Critical Intervention Action Plan

**Media with Meaning:**

**Can Social Media Improve Truth?**

**(Photojournalism isn’t dead!)**

Holly Tharp

 and

Trish O’Donnell

2/5/2012

Contemporary Issues in Art Education

***Research Brief:***

***Issue:***

Inspired by a lecture given by Alisa Miller, the president and CEO of Public Radio International, titled, “How News Shapes Our World,” we began discussing the issue of local and national news broadcasts lack of coverage of global news. Miller presents staggering statistics paired with visuals that address the issue of Americans receiving relevant news that is occurring worldwide. In 2007, only 12% of local news, where the majority of people go to receive the news, was global coverage.[[1]](#endnote-1) Miller presents a compelling discussion throughout her presentation that explores political and financial motivations for this lack of global coverage. Based on the statistics of what percentage of global news is broadcasted and where Americans go to receive the news, we began to ask questions as to where it is best to access global news and how to face the issue of our youth knowing less about the world than previous generations.

Through our research we present a curricular unit designed for photojournalism students to explore ways that social media improves global awareness and truth. Educators, activists, and artists alike are using interface as a tool to communicate about world news and politics and provide accessibility for our society to become globally connected. If the local and national news has shirked on this responsibility, where else can we go as a society to learn about global issues and perspectives? Through this unit, we provide several links and examples of individuals using social media as a means to reach out and inform a global audience.

***Research Summary:***

1. Alisa Miller

Alisa Miller, head of Public Radio International, talks about why -- though we want to know more about the world than ever -- the US media is actually showing less. Eye-opening stats and graphs.[[2]](#endnote-2)

<http://www.ted.com/talks/alisa_miller_shares_the_news_about_the_news.html>

Alisa Millers professional website

<http://www.pri.org/global-news.html>

1. Julian Assange

The controversial website WikiLeaks collects and posts highly classified documents and video. Founder Julian Assange, who's reportedly being sought for questioning by US authorities, talks to TED's Chris Anderson about how the site operates, what it has accomplished -- and what drives him. The interview includes graphic footage of a recent US airstrike in Baghdad.[[3]](#endnote-3)

<http://www.ted.com/talks/julian_assange_why_the_world_needs_wikileaks.html>

1. Aaron Koblin

Artist Aaron Koblin takes vast amounts of data -- and at times vast numbers of people -- and weaves them into stunning visualizations. From elegant lines tracing airline flights to landscapes of cell phone data, from a Johnny Cash video assembled from crowd-sourced drawings to the "Wilderness Downtown" video that customizes for the user, his works brilliantly explore how modern technology can make us more human.[[4]](#endnote-4)

Amazon’s mechanical turk

<https://www.mturk.com/mturk/welcome>

10,000 sheep created by online workers

<http://www.thesheepmarket.com/>

Aaron Koblin personal website

<http://www.aaronkoblin.com/>

1. Edward Burtynsky

In stunning large-format photographs, Edward Burtynsky follows the path of oil through modern society, from wellhead to pipeline to car engine -- and then beyond to the projected peak-oil endgame.[[5]](#endnote-5)

Edward Burtynsky personal website

<http://www.edwardburtynsky.com/>

Worldchanging.com is a nonprofit media organization dedicated to solutions-based journalism about the planetary future.

<http://www.worldchanging.com/>

1. Edward Burtynsky

Accepting his 2005 TED Prize, photographer Edward Burtynsky makes a wish: that his images -- stunning landscapes that document humanity's impact on the world -- help persuade millions to join a global conversation on sustainability.[[6]](#endnote-6)

<http://www.ted.com/talks/edward_burtynsky_on_manufactured_landscapes.html>

1. Chris Jordan

Artist Chris Jordan shows us an arresting view of what Western culture looks like. His supersized images picture some almost unimaginable statistics -- like the astonishing number of paper cups we use every single day.[[7]](#endnote-7)

<http://www.ted.com/talks/chris_jordan_pictures_some_shocking_stats.html>

1. Derek Sivers

With help from some surprising footage, Derek Sivers explains how movements really get started. (Hint: it takes two.) [[8]](#endnote-8)

<http://www.ted.com/talks/derek_sivers_how_to_start_a_movement.html>

Derek Sivers personal website

<http://sivers.org/>

1. National Conference of State Legislatures

The National Conference of State Legislatures is a bipartisan organization that serves the legislators and staffs of the nation's 50 states, its commonwealths and territories.  NCSL provides research, technical assistance and opportunities for policymakers to exchange ideas on the most pressing state issues.

<http://www.ncsl.org/press-room/top-12-legislative-issues-of-2012.aspx>

***Unit Overview:***

What we think we know, what we have been told, and the truth could differ…

It is our job to find the answers.

***Objective:*** Through a series of topics and research formats, photojournalism students will explore social media as a resource to become active, informed, and globally aware citizens. Listed below are several resources students will research in deciding on a topic to investigate further regarding global issues. Once a topic is chosen, students will have options to how they want to visually investigate and discuss their topic in regards to how it is addressed in various media, such as television, print and radio, verses the coverage found via the internet.

***Motivator:***

Photojournalists tell stories and many risk their lives and witness subject matter that is unspeakable. Students will consider how photojournalism has changed in history by answering some important questions and looking at photographers who have made a difference.

How does photojournalism exist today? What venue(s) do you think works best to tell a story through images? What type of information is important globally? How can photojournalist be part of a movement? Can they start a movement?

*Historical Scavenger Hunt:*

Philip Jones Griffiths

Henri Cartier-Bresson

Robert Doisneau

David Burnett

Robert Capa

Marvin Breckinridge Patterson

Noura Tabet

David Seymour

Dorthea Lange

Margaret Bourke-White

Eddie Adams

Robert Frank

Yevgeny Khaldei

Mathew Brady

Weegee

Mohamed Amin

Pablo Bartholomew

Spider Martin

Lewis Hine Charles Moore Phan Thi Kim Phuc

***Procedure:*** The “research summary” links are resources in opening the discussion and thought process of how social media can improve truth by exploring and covering global issues that are not accessible via traditional methods of providing news. Watch and visit the links provided. Take notes of what inspires you, what you learn that you had not known previously, and questions you may develop. Keep a list of issues and topics covered in the discussions. In partners or small groups, decide on a topic from the provided list to further inquire and research via social media as resource for news and education. Once your group has decided on a topic, you will choose a project to explore, illustrate, and present your group’s findings and conclusions.

***Topics, Global Issues:***

* Defense
* Healthcare
* Human Rights
* Technology
* Criminal Justice
* Energy
* Poverty
* Gender

***Projects to Explore:***

Read, watch, fact find using at least 10 different media “reports”…

* Visually show truth in stats about topic
* Visual web or diagram showing topic
* Show change in history of any topic
* Compare and contrast ideas, views, or opinions
* Build a museum collection related to topic
* Start a movement using social media

***References:***

 Miller, Alisa. "Shares the news about the news." TED Talks. Mar. 2008. Web. 19 Jan. 2012. <http://www.ted.com/talks/alisa\_miller\_shares\_the\_news\_about\_the\_news.html>.

3 Assange, Julian. "Why the world needs WikiLeaks." *www.ted.com*. TEDtalks, July 2010. Web. 18 Jan. 2012. <http://www.ted.com/talks/julian\_assange\_why\_the\_world\_needs\_wikileaks.html>.

4 Koblin, Aaron. "Artfully visualizing our humanity." TED Talks. Palm Springs. Mar. 2011. Web. 18 Jan. 2012. <http://www.ted.com/talks/aaron\_koblin.html>.

5 Burtynsky, Edward. "Photographs the landscape of oil." TED Talks. July 2009. Web. 19 Jan. 2012. <http://www.ted.com/talks/edward\_burtynsky\_photographs\_the\_landscape\_of\_oil.html>.

6 Burtynsky, Edward. "Manufactured landscape ." TED Talks. Feb. 2005. Web. 19 Jan. 2012. <http://www.ted.com/talks/edward\_burtynsky\_on\_manufactured\_landscapes.html>.

7 Jordan, Chris. "Pictures some shocking stats." TED Talks. Feb. 2008. Web. 19 Jan. 2012. <http://www.ted.com/talks/chris\_jordan\_pictures\_some\_shocking\_stats.html>.

8 Sivers, Derek. "How to start a movement." TED Talks. Long Beach. Feb. 2010. Web. 19 Jan. 2012. <http://www.ted.com/talks/derek\_sivers\_how\_to\_start\_a\_movement.html>.

1. [↑](#endnote-ref-1)
2. [↑](#endnote-ref-2)
3. [↑](#endnote-ref-3)
4. [↑](#endnote-ref-4)
5. [↑](#endnote-ref-5)
6. [↑](#endnote-ref-6)
7. [↑](#endnote-ref-7)
8. [↑](#endnote-ref-8)