. The researcher asked site managers what it was about convergence that they wanted to bring to their own organization. The discussion focused on the frequently sited examples of a desire for economization in the newsroom and improved news product quality. Questioning of the managers established what the company was striving for when the idea of convergence was first discussed, but the variable is focused on identifying whether the managers were aiming for newsroom economization and/or improved news quality when they decided to move forward with convergence.

RQ4: The issue of training was investigated qualitatively because of the many varied forms training can take, ranging from simple staff meetings about how convergence will be organized, to site visits to other convergence sites and attendance at national conventions. Site managers were asked about their own investigation on the issue of convergence before they moved forward with their own convergence plans.

RQ5: The variable regarding cultural differences between newsrooms determined if the converged news operations had or were dealing with any cultural disputes between newsrooms, and if so, how those disputes have been handled. The questioning sought to find if the solutions used by other converged newsrooms or reported on by researchers are being used, have worked, or failed at the various sites.

RQ6: Because of the lack of historical information regarding how converged newsrooms have dealt with the issue of reporters' compensation, the researcher needed to determine how or if site managers have investigated the issue and if compensation has been addressed, how it may have changed under convergence.

RQ7: Goal achievement was measured by outcome. This was measured by comparing the organization's goals going into convergence to what they have experienced since then. In some cases, the researcher has incomplete information on this variable because of the early stage of convergence some of the subject sites were involved in.

A number of methods were used to identify potential convergence sites which fit the criteria outlined by the researcher. The goal was to find examples of convergence between broadcasters and print media in small to medium markets in the Midwest. For the sake of this study, small to medium markets were defined using the television market size rankings. In this case, the researcher looked for television media markets outside the top 80 U.S. markets as defined by the Nielsen 2005/2006 market rankings ("Nielsen Media," 2006) which are also within the study area of North Dakota, Minnesota, Iowa, Wisconsin, and Illinois. The one radio station included in the study is classified as small by the researcher given the fact that the market is not large enough to fall inside the top 300 markets by Arbitron ratings ("Arbitron Radio," 2006). The search for potential sites was conducted using The Media Center's "Convergence Tracker" ("Convergence

Tracker", 2006) and consultation with broadcaster associations in each of the subject states to determine what stations where engaged in convergence. Through this process, the researcher identified three sites. The *Times Citizen* and KIFG radio in Iowa Falls, Iowa. *The Gazette* and KCRG-TV in Cedar Rapids, Iowa. *The Forum*, WDAY-TV and WDAY-AM in Fargo, North Dakota. It should be noted that other sites in the Midwest were identified by the researcher, but management at those companies declined requests to participate in the study. None of the sites examined in this study had unionized employees.

Once identified, the researcher contacted each convergence site and was put in touch with a contact who could help determine if the site would be interested in taking part in the study, would fit the thesis study objectives, and be willing to give up some time to provide information to the researcher. Site visits were arranged with the organizations in Iowa Falls, Iowa and Cedar Rapids, Iowa and conducted on May 11, 2006 and May 18, 2006 respectively. A site visit to Fargo, North Dakota was considered, and ultimately abandoned in favor of a conference call. This was done because there was only one principal manager in charge of convergence at the organization, the manager was willing to share information about the physical arrangement of the newsroom through photos and floor plans, and the cost of traveling to Fargo from southern Wisconsin was determined to be more than the estimated value of a site visit versus a conference call. In each case, the researcher subsequently contacted the subject managers by e-mail for clarification on their responses or for additional information. All subjects completed confidentiality forms, but because of the nature of the study and the small study size, anonymity could not be promised to the subjects.

A lack of available convergence sites that fit the study criteria makes it difficult to place too much focus on one or two quantitative variables. A lack of a larger sample size would make the data insignificant. At this stage of the convergence phenomenon a qualitative analysis was therefore needed for the researcher to draw any conclusions about small market convergence. Even though the conclusions may be weaker than quantitative results, a qualitative study allowed the researcher to more easily compare the practices of converged newsrooms to data presented by researchers about convergence at large. Qualitative examination of convergence models is also relevant because of the contemporary nature of the phenomenon (Yin, 1994).

The site visits were conducted through informal questioning of convergence site managers. The researcher brought a list of prepared questions to help drive the conversation to cover the issues raised by the study variables. Follow-up questions were frequently used to help clarify the common practices, policies, and philosophies behind convergence efforts at the sites. Interviews were conducted in person at two sites, and by phone for a third site. The researchers took notes during the course of the interview and transcribed them into a word processing document within 24 hours of the visits. (see Appendix A for list of initial questions).

Collected Data

Iowa Falls

Iowa Falls is a city of approximately 6,000 about 75 miles south southeast from Des Moines. The *Times Citizen* is a twice-weekly that circulates about 3,800. There are no dailies in the immediate area. The radio station's reach extends beyond the circulation of the newspaper. KIFG was bought in 1999 and features local programming from 6:00 to 10:00 AM. Its only competition is in Marshalltown, Iowa, which is 50 miles away. The newspaper and radio station share a building near downtown Iowa Falls. About 92 people work for the company, including 66 in the downtown building.

The managers in Iowa City met with the researcher for two hours. Those in attendance included the KIFG station manager, the division manager, president and owner, vice president and general operations manager, and a computer and IT specialist (see Appendix B for participant information).

The *Times Citizen* and KIFG Radio have fully implemented convergence in their news and sales staffs. The sales staffs were gradually converged over two years.[1] The news staffs have been converged since January 1, 2006. News convergence was immediate, which was recommended by the vice president and general operations manager. She says it is less painful in the long run.

Convergence in Iowa City was prompted by industry trends which were noted by managers in trade magazines like those printed by the "Radio Television News Directors Association" and "The Poynter Institute." There was an interest in improving the news product for both the newspaper and radio station. The push for convergence started with management. Managers investigated convergence before moving forward with the project. They attended many meetings and retreats, used trade magazines as resources, and studied the issue online and through seminars. The stated goal was to improve the news product.

There are only 1.5 positions in the radio operation. The station manager and half of the radio news director/reporter are directly tied to the radio station. Newsroom convergence started with news stories being submitted to the radio station by newspaper reporters. Now there is a shared computer file where all stories are filed. Now, after every event, reporters call an answering machine at the radio station to leave a three or four paragraph audio summary of the event. Their recordings are played as part of the radio newscast. A reporter can also digitally record audio at meetings and events, but the quality of that sound is sometimes not good. If the reporter feels they have audio that could be included in the radio news, he or she leaves the recorder for radio staff. If radio staff wants to do more with a story, they will make their own phone calls to follow up. Newspaper reporters also do "second day" leads for print. Stories are made to sound different on the radio than in the newspaper. Reporters do no ad-libbing on the radio. The vice president and general operations manager says, "It doesn't make sense to have multiple reporters at the same event," and she says "It really gets a lot of voices on the radio station." Technology also helped reporters minimize the extra work needed to file stories for radio. All that is required of them is to use a cell phone to call reports into the radio station after they attend an event.

The news staff, the radio station manager, and the division manager meet twice each week in preparation for each upcoming issue of the newspaper. Newspaper feature stories sometimes go on the air. When they do, the full news staff discusses how to handle it. The radio segment will go back to the source of the story. The radio news teases more extensive coverage in the *Times Citizen*. Additionally, the radio news director gathers news in outlying communities because the radio station reaches beyond the circulation of the newspaper. That content typically is not used by the newspaper.

The news operations are truly converged in the sense that there are no separate newsrooms. All reporters work in the same office. While the organization has no formal position for someone who is organizing convergence, the editor oversees both the radio and newspaper products. The editor oversees a staff of three reporters plus the radio news director, who also acts as a reporter part of the time. While the news staff discusses editorial decisions, the final decision is made by the editor, who also directs reporters. The vice president and general operations manager says the editor has to be organized and there are few people out there with experience in convergence to do the job. This model was arrived at organically over the months leading up to full implementation.

The newspaper and radio station each maintain its own websites. The radio station website is intended to be “more fun,” and lists recipes and other non-news information plus a 2-minute audio file of the day’s sports, a 2-minute audio file of the day’s news and a 2-minute audio file of the day’s obituaries. The radio website has no text news. They are planning to add streaming audio to webcast play-by-play coverage of sporting events at outlying school districts. They are considering hiring local college students to anchor the Internet play-by-play, which would not be broadcast on the radio. The website has Internet-only audio spots.

The newspaper website has been paid-access only for three years. Subscribers to the newspaper get a username and password for free access. Those who want to subscribe only to the website pay the same rate as a paper subscription. Four days after our visit, the website was set to begin “single-copy” subscriptions, allowing people to pay $1 for 24 hours of access to the website. For subscribers, the site offers html copies of most articles from the newspaper after the newspaper has been printed. They also offer entire newspaper sections for download as zipped Acrobat files. They also have a searchable archive. The vice president and general operations manager rejects the idea of a converged site with a different domain name. She believes it is more important to leverage the identity of each organization. “You want to take advantage of that franchise,” she said. They want to get to the point of doing video on the website.

There was no formal convergence training for journalists. Reporters were given pointers on being on the radio and using the equipment. The vice president and general operations manager says reporters saw the value of convergence before it arrived, although they initially resisted it so management forced it. She says you need a champion for both media along with management buy-in and you need to show relentless pressure during convergence transition.

The KIFG station manager says there were two big hurtles for reporters. He says newspaper reporters need to know that radio needs information faster than the newspaper does. Also, newspaper reporters have to get over hearing themselves on the radio. He says everyone has to be willing to participate in change. The vice president and general operations manager says they have to end talk of "newspaper vs. radio." Reporters are allowed to break their own stories on their air, which takes away the "sting" of having it on another medium before it appears in the newspaper. Those who do not eventually accept the change will be fired, but this has not been necessary so far. She says "reporters can move on to new 'cool' things as they give up turf". New hires know they are expected to produce for both media.

When it comes to compensation, the vice president and general operations manager says reporters can be paid better for having more skills. In the case of Iowa Falls, there is no additional compensation for reporters working for both media. The vice president and general operations manager says newspaper reporters get a boost from being on the radio since they get feedback from family and the community.

When asked if they are achieving their goals in convergence, the answer was "yes," but there is room for improvement. They say there is little money saved in their overall news operations, but the product is better. The vice president and general operations manager says common ownership makes a difference and convergence on such a small scale makes sense. She says convergence is a saving grace for small markets (especially radio) since it has made the radio product better than their competitor.

When asked what did not work in their convergence model, they identified incremental implementation. They also tried a simple method of newspaper reporters simply giving stories to radio reporters. This was also an unsuccessful venture because they found it easier for the person who originated the story to execute the writing and explanation for the radio. In the future, they would like to be able to use convergence to provide more content on the radio and the web.

Cedar Rapids

Cedar Rapids is a city of approximately 120,000 about 130 miles from Des Moines. *The Gazette* is a morning daily that circulates over 70,000 on weekdays and focuses much of its attention on Cedar Rapids and Iowa City. It is the paper of record for the City of Cedar Rapids and employs about 100 full time equivalent workers. The newspaper and TV station are in adjacent buildings separated by an alley. The television station covers 16 counties including the Cedar Rapids, Iowa City, Dubuque and Waterloo metro areas. This is basically the eastern one-third of Iowa. The meeting with *The Gazette* managing editor and KCRG-TV Executive news and web producer lasted about one hour. (See Appendix for participant information).

The industry buzz about convergence is what got them thinking about it initially. The newspaper started the conversation about convergence and it was eventually taken up by both reporters and upper management. The editors were on board with the idea. The managers say there was not much investigation done going into convergence, but there was extensive discussion on how it should work. *The Gazette* managing editor says “it felt right.” Ultimately, they learned by doing.

Going into convergence, the stated goals were to extend the newspapers’ brand and sell more papers through television branding. There was discussion from upper management about finding ways to use convergence to reduce staff and merge newsrooms, but this has apparently not taken place.

Convergence efforts at Gazette Communications started in 2000 and progressed gradually. It started with projects including "Read it, See it," which was the first project 6 years ago. This was done about once a quarter, usually coordinating with TV sweeps. The project took a single story and focused on the power of telling the story on TV. The managers report that these stories were a lot of work. The convergence relationship evolved over the years and the model developed organically.

There was a gradual sharing of information on a daily basis, particularly with breaking news. On-air credit is given to the reporter who breaks a story, if it was someone at the newspaper. The newspaper still considers itself in competition with television, but they don't compete on spot news. The newsrooms work together on common website projects like elections and other special projects. They otherwise have websites that are separate, but linked together. The television newsroom has access to the newspaper computer archive system, but the newspaper does not have access to the television computer archive. It would seem the newspaper has little need for any archival information retained by the television station.

Primary communications between newsrooms is via telephone between the television station's managing editor or senior producer and the newspaper editors. They also meet face-to-face once a week. Reporters are also aware they can independently contact the other newsroom, and they do so on occasion. Television reporters will tell viewers about newspaper stories, sometimes without prompting from managers and the newspaper. They believe television still benefits from this arrangement and *The Gazette* gets the credit. Breaking news goes straight to television and the details are saved for the newspaper. There is a television camera set up in the newspaper newsroom, but otherwise there are no changes to the office setup as a result of convergence. The newsrooms fully combine their resources and their brands for events like elections, but they otherwise remain autonomous.

Newspaper reporters help fill content on the television station. They are on a daily midday television program discussing the story of the day. Topics range from enterprise stories to breaking news. The newspaper reporters will sometimes promote stories coming up in the paper. Newspaper reporters are used as witnesses to help add context to a story. There are also regularly scheduled television features with newspaper reporters in the mornings twice a week.

There have been occasions where the newsrooms have stepped on each others' stories causing conflict. The managers say there is a respect for stories from either side, but sometimes people get upset about sharing information. On some rare occasions, upper management has had to get involved in conflict resolution. There is no convergence manager overseeing news flow for both news operations.

When convergence was first discussed in Cedar Rapids, a small groups of newspaper reporters was sent to classes to learn television reporting. After the classes, the reporters produced stories, but ultimately, only two of them aired. They also tried to train television reporters to write for the newspaper, which also did not work. The idea of a multimedia reporter was abandoned. There was still a certain level of training involved in the convergence model currently in place. Newspaper reporters received informal training from television managers on dress and on-air etiquette so they would have the basic idea for what it takes to be on the air.

Reporters receive no change in pay for taking part in convergence. Managers say they consider it part of the eight hour work day. When convergence first arrived in Cedar Rapids, newspaper reporters' comfort with TV was an issue. They were not forced onto television, but *The Gazette* managing editor says some had to be "cajoled." Others wanted to be on television, and still others continued to see television as the enemy and therefore remained competitive. This went away over time, according to management. Newspaper reporters also saw television as superficial, but now there is a better understanding of the medium. Managers expect the reporters to participate in convergence, but they still need occasional reminders. New hires are also expected to take part in convergence. Managers note that heavier turnover in the television newsroom means relationships between the newsrooms are changing frequently. There is no indication this turnover is due to convergence, rather it is likely the moderate turnover rate normally found in the newsroom of a medium market television station.

When asked if convergence is working in Cedar Rapids, *The Gazette* managing editor and KCRG-TV executive news and web producer say it works "on and off." They believe that both sides benefit and there is increased story generation. The researcher asked about any hard evidence of increased advertising revenues or circulation. *The Gazette* managing editor says it is difficult to prove that circulation or revenues have been affected either way by convergence. He says there are too many other factors which drive advertising and circulation to know what role convergence plays.

It appears the idea of the multimedia reporter was the key convergence proposal they tried which did not work. They also wanted a video operator to begin working for the newspaper, but this person was never hired. They also learned that you cannot tell the same story on both media. Rather you have to gear stories towards the strengths of particular media.

Fargo

Due to cost, instead of a site visit the researcher conducted an hour-long telephone interview on Tuesday, May 23, 2006 with the Chief Operating Officer of Forum Communications in Fargo, North Dakota. The company employs 600 in their Fargo operations, which includes *The Forum*, WDAY-TV, and WDAY-AM.

Fargo is a city of more than 170,000 on the east side of North Dakota. *The Forum* is a daily newspaper that circulates about 51,000 on weekdays. WDAY-TV is an ABC affiliate and is in the same building as WDAY-AM, which is a news/talk format. The AM station signal has about a 100 mile broadcast radius. The ownership arrangement is grandfathered under FCC regulations.[2] Forum Communications also operates the in-forum.com website, an Internet service provider, a wireless service, and commercial printing.

The Forum Communications chief operating officer (see Appendix for participant information) says convergence started in 1997 with their first Internet site. Most information for the website came from the newspaper, but the websites were kept separate. By keeping them separate, content and brand are personalized on each website. Today there is much more information on the websites than at their inception.

Forum Communications is different from the other sites being studied in this thesis because the media groups are not yet converged to the point the company had hoped. It would have to be surmised that the implementation has been gradual, given the progress already made on the issue of convergence. The chief operating officer says implementation has been delayed by the untimely death of an editor. Convergence was put on hold while the new editor was getting up to speed.

Convergence in Fargo was prompted by industry trends and talk about the changes happening in Tampa, Florida that were discussed in the literature review of this study. There was a desire in the company to create more strength in the market and develop more local content. The interest started in the company's online group. The chief operating officer figures the online employees had nothing to lose from convergence. He says they always knew they could implement convergence; it was just a matter of getting someone to push for it.

Once the interest was there, the chief operating officer says convergence was investigated by following trade journals. The company also sent some of the staff to visit a well-cited example of a converged newsroom in Lawrence, Kansas. They also brought in a successful web company to get ideas from.

The chief operating officer says technology has made it easier for the newsrooms to work together and to save time, which is important because part of the challenge is convincing reporters they have time for convergence. He says technology has to be part of future news dissemination because the consumer controls the decision-making on when, where, and how they get their information.

The goal going into convergence for Fargo appears to be focused on the generation of more local content. There seems to be recognition that convergence is not a money-saving technique. The chief operating officer says the question which comes up regarding convergence is how to pay for convergence.

The model envisioned by the chief operating officer involves the sharing of breaking news and polling information among the newspaper and broadcasters. He says newspaper reporters need to realize the news will break anyway. The current arrangement is ad hoc and not formal. It is about 50 percent of where the chief operating officer wants to be. He says they have a vision of creating multimedia reporters.

There is hard evidence that the company is moving forward on convergence, in the form of a central news desk. As of the time of the interview, the chief operating officer says a design for the news desk was being developed and the desk will be constructed over the coming summer. The desk will be in the middle of the newspaper newsroom. Each newsroom will put a representative there. It will be staffed 24 hours and there will be a television camera in the area. There will be a morning huddle to discuss cross-promotion and story treatment. The chief operating officer is not yet sure how the news would flow to their Internet sites.

The chief operating officer has plans to hire a “newsflow editor” in the near future. He believes the position has to have some authority but will oversee just the news and not staff. He says the budget issue needs to be ignored because if you truly want to improve content, the cost should be viewed as immaterial.

When it comes to the issue of reporters' compensation, the chief operating officer admits reporters have a valid point that they should be paid more but says the issue has to be addressed over time. He believes managers interested in convergence ought to approach reporters saying "we are willing to pay you more for doing this," which could also help reduce resistance.

Apart from what Forum Communications has learned from the process of investigating convergence, the chief operating officer says he plans to bring in a "change expert" when the new news desk gets constructed in June. He believes it is harder to train the top than the bottom, in reference to training management on how to implement convergence. A newspaper expert is also being brought in to help convince managers that convergence is coming. The chief operating officer says more training is underway. The company has already spent a lot of money training to help the sales department find ways to sell convergence, but he admits it has been unsuccessful so far.

The chief operating officer is frustrated by the difficulty faced in finding ways to change newsroom cultures. He says it is still hard to get reporters to give up information and get them thinking globally. The plan is to take advantage of reporters who already have an interest in convergence. For those that do not come forward to participate, he says they will get some time to assimilate, but they will not survive if they do not eventually change. Right now, the chief operating officer says managers claim they are hiring convergence-minded employees, but he has not seen actual evidence of that. He believes it should be done more.

This convergence plan was developed because the chief operating officer sees a need to get content distributed properly. He says there are powerful resources not being utilized and local content is needed to survive in an environment where content is available from multiple media forms.

While convergence is not yet fully realized in Fargo, the chief operating officer says the goal is still to cut costs and to build content. They want to be the largest local producer of content. The chief operating officer believes in an old adage from the newspaper business that money follows quality content.

Analysis

A comparison of the three sites being investigated in this study illustrates the complexity and variety of ways convergence can be implemented. With this study's focus on small to medium sized markets, it can be noted that the variety of convergence models that exists in nationally-recognized convergence newsrooms is also found in this study's sample. The first variable, the newsrooms' placement on the "convergence continuum," may, on the surface, show some commonalities between the sites, but a more in-depth analysis will show this may not be the case.

RQ1: *Place on Convergence Continuum*

The convergence model in Iowa Falls is placed to the far right on the "continuum" in the category of "fully converged." This is done largely because of the organization's philosophy that there are no "radio" and "print" reporters. It could be argued that the organization has multimedia reporters, which would qualify it for this category. This argument also holds true when you consider information flow, management, and office setup. In the case of Iowa Falls, there is no separate information flow, management, or office for the different media. The only separate identifiers for the media are their own websites, which are linked together, but do not share content.

The cases of Cedar Rapids and Fargo become more problematic and complex. Both are categorized just to the left of Iowa Falls on the "convergence continuum" as "content sharing." These categorizations are debatable. The researcher believes they are appropriate because, despite the high level of sharing practiced in the newsrooms, both models appear to support the concept of newsroom autonomy, something which sets them apart from Iowa Falls. In the case of Cedar Rapids, there is a sharing of information flow, although it is not always solid and consistent. There is no shared management and no shared office space. The model being prepared for Fargo would appear to merge information flow to a large extent with a shared news desk, but the broadcasters would still be working in a separate building and be managed separately. The decision to create a shared news desk raises the possibility of arguing that Fargo is heading towards full-scale convergence, but the model discussed with Forum Communication's chief operating officer would appear to allow for the continuance of newsroom autonomy.

In this study, the smallest market under examination has the most complex convergence model. While this study is not complex enough to draw any conclusions from this fact, it is worth noting because it suggests that smaller markets may have an easier time experimenting with convergence ideas simply because of their size. The vice president and general operations manager in Iowa Falls said convergence is a saving

Table 1

Summary of Study Sites' Convergence Variables

Variable	Iowa Falls	Cedar Rapids	Fargo
Where do they fall on the "Convergence Continuum"?	Fully converged	Content sharing	Content sharing
Motivations for beginning cooperation	Improving news content	Improve newspaper brand and circulation (possible cost savings)	More local content and market strength
What training was involved?	Little (minimum to get newspaper reporters on the radio)	Little (minimum to put newspaper reporters on TV)	Meetings with "experts" to convince managers to move forward
Cultural differences	Management forced the issue – those who do not change, can leave – reporters buy in	Some resistance from newspaper reporters – cooperation is expected and part of the job	Resistance from reporters – they will get time to assimilate, but those who do not will have to leave
Reporters' Compensation	No compensation – reporters get a personal boost from being on the radio	Part of the eight hour work day	Has to be addressed over time – reporters should be offered more pay for more duties
Are you achieving your goals?	Better news product – convergence is a saving grace for small market radio – room for improvement	"on and off it works" – both sides benefit – more story generation – no proof of impact on circulation	Only about 50 percent of where they will aim to be in the future

grace for small markets (especially radio) since it has made the radio product better than their competitor's. For Iowa Falls, convergence is about more than just being an incubator for what works and what does not work, as suggested by Killebrew (2002), but Iowa Falls' convergence model is still of value for further investigation. Sites like Cedar Rapids and Fargo are less converged, but while it cannot be concluded that their market size is the reason for this, it could be argued that their size makes it considerably more difficult to implement a fully merged newsroom than in Iowa Falls. A larger news staff, for example, can be harder to manage with the same handful of managers, while confronting issues including compensation and cultural differences between newsrooms. This makes the convergence model at Iowa Falls tremendously valuable to larger market companies interested in moving towards more comprehensive convergence. Even if the size of the organization precludes a larger organization from simply transferring the ideas to their own newsrooms, the structure of the organization at Iowa Falls is similar to management at many newspapers and broadcasters across the country.

Managers at the two sites further along in their convergence efforts, Iowa Falls and Cedar Rapids, believe the convergence models they are using right now were arrived at organically as the company decided which way convergence would work best for them. This may also be the case for Fargo, but discussions with Forum Communication's chief operating officer suggest there is a model in mind, even though full convergence has not yet arrived. Because of the high level of investigation and research Forum Communications has undertaken on the issue, it is difficult to know how much of the model is determined organically by the situation in the organization and how much is based on what is happening with other organizations being studied by Fargo managers.

All the sites investigated in this study are on the right side of the "continuum". This could be due to the fact that any organizations experimenting with convergence on the left side of the model are simply harder to identify because of their limited convergence efforts. Further, those sites would not have has as much information to share for this particular study because their convergence model would not have included issues, like management, for example, that are more prevalent and relevant for organizations using more complex convergence models.

RQ2: *Effectiveness of the "convergence continuum"*

This study has exposed some of the flaws of the "convergence continuum," in particular, its inability to measure convergence more precisely. The convergence models at Cedar Rapids and Fargo are different in many dramatic ways. While some of these differences are found outside the scope of the convergence model (variables like dealing with cultural differences and reporters compensation) others like information flow and office setup are part of the model. Despite some of the differences between how convergence has been implemented at both sites, they are both classified under the "convergence continuum" category of "content sharing." The "continuum" does an adequate job of reminding researchers to consider issues like information flow, management, and office setup, but the scale does not adequately define differences between convergence models. A better model might merely suggest variables like information flow, management, and office setup, without offering a single scale to measure them on, acknowledging the complexity of comparing convergence models.

It should also be noted that the attempt by Dailey et. al (2005) to connect the “continuum” to diffusion theory may be flawed. It was suggested that the “continuum” could be used to measure diffusion. While this connection may be valid for organizations aiming to achieve full convergence, this link suggests that organizations in the right stages of the “continuum” are not really finished with their innovation. Some of the stages on the right could, in fact, be the final convergence goal for an organization. It is possible full convergence is not necessarily everyone’s final goal. But even if an organization’s goal is full convergence, it remains to be seen if the organization would have to work on the “continuum” to gradually reach its goal. Examples of organizations like the one in Tampa may suggest an organization may be able to diffuse an innovation without experiencing all five steps of the “continuum”.

RQ3: *Motivations for beginning convergence*

Management at all three sites appear to have clear connections to the pulse of the print and broadcasting industries. Managers at all three sites say the idea of converging newsrooms came from industry trends. Managers were aware of the convergence experiments going on in high profile places like Tampa, Chicago, and Lawrence. Well-informed newsroom managers may be a prerequisite to consideration of convergence.

Once industry trends alerted managers at these sites to the concept of convergence, some managers used resources to learn more. In the case of Fargo, they even visited Lawrence, Kansas to learn more about their converged news operations. In

Iowa Falls, there were meetings and retreats to discuss convergence, and trade magazines were used as resources. In Cedar Rapids, less research was conducted. Instead, there was more discussion on what convergence meant for them and what the end result would look like. Comparing the level of investigation at each site to the level of involvement in the “convergence continuum,” there seems to be a relationship. Iowa Falls and Fargo had done the most investigation on convergence and have more aggressive models than Cedar Rapids. The researcher would suggest that the industry focus on fully converged news operations may be responsible for directing news managers to consider full convergence models for themselves, instead of less involved models.

It is also interesting to investigate where talks about convergence started in each of these organizations. In Iowa Falls, the discussion started among managers. In Cedar Rapids, the discussion started among both managers and reporters. In Fargo, the idea started with the company’s online group. The literature suggests the importance of having both management and journalists on board with the concept of convergence--the importance of having investment and leadership from the top and bottom is well established. The push from online employees in Fargo, however, is novel. Forum Communication’s chief operating officer surmised that the online employees had the least to lose among the company divisions. While it is not yet proven that this should be a source of leadership on the issue of convergence, companies interested in convergence may want to consider online divisions as places to start with when trying to sell convergence because of the lower levels of resistance there may be there.

Management at the three convergence sites appear to be in step with a preponderance of the research done on what the goals going into convergence ought to be. All three talked about the desire to improve their local news product as the driving force behind convergence. The Forum Communication's chief operating officer in Fargo made reference to market strength and trying to increase their foothold in the local media market. He says there is recognition that convergence is not a money-saving technique, but at the same time, managers are struggling with the issue of how to pay for it. When discussing goals, the Forum Communication's chief operating officer says the company would like to find ways for the model to save them money. In Cedar Rapids, the idea of convergence started with the newspaper, so part of the stated goals was to extend the newspaper's brand and sell more newspapers. Talk of slimming down the news staff was discussed among upper management, but this never came to fruition. The company appears to have made an early move into the direction of cost-savings when one considers the attempt to train multimedia reporters. This experiment failed, which may add to the conclusions of researchers who insist that convergence should not be viewed as a cost-saving measure. Since Fargo has an ultimate goal of creating multimedia reporters, it will be interesting to see if this is successfully implemented and if it ultimately saves the company money.

RQ4: *Training*

Despite a lot of the research suggesting high levels of training to make convergence easier for journalists, two of the sites appear to have settled on convergence models which require minimal training. Iowa Falls did enough training to get traditional newspaper reporters familiar with recording equipment and other radio technologies used for broadcast. This involved training on the use of simple recording equipment and familiarization with the process of calling reports into the radio station using a phone.

In Cedar Rapids, there was considerable training for reporters identified as possible multimedia journalists. As mentioned, this experiment failed. Apart from the classes taken by those reporters, the only training involved was informal in-office training to give newspaper reporters what they needed to be on television. Training in Fargo has largely taken the form of investigation of other convergence sites and consultation with convergence experts on new industry trends. But training in Fargo will be necessary if they are to create a model which includes multimedia reporters.

It appears, from subject site research that training is a minimal need, as long as there is newsroom autonomy. Newsroom autonomy, in this case, means newsrooms maintain their own newsroom staffs which are trained to produce for their own media. While places like Iowa Falls have not undergone high levels of training for multimedia reporters, the researcher believes major training efforts need only be undertaken when journalists are called upon to expand their writing skills for multiple media. Even though Iowa City managers appear to be pleased with the content of their radio newscasts, it would take a content analysis to better determine if this conclusion is accurate.

RQ5: *Cultural differences*

Each subject site has found its own way to deal with the cultural issues that arise when reporters from different media are asked to begin working together, although all of them have also taken the approach of ultimately forcing the issue. In Iowa Falls, the reporters resisted at first, but the company's initial experiments with convergence in the sales department helped journalists realize that convergence was coming. The vice president and general operations manager says managers need to show relentless pressure. The KIFG station manager says one of the challenges was to get traditional newspaper reporters to begin thinking about the more immediate needs of information for the radio. Those who do not want to change eventually leave the company because of their unwillingness to participate. While this has not happened in the newsroom, the convergence of the sales department in Iowa Falls did lead to a sales representative leaving the company.

Cultural issues also developed in Cedar Rapids. There was the typical complaint from print reporters that television was a superficial medium, but managers reported that the journalists eventually got past this once they realized some of the benefits of the medium. Some reporters saw television as the enemy and continued to compete, but this declined over time. Newspaper reporters are frequently put on television in Cedar Rapids, but they are not forced to be on the air. Managers now expect all reporters to take part in convergence, but they still need occasional reminders to get along. There have been occasions where upper management had to get involved in some conflict resolution between the newsrooms when a dispute would arise. New hires are expected to take part in convergence.

In Fargo, there have been considerable challenges to changing newsroom cultures. As suggested by research, the chief operating officer's plan is to utilize the enthusiasm of those in the newsrooms who are interested in the concept to champion convergence. He says journalists will get a grace period to assimilate to convergence, but will have to be fired if they do not eventually join in.

In all these cases, managers appear willing to take measures to overcome cultural differences in the newsrooms, but they leave plenty of room for reporters to bring themselves into the fold of the new dynamic. It may be interesting to see if any of these subject sites would eventually have to terminate a reporter over insurmountable cultural differences. While it appears the companies are willing to take such a step, it is also clear that they prefer to find ways to make convergence work without taking drastic measures. In any case, these models all seem to be supported by researchers who suggest management has to be in the drivers' seat when it comes to dealing with personnel issues in convergence. It appears cultural differences can be as tricky to deal with on a small scale as they are on larger scales, but the problems are not insurmountable.

RQ6: *Reporters' compensation*

Reporters in small to medium markets may not expect to get paid more for taking part in convergence. In Iowa Falls, reporters' compensation is not changed under convergence, although the vice president and general operations manager noted that putting traditional newspapers on the air gives them personal satisfaction when they receive feedback from the community. Cedar Rapids management sees convergence as part of the eight hour work day. Given the early stage of convergence in Fargo, the issue of compensation has not yet been fully realized, but chief operating officer says he understands the argument that reporters ought to get paid more for having extra duties and talents. He suggests reporters should be offered more pay for their duties, but the issue should be addressed over time.

Even though convergence is not seen as a cost saving measure, reporters are clearly being asked to provide more value to a product they have produced in the past without realizing that additional value in their paychecks. It appears, from the lack of reporter revolt, that reporters at two of the sites have come to grips with the reality that their pay will not improve under convergence. It could be argued that the reporters in Iowa Falls and Cedar Rapids are not being asked to do all that much more than they were before. In Iowa Falls, reporters just make a phone call reporting to the radio station on what they are covering. In Cedar Rapids, it is a simple matter of a manager or reporter giving a tip to the other newsroom. In neither case are the reporters being asked to substantially improve their skill levels. This means they are not only of limited additional value to the company, but their new duties are not really providing an additional boost to their resume either. In both cases, it appears much of the extra burden is put on management to ensure information is being shared. In fact, it may be the resumes of those in management that may be improved because of their experience overseeing the implementation of convergence.

It will be interesting to reexamine what is happening in Fargo in one to two years. It may be anticipated that the progress there will depend on the level of additional training reporters will be asked to undergo. If they move forward with a model for multimedia reporters, the additional training may not only increase their value to the company, but it may also increase their marketability. It appears the management at the company is prepared to consider that there might be an added cost to this added value.

Because of the lack of information on how other converged newsrooms have dealt with reporters' compensation, it is difficult to draw conclusions about whether smaller markets have an advantage in dealing with the issue. It does appear that the issue of compensation can be addressed by finding ways to implement convergence without increasing the skills and duties of reporters. The research conducted here does suggest that future research should focus on how compensation relates to the actual growth in skills reporters are required to undertake, as opposed to the growth in simple job duties. It would also be beneficial to look into any changes in compensation convergence managers might be benefiting from.

RQ7: *Goal Achievement*

In the eyes of management at the three subject sites, results of their convergence efforts are mixed. In Iowa Falls, managers set out to improve their news product, and they believe they are doing that. In fact, the vice president and general operations manager considers convergence a saving grace for the radio station in particular. While they have clearly been able to minimize the size of the radio staff through convergence, the managers are also pleased with improvements in the news product. Still, they admit there is room for improvement and they have identified areas for future development of their convergence model.

The goal in Cedar Rapids was to increase the newspaper's branding and circulation. *The Gazette* managing editor was asked if circulation numbers have changed under convergence and responded by saying that there are too many factors impacting circulation to know if convergence has played any role in recent shifts in the numbers. Still, managers say convergence has increased their story generation and volume of local content. Overall, *The Gazette* managing editor says "on and off it works,” which may be less of a reference to hard results of convergence and more of a reference to the ability to manage the convergence model from within the office.

Clearly, operations in Fargo fall short of the goals of management in implementing convergence. The chief operating officer figures they are about 50 percent of where he would like the news operations to be. Perhaps the upcoming development of a centralized news desk will be an impetus for moving the implementation forward. A central news desk can create both practical and symbolic incentive to see a convergence model put in place. While management remains concerned about paying for convergence, the chief operating officer's belief that money follows quality content will require managers to take a leap of faith, which may already be underway with the construction of a news desk and willingness to hire a news flow editor.

In terms of bringing convergence to the newsroom, all three sites are at different stages of where they are compared to where they want to be. What is consistent between them is their realization that there is more work to do. This suggests that convergence is far from being perfected in any form, and implementation may never truly end. Research on the major market U.S. convergence sites would seem to suggest those sites are beyond many of the challenges the sites in this study still face. While impossible to prove here, there is a possibility that smaller market convergence models are more fluid than major market models because of their ability to absorb change more easily. As mentioned earlier, smaller markets appear to be more nimble in responding to convergence ideas. This is reflected in the organic nature in which they develop and contributes to the belief that small to medium markets may be an ideal incubator for convergence ideas. At the sites in this study, convergence may leave managers with a constant craving to improve their model. While this might frustrate managers, it creates a beneficial situation for researchers to learn more about convergence.

Diffusion of Convergence

Diffusion theory can help determine how well convergence has caught on in at the sample sites, but at two of the sites, it is clear convergence has not been fully realized. I would also argue that it has not been fully realized at Iowa Falls because of the evolving nature of convergence and the constant need to occasionally modify it. In Iowa Falls and Fargo, it is clear the managers believe convergence is better than the status quo. This would explain their strong attitudes on the issue. In Cedar Rapids, it is less clear that convergence is perceived as better than the status quo. The less aggressive examination and implementation suggest there may be some experimentation to see if it will truly be better than the status quo. Because there has been cooperation in Cedar Rapids and Iowa Falls, this would suggest the rank and file perceive it as better than the status quo. Because Fargo has had some roadblocks, it is possible journalists there do not see convergence providing them or the company benefits.

All three sites see relative advantages to convergence, as described in diffusion theory (Rogers, 1983). Both Iowa Falls and Cedar Rapids see improved news products and improved productivity. In Fargo, there is the hope for an improved news product, and perhaps the creation of some efficiency. Diffusion theory would suggest this perception among managers would help lead to successful convergence. How employees react is another issue, which is examined well by Singer (2003a).

The willingness of managers in Iowa Falls and Cedar Rapids to experiment with convergence may help explain its success in those markets. Managers in Iowa Falls admit to trying convergence techniques which failed. In Cedar Rapids, managers have tried different convergence efforts with varying results. In Fargo, it would seem the management would like to have a game plan going into convergence. Because it is not yet in place, it is hard to know how willing the company will be to experiment with different ideas.

The idea of convergence is mostly communicated from management to employees in the sample sites. In Cedar Rapids, there was some indication that convergence was an idea that materialized on upper and lower levels of the company. But ultimately, how convergence will operate is communicated from the top down at all three companies. In Iowa Falls, managers simply told employees convergence was coming, and it came. This may be because of the smaller size of the operation and the relative distance between employees and management. At the two other sites, one could argue there is more distance for the message to travel from management to employees, and the sear size of the companies makes it much easier for the employee to ignore the messages. This may actually be the case in Cedar Rapids and Fargo. In Cedar Rapids, the gradual implementation of convergence may have to do with the employees' ability to simply not participate. While this would ultimately be an issue for management, it is clear those employees who lagged behind in the innovation would get some time to decide to take part. Although it is difficult to know for sure, this may also explain why convergence has been hard to jump start in Fargo.

If you plotted the rate of convergence adoption for all three sample sites on an s-curve, you would see three very different s-curves. In diffusion theory, there is the suggestion that innovations happen over time can catch on once a critical mass of individuals buy in to the innovation. In Iowa Falls, this curve would be a very steep one. Managers report little resistance to convergence in the news staff, which suggests the innovation had very few stragglers. In Cedar Rapids, the s-curve would be much wider. There was a gradual uptake, but it appears there was a critical mass point reached where everyone bought in to the innovation. What few stragglers there may have been are now either gone or part of the convergence efforts. The s-curve for Fargo would be incomplete. There, a critical mass has not yet been reached, but it is clear the uptake is very wide. If management is successful, there will be a spike in the s-curve when employees finally buy-in. This depends on managers finding a way to giving employees the perception that convergence will be good for them and their careers.

Change agents can be found at all the convergence sample sites, but opinion leaders are less easy to identify. Because this study focused on discussions with managers, it is less likely the researcher would have contact with someone who would best fit the definition of an opinion leader. In Iowa Falls, the top-down decision-making involved in the convergence effort suggests the change agent is near the top of management. Whether one of the other managers played a role as the opinion leader is unclear. Diffusion theory would suggest that perhaps some other manager or even an employee may, at some time, have played the role as intermediary in comforting or explaining to a journalist why convergence was being pursued. In Cedar Rapids, both change agents and opinion leaders are difficult to identify. It would seem convergence arrived on a consensus basis among managers. Those managers interviewed for this study would seem to act more like opinion leaders in their role of managing the day-to-day concerns employees have about convergence. If there was a change agent in Cedar Rapids, the researcher did not meet them. In Fargo, the change agent may be the manager who was interviewed. The manager had strong feelings about convergence and how it ought to work. It is possible there is a need for an opinion leader in Fargo to help convergence get support among employees. The manager expressed interest in getting convergence started with those who may be most interested in the concept, which may be a good way to cultivate some change agents.

Conclusions

While this qualitative study makes it difficult to determine what kind of convergence model might work best for other media companies, it does make the case that small and medium market convergence models are diverse and ever-shifting. Media companies looking to consider convergence in the future need to realize that there is no single, static way to implement a convergence model. There may be no such thing as ideal conditions for convergence, but this study illustrates that small market convergence models not only provide ideas for other media companies, but may themselves be better suited to convergence. This is also suggested by Singer (2003a) and supported by the notion in diffusion theory that the larger an organization is, the more diffusion is necessary to implement an innovation. The vice president and general operations manager in Iowa Falls considers convergence a saving grace for small markets looking to improve content on a budget. Differences in market sizes from within the subject sites in this thesis suggests small market companies may be better suited to the flexibility convergence demands.

For the two medium market examples studied in this thesis, the largest challenge they seemed to face was in implementation. While Cedar Rapids has implemented convergence, the process was challenged by cultural differences and an inconsistency in relations and execution. Although it is unproven, there may also be a need for a change agent to promote convergence. The challenges in Fargo are more obvious since cultural, managerial, and logistical challenges are still ahead for the developing news convergence project. Fargo may also be helped by the creation of opinion leaders to help communicate the benefits of convergence from the highest management levels to the journalists. Based on the information from this study, the researcher believes challenges in running a converged newsroom are proportional to the flexibility inherent in the company. The more flexible a company is, the more likely it is to be able to succeed in implementing convergence. Further, flexibility in the company is commonly inversely proportional to its size. That is, the larger a company is, the harder it is to be flexible. Diffusion theory suggests larger organizations can have a harder time experimenting with innovations, which is one of methods for successfully implementing an innovation.

This conclusion should not discourage larger market companies from considering convergence in their newsrooms. The managers must go into the process realizing that the larger their operation, the more complicated and time-consuming the task might be. It is possible that a larger market company could discover ways to implement convergence if they can find ways to react more nimbly to how the program is implemented and managed, but they must still address the number of people convergence involves. The researcher suggests larger market companies will be more likely to find success implementing a convergence model which impacts journalists as little as possible. Apart from avoiding issues of cultural conflicts, compensation, and training, finding ways to remove journalists from the process could make convergence flexible enough to work as well as it does in small market settings. One suggestion the researcher puts forward, based on observations of each site's management issues, is the use of a "news flow editor." This person can minimize the need for journalists from different media in the same company to interact, lessening cultural conflicts. Because more diffusion of innovations is necessary in larger organizations, a "news flow editor" can cultivate the interpersonal relationships needed to give journalists the perception that the idea of convergence is palatable and accepted by others in their peer group. They also reduce the workload generated for journalists, minimizing compensation concerns and needs for training. But finally, with one person fully immersed in the convergence model, the flexibility of the newsrooms to react to changes is just as, if not more nimble than a small market media company.

Given the possible benefits of convergence, it is surprising that more small market media companies do not consider trying it on at least some scale. One of the primary reasons for this may be a lack of common ownership. Common ownership clearly makes convergence easier, as suggested by the vice president and general operations manager in Iowa Falls. It also makes convergence more obvious as the company searches for ways to easily improve content. The idea of working with a traditional media competitor in your own small community may not immediately occur to most small market media company managers. The researcher envisions the possibility of a movement among small markets in the U.S. to act as an incubator for convergence. While many companies have not taken up the newsroom convergence opportunities, certainly all segments of the industry, from small to large markets, stand to gain from such an experiment.

Limitations

Many of the limitations of this study have been mentioned throughout the course of the thesis. Most of them are related to the qualitative nature of the study and limited sample size. The researcher believes the qualitative study was necessary to maintain the flexibility needed to conduct the questioning and address the issue of how to categorize characteristics of a very diverse phenomenon.

Because the focus of this study was small to medium market convergence models, there is some question as to whether the findings could at all be transferable to major market media companies. Other companies may more likely get value from studying convergence models in an a la carte manner. Like the models developed by the subject sites, there are some ideas which worked and others which did not under their own unique circumstances. If media organizations can understand the dynamics which cause individual convergence ideas to thrive or fail, they can use the individual ideas to design a convergence model which can work for them. Looking forward, what is important is that other companies studying convergence are as open to change and willing to correct mistakes as the sites in this study have been.

Future Research

Small market convergence models are diverse and rich with innovation and clearly need to be the subject of more focus. The historical focus on larger market convergence examples is understandable given the implications they have on the overall media. But, if researchers are truly interested in determining the future of convergence, they must look at the smaller markets to bring attention to where the ideas are most fluid an innovative. If convergence is not meant to last in US media, it will not survive in smaller markets.

Future researchers could advance the examination of convergence by finding new ways to quantify studies of convergence. There are some examples of past attempts in the literature review, but they are primarily surveys of how journalists and managers are coping with the industry movement and have little focus on outcomes. More quantitative research could focus on goal achievement within converged newsrooms and measurable outcomes like circulation, advertising revenue, and cost savings. This is the type of information that can be used to spur forward movement on the discussion on whether or not convergence pays off. There are also a lot of variables covered in this study which could be studied in a quantitative manner if the sample size were expanded. Quantitative research could shed more light on the roles and merits of a "news flow editor," the future of the multimedia reporter, and if reporter compensation can or should be addressed. A quantitative study would involve surveys of a wider range of converged newsrooms to get more precise measurements on how management is structured and what is expected of multimedia reporters.

While there is already much written about the issues of cross-ownership in convergence, much of it is focused on the implications of major media mergers on the scale of AOL/Time Warner. There is more be learned about how cross-ownership impacts audiences on a smaller scale. This study suggests that the public is mostly disinterested in what impacts cross-ownership might have on them, but better information could be collected by going directly to the audience.

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Appendix A

Questions for study participants

Describe your market.
Tell me about how you got to where you are with convergence. How did it start?
What is the ownership situation? Is there common ownership?
What prompted convergence?
Where did the push start?
How much does technology play into the decision?
What investigation did you do going into convergence
What was the goal going in?
What does the model look like? How does convergence work in terms of information flow?
What structural changes to the office have been made under convergence?
Is there someone who oversees the convergence effort? What do they do?
How was the model decided upon?
What issues have there been with reporters' compensation, if any?
What role does the internet play in convergence? Do you have converged internet resources?
What training has been undertaken as part of convergence?
How were cultural differences between newsrooms overcome?
How have your hiring practices changed under convergence?
Are you seeing the results you have hoped for going into convergence? What are the results?

Appendix B

Study participants

Managers at KIFG and *The Times Citizen* in Iowa Falls, IA.:

T.J. Norman, KIFG station manager

Anne Denholme, Division manager

Mark Hamilton, President and owner

Jo Martin, Vice president and general operations manager

Jay Luther, computer and IT specialist.

Managers at KCRG-TV and *The Gazette* in Cedar Rapids, IA:

Shannon Booth, KCRG-TV Executive news and web producer

Dan Geiser, *The Gazette* Managing Editor

Manager at Forum Communications in Fargo, ND:

Lloyd Case, Chief Operating Officer

Notes

[1]While this thesis does not examine the convergence of sales departments in media companies, it is an issue of great interest for companies under common ownership not only because of the economy of operations, but also the public perception that companies under the same ownership are not aware of what their own counterparts are doing. Sales managers are concerned about fatigue among businesses getting visits from multiple sales people from the same company. This issue is also very understudied and is also an issue of great interest to companies with more than one sales department in the same locality.

[2] FCC regulations currently prohibit cross ownership between print and broadcast companies in the same market. Exceptions to this rule exist because when the regulation was put in place, companies with cross-ownership in the same market were grandfathered and not forced to divest themselves of any of their media holdings.