

# From the Field: The Mobile Journalist

## 5



Photo Credit: Daniel Schaefer under the Creative Commons license.

Photo 5.1

**A** video recorder. A still camera. An audio recorder. A computer. A phone. A rolodex. A single mobile device serves all these purposes—and more—nowadays. It's no wonder mobile devices are the go-to tool for modern journalists.

In this chapter, you will

- Explore the use of mobile devices and applications to gather, produce, and distribute news content—without having to be tied to a physical newsroom or carry around bulky equipment.
- Learn how to create a mobile journalist go-bag with accessories that will allow you to gather quality content with your device.
- Learn how to create a digital-first story pitch, preparing you to develop a plan to use social media and mobile devices while covering stories.

## TV Reporter Makes History with iPhone

Journalism professor Mike Castellucci (@MikeCastellucci) made history with his iPhone when he was a reporter at WFAA-TV (ABC) in Dallas. In 2015, Castellucci shot a half-hour broadcast entirely with his iPhone. The special, called *Phoning It In*, won an Edward R. Murrow award and three Emmys. He also produced a sequel to the original show.

He outfitted his phone with an external mic, and used a mini tripod and a couple wide-angle lenses. Castellucci said the video quality of the iPhone footage was never an issue for broadcasting on air. “Not once has anybody ever complained about footage quality, not once. In fact, it’s just the opposite, you got that on an iPhone?”

Watch the show: *bitly/PhoningItIn*

From the palm of his or her hand, a reporter can easily gather, produce, and share stories to any platform from nearly anywhere. No need to cart around clunky equipment. Streaming live from the field, for instance, used to require a lot of gear and a small army of people including a reporter, a videographer, and a live truck operator. Now, reporters simply open an app to bring people live to the scene.

Mobile devices and apps simplify the process of getting content from the field to the audience, most notably on social media. Not to mention, journalists can engage with followers on the fly. You see, then, why mobile devices and social media go hand in hand. You can’t discuss one without the other. Imagine how cumbersome it would be to take photos or record video on traditional devices and then post that content on social media. A single mobile device gives journalists the flexibility to get the job done quickly and efficiently.

In addition to streamlining workflow, mobile devices have made it possible for a journalist to accomplish tasks traditionally carried out by a team in the field. Armed with a mobile device, a single reporter fills the roles of one or two others. In most cases, a reporter doesn’t need a photographer or a videographer. This is not limited to reporters in smaller markets. Even those who work in major markets are flying solo in the field with only a mobile device.

Yes, you have to be skilled at doing it all. Welcome to the world of a *mojo*, or mobile journalist.

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### DIGITAL-FIRST MINDSET: MOBILE AND SOCIAL FIRST

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By now, you should have a solid understanding of the digital-first mindset, introduced earlier in the book. Digital-first means mobile and social media first. A digital-first approach requires journalists to use mobile devices to share and engage with audiences on social media prior to publishing on other platforms, such as a website. A news outlet’s website is important, of course, but it’s increasingly becoming the secondary spot to publish information. It all goes back to the audience’s news consumption habits—mobile and social.

## Planning your story: The digital-first story pitch

In newsroom editorial meetings, journalists “sell” the stories they would like to cover. A story pitch has to be convincing and well thought out. Journalists must be prepared to answer key questions before an editor decides which story they’ll be assigned. The art of pitching story ideas takes time to hone. Done right, it can build your credibility and reliability with colleagues as a solid journalist.

A well-crafted pitch has always addressed the following:

- **Story focus.** What’s the angle of the story? Is it focused enough so people will understand the point after watching or reading it?
- **News peg.** Who cares? Why is the story important to your audience at this point in time?
- **Sources.** Does the pitch include a mix of sources to provide a comprehensive story? Does it include “real” people, those directly impacted by the issue or topic? You can humanize a story by integrating the narratives of “real” people, instead of only experts and officials.
- **Data/background info.** What other information, such as scientific research results or statistics from government databases, are needed to provide context and illuminate the issue at the heart of a story? This type of information can back up claims made in a story.
- **Visuals.** How will you tell the story in a visually compelling manner? What visuals do you expect to gather in the field? Which multimedia elements (video, still images, infographics, etc.) are appropriate for this story?

There’s a missing component to this traditional story pitch formula. It doesn’t include a game plan for using mobile devices and social media. Every story pitch today needs to be digital-first. A digital-first pitch outlines how you’ll use mobile devices and social media for newsgathering, distribution of content, and audience engagement.

You’ll recall from our discussion in Chapter 1 those are the three areas in which new media has impacted journalism, opening up new ways to report and engage. For each story pitch, then, include the following elements to not only sell the story to editors, but also stay focused in the field.

- **Newsgathering.** How do you plan to use social media to find sources and content for the story? You may have already been tipped off to the idea because of something you saw on social media.
- **Distribution of news.** Sharing as you go. What’s your plan for keeping the audience up to date on social media? Which platforms will you focus on for this story? Which visual elements can you capture and share with your mobile device?
- **Audience engagement.** How can you bring the audience into your reporting process?

**TABLE 5.1**

Use this toolbox to create your own digital-first pitch for stories. Start by selecting one item from each category.

Digital-First Story Pitches		
<b>Newsgathering</b>	<b>Distribution</b>	<b>Audience Engagement</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>&gt; Search keywords related to a region or a story</li><li>&gt; Use Twitter lists to easily filter through potentially newsworthy items</li><li>&gt; Monitor social media pages of groups, organizations, officials, and other sources</li><li>&gt; Crowdsourcing: Seek out info about a story you're working on</li><li>&gt; Ask for photos or videos</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>&gt; Share photos and videos while in the field</li><li>&gt; Live tweet from news events (remember to use hashtags)</li><li>&gt; Tweet your beat</li><li>&gt; Tweet out quotes from interviews and @mention sources</li><li>&gt; Live blog</li><li>&gt; Create a social media graphic</li><li>&gt; Broadcast live via Facebook Live or Periscope</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>&gt; Hold a live Q&amp;A with the audience</li><li>&gt; Share published stories with social media groups focused on the topic of the report (e.g. Facebook group for new mothers)</li><li>&gt; Retweet knowledgeable sources</li><li>&gt; Crowdsourcing: Seek out info about a story you're working on. Ask audience to comment on a story you have published. Consider using a poll or survey.</li><li>&gt; Thank new followers, follow back, and respond ASAP to questions</li></ul>

Mobile and social media should be embedded in every one of these stages of the reporting process. Table 5.1 serves as a guide to help you brainstorm digital-first pitches. Create your own digital-first checklist using the items in the toolbox. For every story, explain how you will use mobile devices and social media for newsgathering, distribution of content, and audience engagement.

To start, consider picking one toolbox item from each of the three categories. Over time, it will become second nature to integrate more of these elements into your reporting mix, depending on time constraints and the type of story. Notice how some items in the toolbox overlap several categories. For example, asking followers a question isn't just a form of audience engagement; it also could be used as a newsgathering technique.

### **Different types of stories, different approaches**

What you choose from the digital-first toolbox will depend on the type of story you're covering, for instance, a breaking news story versus a feature story. A breaking story will require more frequent posts, and you may choose to stream video live to bring people to the scene.

For a feature story, you'll want to post less frequently and might consider crowdsourcing or a live Q&A, approaches that wouldn't work as well in a breaking news situation. The type of story determines the approach, including which "channels" (Facebook, Twitter, etc.) you'll use. And, in turn, the channel will dictate certain norms, such as the frequency of posts.

Of course, for a journalist, there's no typical day. You never know what you'll be up against in the field. Even the most well-thought-out plans may have to be thrown by the wayside. So, you have to be flexible to change your plan in an instant depending on the situation.

Take the case of journalists covering a sit-in held by a handful of US congressional Democrats. The Democrats sat on the floor of the House chamber for 26 hours as they tried to convince the Republican House majority to hold votes on gun-control measures. The sit-in took place shortly after the deadly Orlando nightclub shooting in 2016, so this was a high-interest story.

The video feed from inside the chamber was turned off, because the House went into official recess. But the sit-in continued. News outlets depend on the feed to monitor House business and to record the video for use in reports, if needed. This is also the feed C-SPAN uses to broadcast congressional proceedings on air. When the feed went dark, journalists used mobile devices and social media to cover the sit-in. The real-time reporting tools included live-tweeting, live-streaming video, and live-blogging.

Only a few journalists were in the House chamber at that point. So many outlets turned to social media to locate content from lawmakers who were using Periscope and Facebook Live to "broadcast" live from inside the chamber. The live-streaming done by lawmakers was used by C-SPAN and other outlets. They not only shared the content on social media, but also used the video streams as part of their on-air broadcast and website coverage.

By quickly choosing the right approach and tools for this type of event, journalists were still able to get the story. Flexibility was key.

**Photo 5.2**  
C-SPAN used Periscope and Facebook Live to cover a sit-in on the floor of the US House of Representatives.



## Covering News in Real Time

When covering news in real time, there are three tools you should consider. A combination of live-tweeting, live-streaming, and live-blogging can keep the audience informed during breaking news and other types of ongoing news events.

- **Live-tweeting.** Tweeting as events unfold creates a narrative to keep followers up to speed. Answer key questions for the audience. Keep the 5 W's in mind (who, what, where, why, and when). When live-tweeting breaking news, it's imperative that journalists don't leave the audience hanging. For example, if you were to write that there's an active shooter on a campus, people expect that you'll then follow up ASAP with what you know and don't know. Include a hashtag related to the news event, so your coverage becomes part of the larger conversation.
- **Live-streaming.** Streaming video through Facebook Live or Periscope can bring people to the scene in ways other social media posts can't. There should be a reason why you're live-streaming though. Don't simply use technology for technology's sake. Tell people what they're looking at, and provide a recap periodically, as new people will continue to join the stream. Use your ethical judgment when deciding what to stream. In dangerous or unfolding situations, be mindful that you could broadcast a worst possible scenario.
- **Live-blogging.** Live blogging is a series of frequent posts on a single webpage dedicated to an ongoing news event. The page contains posts with short bursts of information, each with a time stamp so readers can see the series of events. The posts are in reverse chronological order, with the latest one showing



at the top. Live-blogging was first used by technology journalists to cover Steve Jobs's keynote addresses at the MacWorld conventions. Today, journalists live-blog to report on a range of developing stories, including breaking news and trials. For instance, during the House sit-in by Democrats, the *Atlantic* created a live blog on its website. A team of *Atlantic* journalists posted short bursts of text, sometimes including photos and video, as they received new information about the sit-in. A live blog can be set up as a page within a news outlet's website or through another platform, such as the microblogging site Tumblr. For student journalists, one way to experiment with live-blogging is to select a campus event and create a Tumblr page to live-blog about it. Each year, Educational Technology Day, held at Ithaca College, attracts educators from all over the northeast. As a learning drill, my students live-blog the day's event at [edtechday.tumblr.com](http://edtechday.tumblr.com). They're assigned a shift, with three people each hour posting updates using the Tumblr app and several people throughout the day acting as editors for the live blog.

LIVE BLOG Jun 22, 2016

## A Sit-In on the House Floor Over Gun Control

Congressional Democrats, led by Representative John Lewis, are protesting the House's refusal to vote on gun-control measures. We're providing live updates of their protest, and reactions, as it continues.

Share Tweet ...

### UPDATES

This live blog has concluded

Yoni Appelbaum  
June 23, 2016, 11:10 a.m.

As the sit-in hits the 24-hour mark, we're shifting our continuing coverage to a new post. Scroll down below to see how the action unfolded on Wednesday, or follow along with us as we continue to update the story in real time here:

Democrats have been sitting on the floor of the House for 24 hours as they try to convince the Republican House majority to hold votes on gun-control measures. And it doesn't sound like they'll be leaving anytime soon. "We are going to hold the floor of the House of Representatives ... until we can get the majority to do their jobs and give us a vote," Florida Representative and Democratic National Committee Chair Debbie Wasserman Schultz said Thursday morning on CBS. "It is a cowardly act that they have not at least allowed a vote."

Yoni Appelbaum  
June 23, 2016, 7:44 a.m.

The House, it turns out, can bring timely, controversial legislation to a vote—just not the bills that Democrats had hoped would make it to the floor.

Shortly after 3 a.m. on Thursday morning, Speaker Paul Ryan pushed a bill to fund the fight against the Zika virus to a vote, *The*

## From the Newsroom



**NEAL AUGENSTEIN**  
**(@AUGENSTEINWTOP)**

Reporter, WTOP-FM  
Washington, D.C.

Neal Augenstein became the first major-market radio reporter to use an iPhone as the primary tool to produce news stories in the field. The Newseum recognized Augenstein's

innovative work in mobile journalism by displaying his iPhone 4S as an artifact representing this new era of reporting.

### WHEN DID YOU REALIZE THE POTENTIAL OF USING ONLY A MOBILE DEVICE FOR REPORTING?

When I started at WTOP in 1997, I used to go into the field with two cassette recorders.

*(Continued)*

(Continued)

The cell phones we carried were as big and as heavy as a bowling ball. By 2000, I was carrying a laptop, cameras, microphones—all that gear. Whenever I did something in the field, I would spend a lot of time waiting for the laptop to start and then transferring my clips onto the laptop. I thought, wouldn't it be cool if we could speed up this process.



Photo Credit: Joel Gwadz

**Photo 5.5**

Eventually, in 2010 when the iPhone had been out for a bit, I remember reading about an app that could do multitrack editing. So, I was quick to test that out. With that, I could do all the things I needed. It allowed me to record interviews, edit them, add my voice track and a track of natural sound, and then send the report via e-mail to the newsroom. Being able to do that on a single device was what I was looking for.

#### **WHAT ABOUT THE QUALITY OF THE SOUND?**

At the time, I remember thinking to myself that the quality needs to be good enough for broadcast.

I found that by the time the pieces get edited and go through the audio processing at the station, the sound quality recorded on an iPhone was the same to a listener as that recorded on traditional equipment. I said to myself, "Let me see if anyone notices." This was February of 2010. No one has ever said, "Are you recording on different equipment than coworkers?"

#### **HOW DO YOU USE YOUR IPHONE WHEN YOU FIRST ARRIVE ON A SCENE?**

When I arrive on the scene, I immediately look for images that I may not be able to capture again, such as a house burning. I can record a 10-second video, tweet it out with what I know at that point, and then follow up with the latest information. I can also snap a couple of photos and then tweet them out. Then I record an audio or video interview with the public information officer for the fire department, for example. I prefer video interviews, because they allow me to have both video and audio elements. If I only need audio for a report, I simply strip out the video during the editing process.

#### **YOU'VE CAPITALIZED ON THE BENEFITS OF MOBILE REPORTING. WHAT ARE THE CHALLENGES? HOW DO YOU OVERCOME THEM?**

The biggest limitation of the iPhone is that the microphone is very susceptible to wind—even a breeze. The answer to that is a simple mic windscreen that I always have. Slip it over bottom of the iPhone, where the mic is located. It may look silly, but I've covered hurricanes with it and it worked perfectly. Also, charging is very important. I carry two charging bricks with me so I can keep reporting in the field with the charger attached to my device if needed. I'm always charging in the car and in the newsroom.

#### **ADVICE FOR BUDDING JOURNALISTS?**

Envision different ways of telling stories. What's the best way to tell a particular story? Some of the most exciting things right now are new



ways to engage audiences. Realize and accept that social media storytelling is critical on this front. If someone is looking at social and sees you're covering a story in a unique way, that pays off in the long run for your brand and that of your outlet.

For example, I covered the reopening of the Watergate Hotel. What I wanted to do is tell the story in photos with detailed captions—something that would do well in a

gallery, something someone could thumb through and enjoy. I took a whole bunch of close-ups that showed details, and then I processed them all in black and white on my phone. It got me excited to tell this story and ended up being an effective storytelling format—better than a standard video package. Because of the engaging user-experience of someone flipping through the photos, they would likely remember this piece and share it.

## WORKING REMOTELY

Your “office” as a journalist is, well, just about anywhere. Odds are you won't be returning to the newsroom to write and “file” most stories. The news needs to get out now on multiple platforms, and you have the tools to do that from the field. Mobile devices allow mojos to be “mobile” in more than one sense. They give them the flexibility to produce stories with a single device and set-up an “office” anyplace.

In this section, you'll learn how to make the most of your mobile device to gather, edit, and distribute news. With the proper production apps and techniques, you can capture quality content while working quickly under deadline.



**Photo 5.6** A typical mobile journalism go-bag contains the following: 1. selfie stick 2. mini tripod 3. iOgrapher filmmaking case 4. iPad Mini 5. iPhone 6. XLR cable 7. headphones 8. iRig Pre XLR adaptor 9. microphone 10. car charger 11. portable charger

## Equipment and accessories

Before you head into the field, organize the essential equipment and accessories. They can all fit into one backpack—a journalist's go-bag. Most newsrooms will issue many of these tools of the trade when you're hired. If you're a freelancer or student journalist, you can build your own toolkit inexpensively.

There are dozens of mobile apps and a big market for smartphone accessories, but the bottom line is keep it simple. That's the *mojo* mantra. Weighing yourself down with equipment and accessories defeats the purpose of a *mojo*. Here are the essentials to get the job done:

- **Mobile device with network connectivity.** You're not going to get very far without a mobile device, smartphone, or tablet that has a network connection. No surprise that the devices of choice for journalists are the iPhone and iPad. Other devices simply don't compare to the functionality and versatility of Apple products for multimedia reporting. Many Apple iOS editing apps also offer features such as multitrack video editing, which is critical when producing professional-quality content.

No matter the device, it must have network connectivity through Wi-Fi or a cellular network connection. Network connectivity is obviously needed in order to carry out tasks in the field, such as sending content back to the newsroom, posting to online platforms, and live-streaming. If you're using a smart phone, you'll almost always be connected via your cellular data plan. Keep in mind, the signal strength will vary depending on where the story takes you.

If a tablet, such as an iPad, is your device of choice, there are a couple of ways to connect to a network. You can either purchase a data plan, if that's an option through the provider, or find a way to connect to Wi-Fi. Connecting to Wi-Fi available in public places, such as coffee shops and libraries, isn't always a reliable option. You never know where you'll be, and you don't want to waste time trying to find Wi-Fi you can tap into.

A portable Wi-Fi hotspot can do the trick. There are two choices for portable hotspots. Many providers give you the option to turn your smartphone into a Wi-Fi hotspot for an additional fee. This is often referred to as "tethering." Or, you can purchase a standalone mobile hotspot.

- **Portable chargers.** The last thing you need is for your device to go dead in the middle of a story. A device's battery can drain quickly when it's getting such a workout in the field. A portable charger is a lifesaver. They cost as little as \$15. Plug a mobile device into it, and you can work as the device charges. Don't forget about a car charger—another great way to charge on the go.
- **Monopod/tripod.** One of the limitations of using a mobile device is that, depending on the situation, it can be difficult to get steady video shots by hand. Overcome this challenge by using a tripod or monopod. A tripod has three legs, whereas a monopod is a single pole.

Traditional tripods are heavy and bulky. There are mini tripods made for mobile devices that can fit into your bag or even your pocket. These smaller tripods and monopods give you the stability and flexibility you need in the field. There are many different brands. Recommendation: the JOBY GripTight GorillaPod tripod (around \$20). Manfrotto also sells a variety of mini tripods and monopods that work well with mobile devices.



**Photo 5.7 and 5.8** Mini tripods help provide stability for shooting video and photos. In the photo on the right, the iPad Mini is placed in an iOgrapher Filmmaking Case, which is attached to a mini tripod.

Selfie stick? Yes, include it in your kit. The selfie stick can be handy for getting different visual angles, such as aerial shots, and recording reporter stand-ups.

- **External microphone and adaptors.** The quality of audio recorded on a mobile device is quite good overall. But there are times when an external microphone is needed to get professional-quality audio, such as while interviewing someone in a location with background noise.

Not a problem. With a special adaptor, you can connect handheld or lavalier microphones to a mobile device. Recommendation: the iRig Pre XLR adaptor (around \$40). Simply plug the battery-powered adaptor into your device's headphone jack, and then plug into that an XLR cable attached to the mic. These adaptors also have a spot where you can plug in headphones to listen to the audio. There are also microphones that plug directly into your mobile device, but many of these do not have a headphone jack, making it impossible to monitor audio while recording. Also, throw a mic windscreen in your bag. You'll need that on windy days.

- **Headphones.** The type of headphones you use to listen to audio is important. Avoid earbuds. Instead, toss into your toolkit a pair of headphones that cover your ears. These do a better job of blocking out background noise, so you can hear more accurately the audio coming into your device.

- **Optional gear.** Bringing along a laptop isn't a necessity, but it can make the job of writing stories in the field much easier than tapping on your device's keyboard. If you'd rather leave the laptop at work or don't have one, consider a portable Bluetooth keyboard. The portable keyboard makes it possible to type stories quickly on your mobile device. There are also many other attachments on the market for mobile devices. Some mojos use mini lights and camera lenses that attach to their mobile devices.

### Production apps

In Chapter 3 we discussed the social networking platforms you should be active on as a journalist. If you haven't yet, be sure to download the apps for each of those platforms: Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, and Snapchat.

In addition to those, you need production apps that allow you to edit photos, video, and audio. This section highlights the best apps for journalists for these purposes. I've also noted top recommendations in each category below based on my experience using the apps in the field, my students' use of them as part of my classes, and feedback from journalists. Keep in mind, the availability of each app depends on the type of device you use.

Don't wait to test out apps for the first time in the field. Do this well before you use them to cover a story. Experiment with different apps to find which is the best fit for you. As you do this, think about how quickly each app allows you to produce quality content. Shareability is also key. It's important that the content you produce within the app can be easily sent to colleagues via e-mail, uploaded to platforms such as YouTube or Vimeo if needed, and shared to social media platforms.

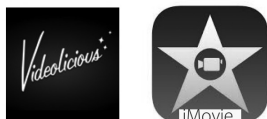
## Mojo Checklist

Preparation begins well before you head to a story. There's nothing more frustrating than having something go wrong in the field that could have easily been prevented. So don't wait until you're in the field to complete this checklist. Store this mojo checklist in your go-bag.

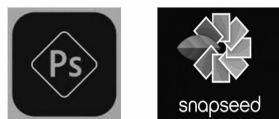
- Do you have all the gear you normally use? Mic(s), headphones, monopod, et cetera.
- Do you have enough memory on your device(s)? Check your device settings for this information.
- Are your devices charged? What about your portable charger? Did you remember your car charger?
- Do you have batteries for equipment that needs them?
- Do you have all the cords for your devices?
- Do you have all the social media and production apps on your phone that you'll need to get the job done?
- Have you tested the mic(s) you plan on using?
- Have you searched for locations where you can tap into Wi-Fi, if you need it? Certain apps pinpoint on a map where public Wi-Fi spots are located.
- Recharge and repack as soon as you get home or back to the newsroom.

## There's an App for That

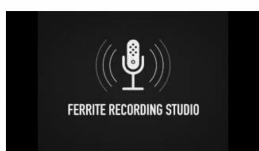
### Video



### Photo



### Audio



### Social Graphics



**Photo 5.9** The go-to mobile production apps.

To quickly snap a photo or record a video to post on social media, you can simply use your device's camera and then share via social media apps. But for more highly produced reports, such as radio wraps or video packages that will be embedded in a web story or aired in a newscast, the production apps listed here are essential.

### Video

Some video apps allow multitrack editing—the ability to mix a combination of reporter voiceovers, natural sound, sound bites, and visuals (video and photos). Others do not give users this type of flexibility, limiting the production level of video packages. The following apps have a variety of options to share your finished product, including e-mailing, posting to social media, saving to your device, and uploading to Vimeo or YouTube.

- **iMovie.** iMovie is my go-to video editing app. It's an easy-to-use app for video stories that require a combination of visuals and audio tracks. You can create a traditional TV style news package with this app. It's also simple to produce stories that include visuals, interviews, and natural sound, but no reporter track. There's a lot of flexibility within this app. The app has two tracks for video and two for audio, and is packed with many of the same features as traditional desktop video-editing software. You can trim clips, split clips, detach audio from video, and much more.



**Photo 5.10** The iMovie app allows layering of video and audio, among many other features.

- **Videolicious.** Videolicious is perfect for quick turnaround videos, such as breaking news updates from a scene and social media teasers about a story. Select visuals from your mobile device in the order you want them to appear in the video. You then have the option to open the mic and use a forward-facing camera to record your voice or a stand-up shot. As you narrate, you tap the screen when you want the next visual to appear. The free version of Videolicious doesn't include more advanced editing options, such as trimming video clips or adjusting audio levels of natural sounds. However, the premium version, used by many newsrooms, including those of the *Washington Post* and the *Los Angeles Times*, comes with additional editing features. Journalism programs can get free access to the premium version by contacting Videolicious.
- **Voddio.** This app was one of the first used by journalists to produce video and audio stories on mobile devices. Voddio has multiple tracks for audio and video. My students and I have found there is a steeper learning curve with this app than with iMovie, its closest competitor. Voddio isn't as intuitive as other apps, and it's a bit more complicated to layer tracks. Voddio includes a feature in which you can write a script and then record the audio from the same screen.
- **Filmic Pro.** This app also offers multitrack editing options and has advanced editing features. In addition, Filmic Pro has manual controls typically seen on traditional video cameras. Open the app to record video, and you're able to lock focus, exposure, and white balance. It also gives you the option to monitor audio levels as you record.



- **Vimeo and YouTube Capture.** After producing a video, it's recommended you upload it to Vimeo or YouTube. Either one of these video sharing platforms should serve as the central place to house your videos. Most video production apps allow you to upload the finished video directly to these platforms with a few taps. The other option is to save the finished video on your mobile device, open either the Vimeo or YouTube Capture app (the main YouTube app allows you only to view videos, not upload them), and upload the video directly from your device's camera storage. After you upload to YouTube or Vimeo, it's easy to share the video to social media or embed it in a web story.

**Recommendation:** iMovie, Videolicious, and either Vimeo or YouTube Capture.

## Photos

The cameras on most mobile devices now include basic photo editing features such as cropping and color adjustment. Typically, that's all you'll need as a mojo. There are a range of photo apps that provide more sophisticated editing features. You can snap photos from within these apps or import from your device's photo storage. Posting photos to social media sites, saving to the device's photo storage,] and e-mailing are also standard features.

- **Adobe Photoshop Express.** Don't expect this app to be as powerful as the desktop version of Adobe Photoshop. Photoshop Express is intended for easy touch-ups. Use it to adjust hue, color, brightness, white balance, and a handful of other elements. Compared to the traditional Photoshop software, there's not much of a learning curve with this app. Simplified tools give users the effects and changes they want without much effort.
- **Snapseed.** This app is a good fit for both novice and more skilled still photographers. Snapseed has more than a dozen different editing tools from basic to more advanced, most of which include different adjustments. One advantage of Snapseed is that it allows you to selectively adjust parts of a photo. Snapseed also saves your adjustments as reeditable layers (or "Stacks" in Snapseed-speak). The Stacks tool lists every edit you have applied, making it easy to remove one or more.
- **Camera+.** Like almost every photo app out there, Camera+ includes a variety of filters and editing tools. The main advantage of Camera+ is that you can shoot in manual mode from within the app. This approach allows you to manually control the exposure, focus, and white balance to get the best image. Camera+ also has a stabilizer that automatically takes the shot when your hand is most stable.

**Recommendation:** Adobe Photoshop Express (although you can't go wrong with any of these three apps)

## Audio

The built-in audio-recording feature on mobile devices does a fine job of recording audio, and most allow you to monitor audio levels as you record. However, they're

limited in the ability to edit beyond a simple trim of the audio. To produce audio reports, you'll need an app that offers multitrack editing. With all of these apps, the audio files can be e-mailed and shared on social media, among other locations.

- **Ferrite Recording Studio.** Ferrite is aimed at journalists and podcasters, in terms of functionality and workflow. You can record interviews and voiceovers, rearrange tracks, make finely tuned edits, change volumes, and mix ambient and natural sounds into a report. While recording within the app, you can monitor audio levels. This is the go-to app for Neal Augenstein (@AugensteinWTOP), a reporter for all-news WTOP-FM and wtop.com in Washington, DC. Augenstein was one of the first major market reporters to use only a mobile device for reporting. Since 2010, he's been doing all field production and reporting on an iPhone.
- **Voddio.** Before switching to Ferrite, Augenstein used Voddio, one of the original multitrack audio and video editing apps. Voddio's layout and functionality aren't as intuitive as those of Ferrite. "The learning curve is fairly steep—the swipes, hidden menus, and ducking audio are not terribly intuitive," Augenstein wrote on his website, [iphonereporting.com](http://iphonereporting.com).<sup>2</sup> In addition, the Voddio software is infrequently updated, which may explain why it crashes so frequently.
- **Hokusai Audio Editor.** This multitrack audio editor is straightforward. The interface is simple and makes it easy to quickly edit tracks side by side or mix them together. Live "scrubbing" means you can hear the sound under your fingertip as you make your adjustments. You can also monitor your sound while recording.
- **SoundCloud.** Once you finish an audio story, SoundCloud is the ideal spot to upload the file to. Like Vimeo and YouTube are for videos, SoundCloud can be a centralized place for your audio reports. From SoundCloud, you can embed the audio clips directly into a web story and share via social media, among other options.

**Recommendation:** Ferrite Recording Studio and SoundCloud

### Storage and file management

"Storage is very important if you're going to be a mobile journalist," said Allissa Richardson (@ProfAlliRich), a journalist and professor of mobile journalism. "Things happen and things get lost, and you don't want to be the one who had the exclusive and now it's gone."<sup>3</sup>

With the **Dropbox** and **Google Drive** apps, storing and managing files on mobile devices is as easy as doing it on a computer. Dropbox and Google Drive allow you to access and upload files from any device—mobile, laptop, and desktop computer. You can move raw materials and finished audio, video, and written stories from your device into anyone of these apps. That provides an easy way to share content with coworkers. Simply create a shared folder in Dropbox or Google Drive, and drop in the content you want others to have access to.

## There's an App for That

There are all sorts of apps that make a journalist's life easier. Here are a few other recommendations.

- **Call Recorder.** Record a phone interview and easily import the audio file to any one of the video or editing apps to use as part of a story.
- **5-0 Radio Police Scanner.** Ideal when tracking breaking news in the field. Take the police scanner on the road

with you. This app allows users to listen live to local, national, and international police, fire, and ambulance radio traffic.

- **Banjo.** This app provides an easy way to locate social media posts in real time at a specific location. Type a location in the search bar, and posts from that spot will be displayed on a map. This can be useful in breaking news situations to locate witnesses and images from the scene.

Dropbox and Google Drive are connected to many of the multimedia apps highlighted above, giving you the option from within each app to transfer content directly to Dropbox and Google Drive. As an alternative, you can save a finished report to your device and upload it to Dropbox or Google Drive. In most production apps, you can also import content stored in your Dropbox or Google Drive accounts.

It's important to note that Google Drive typically compresses uploaded video files, decreasing the quality. Dropbox is a better option for video.

If your device is running low on storage in the field, these apps can be a lifesaver. Move content from your device into one of these two apps to free up space. After moving the item, such as a photo, you can delete it from your device. It will remain wherever you transferred it to, Dropbox or Google Drive.

The Documents feature in Google Drive is useful for writing web stories or a broadcast script that can then be shared with colleagues.

### Shooting and editing video

Regardless of the app or equipment you're using, maintain the basics of videography, audio reporting, and photography. Don't throw traditional production skills out the door simply because you're using a mobile device.

Despite all the new gadgetry, reporting is still about the fundamentals of storytelling. Quality is still king. Shaky video and inaudible interviews, for example, are what distinguish a novice from a professional. Maximize what the device can do well, and recognize its limitations. Minimize what it can't do well.

One benefit of mobile devices, beyond the mobility and simplicity of producing content, is that they can be less intrusive for interviews. Any TV reporter will tell you that the biggest barrier to getting someone to talk is the camera. A mobile device can make that experience less intimidating for interview subjects.

"When you're filming someone who is a bit of a nervous contributor, or a member of the public who hasn't had media training, they can clam up a bit when they've got a big camera in their face, as they feel overwhelmed. But if you're doing it on the phone, it's much smaller and an object they're used to, so they're

definitely much more relaxed and forthcoming in interviews,” said BBC reporter Dougal Shaw (@dougalshawBBC), who uses an iPhone and Filmic Pro app for video.<sup>4</sup>

Follow these rules when shooting and editing mobile video:

- **Airplane mode.** Put your device in airplane mode to prevent incoming calls or messages from interrupting the audio or video you’re recording.
- **Horizontal or vertical?** There’s much talk in the industry about whether video should be shot holding the device horizontally or vertically. There’s no correct answer. It depends on the platform. If you’re shooting for a TV broadcast or web story, the general rule of thumb is to turn your device horizontally when you shoot video. The video will fit the orientation of those types of screens. As mobile consumption continues to grow, though, news outlets are turning to vertical video to optimize their content for viewing on phones. Snapchat and Facebook Live, for instance, are designed for vertical video. “What we’re trying to do is make sure that we’re producing video that works specifically for each platform, so we don’t expect one video that we produce is going to work across our site, across social networks, across devices,” said Mica Gelman (@mbgelman), senior editor and head of video at the *Washington Post*.<sup>5</sup>
- **The basics.** The same video journalism basics you would use with a traditional camera apply to shooting video on a mobile device—most of the time. With vertical video, breaking some of the rules actually gives the mobile audience a better experience.
  - Record a sequence of shots around specific actions, events, or locations. Wide, medium, and close-up shots are key to building sequences. A series of shots that don’t seem to fit together can often leave viewers with a sense of disorientation. A sequence of shots related to a specific subject creates a seamless progression. When that sequence ends, you’re ready to start a new one. You have to get the appropriate series of close-up, medium, and wide shots in the field in order to be able to edit sequences.
  - Don’t stay in the same spot for all your shots. Move around the scene to get different angles as you shoot sequences. Different positions give the viewer different vantage points.
  - Always get a sequence of video clips of people you interview. These will be needed to cover voiceovers in which you mention a specific person. Even if you aren’t producing a video package with a reporter voiceover, you can still use this video to cover portions of a person’s interview. In my experience, this is the one item many new video journalists forget to shoot in the field.
  - The rule of thirds is a foundational composition principle of videography and photography. Imagine your screen is divided by straight lines

into thirds horizontally and vertically, with four points where the lines intersect. Where those lines meet, you should try to position the primary subject of your image. Most mobile devices have the option to superimpose the rule of thirds grid onto the camera screen. On an iPhone or iPad, go to the device settings to turn on this feature. With vertical video, break this rule. It's best to put the subject, particularly people you interview, in the center of the screen.

- Hold each shot for about 10 seconds, or as long as an action requires. There's nothing worse than looking through raw footage and realizing you didn't get enough of a particular shot to use in a story.
- It's tempting to move a mobile device more often than you would move a traditional camera. But avoid the urge to pan and tilt unless it's absolutely necessary. There should be a reason to record these types of shots. For example, to show how tall a building is or how long a line is.
- When recording a stand-up for a package or a social media post, capitalize on what's happening around you to bring people to the scene. Show and tell. Using the front-facing camera can give viewers an in-the-moment intimate experience with you and the story you're covering. You can also use a monopod, tripod, or selfie stick to shoot a more traditional stand-up.
- **Zoom with feet.** Don't use the zoom controls in the camera. The resolution quality is degraded when zooming manually. Instead, when you want to get a closer shot, walk closer to the subject.
- **Steady shots.** It's always preferable to use a tripod or monopod in order to avoid shaky video. If that's not possible to get the shots you need, bring your arms and hands close to your body, and lean against something to stabilize the camera.
- **Lighting.** One challenge of shooting with mobile devices is finding the proper lighting. You have to rely on natural lighting most of the time. For starters, avoid shooting into the sun. When recording interviews, the sun should be behind you so that it acts as natural light on the subject. In low-light indoor situations, turn on as many room lights as you can and open shades or curtains. When recording interviews indoors, bring subjects to a window, and have them face it so the natural light fills their face. Never shoot into windows. The window should not be behind the subject. The same principles apply for reporter stand-ups—position yourself so that you're facing the sun or other dominant light source.
- **Play back at the scene.** Watch your video and make sure you have usable audio before you leave the scene. Be sure to play back interviews right after you record them—while the person is still with you. That will make it much easier to rerecord in case there's an issue with the quality of audio or video.

## User Experience: Readable Videos

The use of text in social media and website videos is becoming more common, as mobile users often don't have the volume turned up



on their phone. Sometimes this has to do with being in a public place. Text helps viewers comprehend the video story without having to turn on the audio. It can also pique their interest in a story, giving them a reason to listen. The text provides context and background information. News outlets, such as the *Democrat & Chronicle* (Rochester, New York), have hired staff focused solely on producing readable videos.

- Use large font sizes.
- Use color to make words pop.
- Don't cram too much text on the screen.

- **Editing.** When editing multitrack video stories, use the same methods as you would with a desktop editing system. First, lay down your audio (voiceover tracks and sound bites), and then layer video on top of those elements. When possible, build sequences by editing together a series of related shots. Avoid jumping from one video clip to another that's unrelated to the action in the previous one. The sweet spot for total video length for social media is 40–60 seconds; for websites, it's 60–90 seconds. Remember to include a lower-third, or title, graphic the first time we hear from a person you've interviewed. Place the person's name on the upper line and title on the bottom line. It's also customary to include a lower-third graphic at the beginning of a package to describe what the story is about. Place the description on the upper line and the location on the bottom line.

### Recording and editing sound

Getting good audio is also vital for video. It's as important as the visuals. Whether you're producing a video package or an audio-only story, here are recommendations to capture professional quality audio.

- **Airplane mode.** You don't want the audio to be interrupted.
- **Monitor with headphones.** Always listen to the audio as you're recording. Remember, ear buds are not a substitute for headphones. Headphones give you the best sense of what's being captured on your device.
- **Don't cover the device's mic.** Know where your device's microphone is located so you can make sure your hands aren't blocking it while recording audio.
- **Get close.** The closer you get to an interviewee, the better the audio will be. This is particularly important if you aren't using an external mic. Ask the person to speak louder if needed.



- **Step away from noise.** When interviewing someone, you should try to find a location in which background noise will not interfere with the audio. For example, let's say you're covering a public meeting in an auditorium and want to interview people after it ends. Find a spot away from the crowd of people talking after the meeting.
- **External microphone.** Overcome many audio challenges by using an external microphone. If you're recording an interview in a loud environment, you'll want to use an external mic. In this type of situation, you can't rely on the built-in mic to capture quality audio of the person you're interviewing. Plug the mic into your device before launching any apps to make sure it's detected. If you're recording in a loud environment and have no external microphone, a pair of standard headphones can come in handy. They usually come with a microphone that can make a huge difference. Use a wind screen when needed.
- **Natural sound.** When capturing natural sound—such as fire truck sirens or demonstrators chanting—the built-in microphone usually is all you need. Connecting an external mic to record natural sound can be cumbersome if you need to move around quickly at the scene. When recording natural sound in windy conditions, however, an external mic with a windscreen is recommended. The built-in microphones on mobile devices are usually overtaken by wind noise.
- **Phone interviews.** There are two ways to record audio from phone interviews. You can use an app, such as Call Recorder, that saves calls as an audio file on your device. You can import the file to a video or audio app in order to edit. The other option, one recommended by Augenstein, is to have the sources record the call with their device. Augenstein has interviewees open the built-in voice app on their device, hit record before the conversation begins, and then e-mail him the file directly from the app once the call is over. He's even created a short video tutorial that he sends to sources prior to this type of interview.
- **Voiceovers.** Always use an external microphone for voiceovers. Hold the mic about six inches away from your mouth to prevent a popping sound. Record voiceovers as audio files using the device's voice recording function. There's another option recommended by journalist and mobile media trainer Ivo Burum (@citizenmojo). For voiceovers in video packages, Burum films the voiceover instead of audio-recording it.<sup>6</sup> This provides all the files you'll use as video clips when you start to edit. Burum advises holding your hand over the camera when you record tracks this way. The clip will be all black and easier to find among the video files. You then pull only the audio portion of that clip into your project sequence.
- **Play back at the scene.** Again, just as you do with video, get in the habit of doing this so you don't get burned with bad audio.
- **Editing.** With the proper app, editing audio-only stories is straightforward. Place voiceovers, sound bites (also referred to as *actualities* in the radio industry), and natural sound on separate tracks. This layering approach makes it

easy to locate and adjust the key audio elements. For example, typically Track 1 contains all voiceovers, Track 2 is dedicated to sound bites, and the third track has any natural sound. Natural sound under voiceovers and sound bites should be adjusted so as not to overpower the other audio. The audio levels of voiceovers and sound bites should be consistent, so one isn't any higher or lower than any other. After exporting your finished piece, listen to it to make sure the audio sounds the way you want it to.

### Still photography

Photographs shot on mobile devices have even proved worthy of the *New York Times*' front page. In a 2013 front-page feature of New York Yankees' player Alex Rodriguez, the *Times* used a photo taken by professional photographer Nick Laham. However, Laham didn't use any professional equipment. He snapped photos of Rodriguez with his iPhone—and in the Yankees' locker room bathroom. Laham then edited the photos through Instagram. The *Times* was one of the first major newspapers to publish a front-page photo taken with an iPhone.

With reporters able to capture quality images on a mobile device, some professional news photographers have found themselves out of a job. For example, in 2013, the *Chicago Sun-Times* let go its entire photography staff of 28 people.<sup>7</sup> Its reporters then received iPhone photography training to start producing their own photos and videos.

Here are the fundamentals of shooting still images on mobile devices.

- **Composition.** Traditional composition techniques will help you take eye-catching shots. Composition has to do with the position of the subject and the angle at which the photo is shot. As we discussed with shooting video, follow the rule of thirds. Place your main subject at one point where horizontal and vertical lines intersect. Also, use your foreground and background to



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**Photo 5.12**  
 Photographer Nick Laham captured this *New York Times* front page photo with his iPhone.

place objects or scenes in relation to your main subject. For example, placing a tree in the foreground of a photo with a person who is the main subject will provide depth of field and make the image more multidimensional.

- **Zoom with feet.** Just as with video, zooming with fingers degrades the quality of the visual. Move closer to a subject to avoid making your picture look pixelated and blurry.
- **Stay still.** The steadier your mobile device is when you're taking your shot, the clearer your image will be.
- **Lighting.** Use available light as you would with video. Bright light sources should come from behind the camera. Don't set the flash to automatic. Turn it on and off as needed. Manual flashes can often blur photos. iPhone and iPad cameras have a feature called *high dynamic range*, or *HDR*. HDR lets you produce a quality image when taking photos that have high-contrast light sources, such as a bright blue sky and a dark-colored building in the same shot. In HDR mode, your device combines three different exposures of the same photo to create one properly exposed image. You can turn HDR on directly from the device's camera.
- **Set focus and exposure.** The device will automatically adjust focus and exposure. Exposure refers to the amount of light in a photo. To get a better-quality photo, take control by adjusting these two elements. With the camera open, just tap on the screen where you want to set the focus and exposure. The camera does a good job of handling the rest. But, if you still want to adjust the exposure, move your finger up and down the screen to brighten or darken a photo. You can also lock focus and exposure. Press and hold on the screen to lock in settings. The words "AE/AF lock" will be displayed. To remove the lock, just tap anywhere else on the frame. Whenever there are significant changes inside the frame, your focus and exposure settings will be lost unless they're locked.<sup>8</sup> These techniques work with shooting video as well.
- **Shoot in burst mode.** The burst mode allows you to take multiple photos in the matter of seconds. Simply hold down the shutter button and the device will start taking photos one after another. It's an easy way to capture the perfect action shot.
- **Landscape or portrait?** Horizontal photos typically work better for web stories, which means you'll want to hold your device horizontally. For social media, the portrait orientation works better.
- **File size.** When transmitting photos back to the newsroom through e-mail or another service such as Dropbox, you might be given an option to select a photo size. When possible, maintain the original size of the photo. "Small" photos generally will not look good on websites.
- **Minimize use of filters.** Filters raise ethical concerns. Using them can alter a photo's editorial content. A photo with a filter applied to it should accurately portray what a journalist saw when taking the photo. In addition, filters can degrade the quality of an image, especially when the size of the photo is increased.

## Mobile-first workflow: A digital juggling act

Today's do-it-all journalists must have the flexibility to report, write, shoot, edit, post to social media and web, and—if they work for a radio or TV station—produce a broadcast story. Workflow is all about coordinating and planning how to tackle the list of tasks.

It's a process that can be messy, chaotic, and exhilarating—a digital juggling act of sorts. With practice, workflow will become second nature. You'll create your own routine. Here are the key workflow considerations:

- **Plan.** Planning the workflow process starts before you get to a scene. What content does your newsroom expect from you? How will you get content back to the newsroom, if needed? That's where Dropbox or Google Drive come in handy. Some newsrooms also have their own upload systems and general plans for workflow that you'll become familiar with. All the apps you need should already be on your device and equipment in your go-bag. Follow the tips on the Mojo Checklist.

What about social media platforms? Which platforms are appropriate for the story? Have a grasp of each platform your newsroom has and how they rely on you, the reporter, to provide content for those platforms while in the field. There are newsroom social media accounts, and then your professional ones. You obviously will manage your own. However, for a newsroom's accounts, there are two approaches: centralized and decentralized. In the centralized approach, only certain staff members, usually a digital team, have access to an outlet's social media accounts. In this approach, the team members often rely on reporters' posts to their own professional social media accounts from the field, particularly during breaking news the reporters cover. They'll reshare that content from the outlet's main accounts. In other newsrooms, more commonly at smaller outlets, the process is decentralized. Many newsroom staff members manage the outlet's accounts.

- **Prioritize.** Triage the situation when you're in the field. What are the most critical elements you need to gather for a story? Capture those right away, because you might not have another chance. Workflow priorities will differ depending on the type of outlet you work for. Most TV stations still have their reporters shoot and edit video packages using standard cameras and computer editing software. That's in addition to using mobile devices to gather and post content for social media posts and web stories. A TV reporter, then, has to decide if recording certain video on a mobile device is the best approach. If the reporter needs a clip for a traditional TV broadcast, it might make more sense to put the phone aside for a bit and record with the video camera.
- **Publish.** Sharing content on different platforms takes place throughout the reporting process. It can be as simple as a few taps to get a photo or video on social media. Or it may require using a production app to create an audio or video component. Keep it simple. Avoid having to transfer audio or video files to another device for editing and publishing. That's takes up valuable time.

## Workflow in action

Let's say you're sent out to breaking news, a house fire. You have to make lightning-fast decisions. Your workflow might look something like this.

- **Initial post.** Alert Twitter followers that you're heading to a house fire and will update them when you arrive on scene.
- **Follow through on your promise: Share as you go.** With your iPhone, you snap photos and video of firefighters battling smoke and flames. You also record interviews with a witness and the fire chief. You share the latest details in a series of tweets that include photos. In your tweets, you @mention the fire department's Twitter account. You then open the Facebook app and use Facebook Live to stream video from the scene. You show people what's unfolding. We hear your voice giving us tidbits of information. Your decision to stream live was based on the fact that the fire chief told you everyone made it out of the house without injuries.
- **Newsroom's counting on you.** A social media editor back in the newsroom is monitoring your posts and sharing your information on the outlet's main social media accounts. She retweets your flurry of tweets, creates a Facebook post with the latest details and photos you shared on Twitter, and sends out a breaking news alert to mobile app users.
- **Multimedia web story.** After four minutes of live-streaming on Facebook, you call the newsroom to let colleagues know you're about to write a 300-word story for the website. You spend the next 15 minutes drafting the story and editing a short video clip. You use the iMovie app to piece together video clips and portions of your two interviews, upload the finished video directly from your iPhone to YouTube, and then embed the video in your story.
- **Audience engagement.** You also have several Facebook comments you need to respond to, as neighbors in the area saw your live stream and are looking for more information. A Facebook follower claims crews had difficulty locating nearby fire hydrants because they were buried in snow from last week's storm. This could be an important element to the story. You track down the fire chief to ask about this, and update followers.
- **Feeding content to the newsroom.** The social media editor in the newsroom needs your photos and raw video so she can create some additional content for the outlet's social media accounts. No problem. You have the Dropbox app on your phone. You simply place the video and photos from your mobile device into a shared folder on Dropbox. Collaborators with access to the shared folder can retrieve the content from any device.
- **Not done yet: Continue updating.** You update your web story and social media accounts throughout the afternoon until the scene is clear. Once you're confident you have all the information you'll get from the scene, you head back to the newsroom. You work at an outlet that prints a newspaper three days a week. The print version doesn't come out tomorrow, so you're off the hook this time around for writing a story for the newspaper.



- **Analytics.** During the next morning's editorial meeting, the social media editor discusses social media and website analytics. Your tweets received a lot of engagement, and your web story was the second-most viewed for the day. Your Facebook Live video had three dozen views.

Sound like a juggling act? You have to go in with a game plan, yet be flexible enough to change that plan on the fly. That's always been the case with reporting. Hang on for the ride. Time to flex your mobile and social media muscles.

## Mojo Reporting from the Presidential Campaign Trail for NBC News

Little sleep. Lots of coffee. Plenty of planning. It was a whirlwind three days for Ithaca College journalism students who covered the South Carolina Republican presidential primary for NBC News in February 2016. Armed with mobile devices, our team crisscrossed South Carolina, providing content for the network's broadcast, digital, and social media platforms. Students got a real lesson in how to cover a major news event for multiple platforms.

Coordinating with NBC News producers, correspondents, and technical staff based in New York City and on the ground in South Carolina, we created a fluid workflow plan. Because of the nature of a major story like this, with many moving elements, we were in constant contact via phone and e-mail. Often, plans changed quickly depending on the news at a certain location and what the network needed from our team. Here's a glimpse into how we covered the primary.

- We used traditional video cameras for footage that was included in two packages that aired on *NBC Nightly News*. Our team transferred the raw footage from cameras to a laptop computer and then uploaded the video through Latakoo. Latakoo, used by NBC News and other outlets, is an online video transfer system that lets you send high-quality video from a desktop or mobile device. Once the video is in the system, all NBC News staff can access it from any location. One of the

biggest challenges was finding a strong enough Wi-Fi connection to upload the video files, since at times we were in more rural areas.

- Another group of students took over NBC News's Snapchat account and the NBCBLK Instagram account for a day. NBCBLK focuses on culture and news from the perspective of people of color. Logged into NBC News's Snapchat account from my iPhone, two students were responsible for creating a Snapchat story with at least one new Snap an hour. For NBCBLK's Instagram, our assignment was to produce short video clips with people of color reflecting on the election. All those clips were shot and edited using iPad Minis and iMovie. The clips, along with a profile photo for each interviewee, were uploaded to a shared Dropbox folder. We also e-mailed short descriptive text about each person to the NBCBLK producers in New York City, who uploaded the content to Instagram.
- Students produced several multimedia stories for the NBCBLK website. Here too, iPad Minis were used to snap still photos and record and edit the videos. All content was uploaded via Dropbox, and the text of the stories was e-mailed to producers. Some of the content used for the Instagram takeover was repurposed for the web stories.



## Checklist

- ✓ **Website tutorials.** For video tutorials on how to use the production apps mentioned in this chapter, visit the book's companion website, *MobileandSocialMediaJournalism.com*.
- ✓ **Mobile-first discussion.** You're a reporter assigned to the story below. How would you use a mobile device and social media to cover this story? Use the toolbox in this chapter as a guide (Table 5.1) to think through newsgathering, distributing information, and audience engagement. And discuss with your class what the workflow from the field might look like.
- ✓ Shortly after arriving to work at 8:00 a.m., you hear on the police scanner that a train has derailed. You head to the scene, which is 30 miles north of your newsroom. By the way, you're able to listen to the police scanner anywhere, thanks to an app that gives access to hundreds of law enforcement scanners across the country. You arrive to see a crowd of onlookers at the scene. You see that several of the train cars are toppled over, and traffic in the area is at a standstill. The train is operated by CSX.
- ✓ **Teaching moment.** This is your opportunity to teach your class! Each student leads a 10-minute class presentation/discussion about a current topic related to the use of mobile devices and social media in journalism. These teaching moments can be spread out over the course of the semester. This book and content from online sources mentioned in Chapter 1's checklist, such as Nieman Lab and MediaShift, can serve as starting points for ideas. Post a preview of the topic to the class Facebook page (if there is one), tweet about your teaching moment using the class hashtag, and write a blog entry about it. Topics might include how a news outlet uses new media in a novel way, an ethical issue related to the use of social media in journalism, and ideas on how journalists could use a particular mobile or social media tool.
- ✓ **Get in the mojo groove.** Time to practice mojo newsgathering and production. Use several different video apps to produce videos for a campus or community story.
  - > iMovie: Produce one video that includes a voiceover and sound bites, and another that uses only sound bites to tell the story. Upload both to either Vimeo or YouTube, and share to social media. Use subtitles in at least one of these videos.
  - > Snapchat: Produce a Snapchat story while in the field. Follow the tips for Snapchat stories in Chapter 4.
- ✓ **Cover it live.** Pick one event being held on campus, and use a combination of live-tweeting, live-streaming, and live-blogging to report about it. Use Tumblr to create a live blog that multiple people can contribute to.
- ✓ **Scavenger hunt.** Your workout this time around is in the form of a scavenger hunt. Complete the following tasks in no more than an hour. Use your class hashtag for each tweet. Think like a reporter. Double check your facts and spelling of names. Offer an introductory tweet to followers in which you explain the posts that will soon follow.
  - > **Professor on the street (not a professor you know).** Photo of and quote from a professor on campus. Ask the professor what role social media plays in our society today.

(Continued)

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Be sure you include the professor's title and department. **Student on the street.** Photo of and quote from a student. Ask the student where he or she gets news and if he or she uses social media to keep up on the news. Be sure you include the student's year in school and major.

- > **Little-known fact.** Photo of something you think many people might not know about your campus. Include a description of what you're showing people.
  - > **School spirit!** Photo of and quote from someone you don't know revealing school or civic spirit.
  - > **Twitter video from a scenic spot on campus.** Explain what you're showing people. Respond to at least two tweets from classmates also taking part in the scavenger hunt.
  - > Finally, create a Storify that contains all your own tweets and several of your favorite tweets from classmates. In the Storify, write a short narrative reflecting on the experience and what you learned.
- ✓ **Reminder.** Continue working on your mobile and social media strategy analysis, first assigned as part of Chapter 2's checklist. Have you been keeping up with your blog posts (Chapter 3's checklist)? At least two per week? Don't forget to share them to your social media sites. Finally, in order to maintain consistent social media activity, aim for the following each week.
- > 15-20 tweets and a combination of 10 retweets, replies, and likes
  - > 3-5 posts on your professional Facebook page
  - > A few posts to LinkedIn
  - > A few posts to Instagram
  - > Two tweets about class discussions and/or readings that you found interesting. Tell followers why, and include your class hashtag.
  - > Follow a handful of people on each platform. On Twitter, make it a goal to follow at least five people every week, at least as you begin to build your professional brand.