

What's important is that we get it out the door before the Internet dies. There are no guarantees.

—Steve Deering

A Canadian computer scientist at the Xerox Palo Alto Research Center working on upgrading the Internet before it runs out of room

Notepad

The Interactive Connection launched an advertiser-supported Internet sports service called SportsWorld on the World Wide Web at <http://sportsworld.line.com>. The site is free to Internet users and provides up-to-the-minute sports information from professional and amateur sports with box scores, breaking news, individual and team statistics, plus insights, and analyses.

InfoSeek Corp. is offering an Internet-based news filtering service, Personal Newswire, on the Internet, allowing subscribers to create a personal newspaper to track developments on topics of interest. The service delivers full-text articles from USENET News groups and commercial information sources. Additional information is available at <http://www.infoseek.com>.

The Newspaper Association of America has launched a site on the World Wide Web: <http://www.infi.net/naa>. The site is evolving but includes links to newspapers, industry information, and events.

A new survey says 46 percent of all U.S. households now own a computer, Newsbytes reports. The survey from Casey Communications/Shandwick of Michigan says that 16 percent subscribe to on-line computer services that have Internet access. Among the 54 percent who said they don't currently own a computer, 17 percent said they were going to buy one within the next year.

Time Digital, a new magazine covering technology and related issues, will debut this fall as an insert with Time. Time Digital will appear at least four times a year and will have about 40 pages per issue.

BY J.T. JOHNSON

Sometimes we move so fast, we can't see where we are going. That often seems to be the situation with journalism in the Digital Age. Two surveys of computer use in U.S. journalism in the past year are pointing to some clear landmarks. Not only do they show where we were, they suggest strong indications of where the industry is headed.

Last year, Bruce Garrison, a professor of journalism at the University of Miami, analyzed the responses from the staffs of 208 Sunday newspapers with circulations of 20,000 or more. He wanted to determine the degree to which reporters and editors are using the tools of computer-assisted reporting. He also wanted to find out what specific tools are being put to the task.

Later in the year, Steve Ross, a professor at the Columbia University Graduate School of Journalism, and Don Middleberg, chairman of Middleberg & Associates public relations consultants, teamed up to survey 6,000 writers, reporters, and editors. They wanted to know the extent to which the media are using digital channels to receive information.

Together, the two studies get at the two forms of the reportorial process. The former focuses on the reporter as the activist in the process, going after the data that could suggest ideas for news stories and which, upon analysis, contribute to the final story to be passed on to readers or listeners. The second study, motivated no doubt by perspective of the public relations practitioner wondering how to get his message to the press efficiently, highlights the reporter/editor as the relatively passive recipient of the story tip/lead/data.

Here are highlights of the Garrison study:

- Two-thirds (66.3 percent) of the newspapers use computers for some type of reporting. Nearly half (47.1 percent) had created a CAR desk or team or planned to in the foreseeable future.
- Macintosh computers were used by only 12.4 percent of the newspapers for reporting. Of the IBM/Intel-based CPUs used by the remaining 87 percent, nearly half were 486 machines. (The Pentium systems had not gained widespread use, but that was in the spring of '94. Price reductions have made the Pentium machines more affordable.)
- XyWrite was the most-used word processing program (23.1 percent), "but WordPerfect and Word are becoming more common."
- There was a tight three-way race in terms of

spreadsheet programs: Excel was used in 16.8 percent of the newsrooms, Lotus 1-2-3 in 16.3 percent, and Quattro Pro by 13 percent.

• Paradox was the database analysis package selected by 38.3 percent of the users, while nearly a quarter used FoxPro.

What are journalists not doing?

- Most newspapers were not yet using computer mapping programs (83.2 percent said "none" or did not answer the question).
- Only 14.4 percent were using specialized statistical software such as SPSS or SAS.
- Perhaps most surprising, only 7.2 percent of the papers reported the use of personal information managers—software that keeps track of names, numbers, appointments, and to-do lists.



Newspapers slow to embrace advances in computer world

Even so, on-line services first step in electronic reporting

What was not surprising was that tapping on-line resources was the papers' first step into CAR. In 1994, about 60 percent of the daily papers used on-line services.

This dovetails with the findings of the Ross/Middleberg report, "The Media in Cyberspace.":

• Sixteen percent of respondents said they and their staffs use on-line services daily. Another third said they dial in to digital resources—E-mail, databases, BBSs—at least weekly.

• Almost three-quarters of the non-freelance respondents and all freelancers had floppy drives on their desktops and were receptive to information coming to them on a disk. Such was not the case for CD-ROMs.

"Although freelancers (33 percent) and art departments (32 percent) have CD-ROM drives, only a few editors (11 percent) and reporters (6 percent) at magazines and newspapers do.

• Still, "two-thirds (68 percent) of editors at dailies say they will want electronic images rather than slides or photos in two years."

• A year ago, CompuServe was used by the most respondents (35 percent), with the Internet second at 23 percent. America Online was used by 21 percent of the respondents. □

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