Journalism Professors’ Information Seeking Behaviors About Online Tool Use for Teaching

Katherine Hepworth, PhD
Donica Mensing, PhD
Gi Woon Yun, PhD
The Literature

Journalism professors’ use of online tools

Professors’ online information seeking behaviors

Diffusion of Innovations (Rogers)
Research Questions

RQ1
What are journalism professors’ information seeking behaviors around online tools for teaching?

RQ2
After information seeking, which tools do journalism professors ultimately adopt for teaching?

RQ3
How does position on the diffusion of innovations spectrum affect journalism professors information seeking behavior about, and selection of, online tools for teaching?
Method

30 minute, open ended interviews (Responsive Interviewing Model)

Six questions
Participant selection

20 participants

Active teachers

Heavy online tool users

Participants in Online News Association
Results

DIFFUSION OF INNOVATIONS

Innovators — 4 participants
Early Adopters — 10 participants
Early Majority — 5 participants
Late Majority — 1 participant
Laggards — 0 participants
Results

DIFFUSION OF INNOVATIONS

Innovators — generalized information seeking strategies

“I try to attend as many workshops, seminars, conferences and faculty development as I can.”
Results

DIFFUSION OF INNOVATIONS

Early Adopters & Early Majorities — use specific, trusted information sources
Results

DIFFUSION OF INNOVATIONS

Late Majorities — rarely seek information
Results

WHAT INFORMATION ARE PROFESSORS LOOKING FOR ABOUT ONLINE TOOLS?

New tools

Industry standard tools

Reviews of tools

Business news about parent companies
Results

WHERE DO PROFESSORS FIND INFORMATION ABOUT ONLINE TOOLS?

Individuals — media professionals and other professors

Organizations — media outlets and media related foundations

Communities — conferences and Twitter
Results

WHAT DO PROFESSORS USE ONLINE TOOLS FOR?

Content production — creating images, documents, slides

Content publishing — blogs, other websites, file hosting

Private messaging

Social media

Content management
Results

SUPERTOOLS

Tools with multiple features that most professors regularly use
Results

SUPERTOOLS

Facebook
Messages
Newsfeed
Page Insights
Groups

85% participants
## Results

### SUPERTOOLS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Facebook</th>
<th>Google Drive</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Messages</td>
<td>Docs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newsfeed</td>
<td>File storage (Drive)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Page Insights</td>
<td>Forms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Groups</td>
<td>Sheets</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Slides</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- 85% participants
- 75% participants
# Results

## SUPERTOOLS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Facebook</th>
<th>Google Drive</th>
<th>Twitter</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Messages</td>
<td>Docs</td>
<td>Analytics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newsfeed</td>
<td>File storage (Drive)</td>
<td>Direct Messages</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Page Insights</td>
<td>Forms</td>
<td>Hashtags</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Groups</td>
<td>Sheets</td>
<td>Polls</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>85% participants</td>
<td>Slides</td>
<td>Twitter Feed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>75% participants</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>85% participants</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Results

OTHER COMMONLY USED TOOLS

1 Wordpress  5 Storify
2 Blackboard  6 Slack
3 Instagram  7 Pinterest
4 Youtube  8 Canvas
Results

STRESS

90% of professors found information seeking stressful

Early majority were the most stressed

Innovators were moderately stressed

Early adopters were the least stressed

Late majority was not stressed at all
Discussion

An immediate need for reliable, regular information about online tools for journalism education

Information sources about tools are:
— highly fragmented
— hard to find
— not trustworthy
— not suitably distributed
Discussion

Trustworthiness and relevance of information are critical.

Professors want to learn about tools in person, from each other.

Second preference: information from professors and media professionals through blogs, email newsletters, and social media.

Professors are frustrated at the lack of opportunities for seeking reliable, trustworthy, well-publicized information about tools.
Discussion

An opportunity for conference organizers, foundations, and publishers

PROPOSED STRATEGY

1 Hire prominent journalism professors to identify industry-relevant and teaching-appropriate tools

2 Distribute their findings through conferences, blogs, email newsletters
Thank you

@khepworth
khepworth@unr.edu
https://kathep.com/research