# The Changing Nature of Traditional Media in the New Rural Economy

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I am here today to give an update on the Traditional Media project (which is a project through the communications theme), first initiated in the summer of 2003. The researchers on this project are

    Doug Ramsey

    Anna Woodrow

And the student research assistants are myself and Angela Briscoe.

# Traditional Media Project Research Questions

- To understand how the 'traditional' media have changed over time in our study sites.
- To understand how the 'traditional' media portray the "new rural economy" in their coverage and reporting.
- To help build capacity in 'traditional' media to be a critical part of the new rural economy dialogue and debate.

There are three major research objectives with this project:

1. The first is to understand how the traditional media have changed over time in our study sites. This involves archival work that would look at ownership change and newspaper circulation changes as well as a content analysis of the type of news that is being reported in the selected sites.

2. Second, to understand how the traditional media portray the new rural economy in their coverage and reporting. This takes a look at how the new rural economy is covered and would include some key informant interviews to flush out what respondents feel is new rural economy news.

3. And thirdly to help build capacity in traditional media to be a critical part of the new rural economy dialogue and debate. One way we will do this is be to provide reports back to the sites of how they perceive changes in traditional media, and help them to understand the history of their media sources and see how they can possibly connect with them.

## Traditional Media Project Site Selection

- A reflection of the indicators of the NRE sampling frame
- Six sites:
  1. Mackenzie, BC
  2. Spalding, SK
  3. Tweed, ON
  4. Seguin, ON
  5. St. Damase, QC
  6. Twillingate, NF

The sites selected for this project were chosen based on a number of characteristics. We reviewed all 22 sites inventories that were done in the summer of 2003 and considered characteristics such as:

-presence of local or regional newspaper

-presence of local or regional radio

-location of site (to ensure equal sampling and regional representation)

-at least one bilingual or francophone site (again for equal sampling purposes and to ensure regional representation)

-and interest expressed by other researchers in the sites

# Traditional Media Project Purpose

- To measure the changes in traditional forms of media in rural areas as part of the Communications Theme of the NRE2.

The purpose of this project is to measure changes in traditional forms of media in rural areas as part of a series of studies being conducted within the Communications Theme of the NRE2.

**Traditional Media Defined**

- Traditional forms of media include:
  - Newspapers and newsletters
  - Television and cable
  - Radio
  - Bulletin boards (formal and informal)
  - Spaces where interpersonal forms of communication take place

For the purpose of this project, we define traditional media as including:

•Newspapers and newsletters

•Television and cable

•Radio

•Bulletin boards

> •Which include both the formal bulletin boards and the informal locations where people post messages or put up flyers such as store windows

•And spaces where face to face communication takes place such as restaurants and meeting halls.

## Traditional Media Project Methods

- Verification and update of communications inventory done in 2003.
- Literature review of traditional forms of media and the new economy.
- Key informant interviews.
- Newspapers/letters for content analysis.
- Observations of meeting places, radio shows, and cable television.

The research methods we are using to complete the traditional media project include:

1. A preliminary review of the communications inventory for each of the six sites. This will be done to verify contact information and record any changes that have taken place since the summer of 2003.

2. Second, we are also completing a detailed literature review of traditional forms of media and the new economy. This is being accomplished by first compiling a bibliography by performing various key word searches using a number of electronic search engines (such as Academic Search Premier, Sociological Abstracts) and then compiling our findings in a ProCite Bibliography Database.

3. We will also be utilizing three interview instruments on key informants within each of the sites. These instruments will target newspaper editors/librarians, people involved in volunteer groups, and business owners in order to gather information on the types of communication that are being used, have been used, or are missing from the community.

4. To evaluate the information/news that the site is being exposed to, we will also perform a content analysis on all local and regional newspapers that are distributed within the community over the last year.

5. Lastly, to further record the messages and usage of communication in each of the sites we will be in the community to observe and record what takes place in meeting places and what type of information is broadcast on radio and television.

**Traditional Media Project Progress**

- Literature review underway
  - Completed pro-cite bibliography
  - Four main headings for literature review
- Pre-test of survey instrument
  - Benito, Manitoba phone interviews
- Currently completing research in Mackenzie, BC

To date, we have completed:

1. The procite bibliography, and a literature review is currently underway. As it stands now, our literature review has been divided into four main headings, each of which I will describe in just a minute.

2. We have also completed a pre-test of the instrument in Benito, MB. This was done in mid-April

3. And during this workshop, we are completing the research in Mackenzie, BC

**Traditional Media Project Literature Review**

- Publications reflect a range of subject areas.
  1) Rural development
  2) New rural economy
  3) Information technology
  4) Traditional media

Reviewing the Literature we have found that publications reflect a range of subject areas

- -Communications, journalism and media studies
- -business, advertising and marketing
- -rural studies and development
- -information and communications technologies
- -developing vs developed world studies

So we have broken the literature review into four main categories:

1. rural development

2. the new rural economy

3. information technology  and

4. traditional media

- **Rural Development**
  - there appears to be a gap between the rural development (theory and policy) and ICT (technology and user information) literature, yet programs are being implemented (e.g. CAP sites, Broadband initiative)

The first category of the literature review is rural development.  Briefly, we have found that there appears to be a gap in the literature between the rural development theory and policy and information and communications technologies, though we know these programs are being implemented.  Doug will be exploring this literature further in the summer.

- **New Rural Economy**
  - general literature (e.g. Gadrey, 2003 – "New Economy, New Myth")
  - Globalization (Johnson, 2001)
  - Research regarding digital divide and the global economy (Antonelli, 2003)
  - New economy and ICT's (Piatkowski, 2003)

Literature discussing the new rural economy has dealt with the new rural economy in general terms such as

1. General terms, such as the article by Gadrey, 2003 "New Economy, New Myth"
2. In terms of globalization such as in the Johnson, 2001 article: "The rural economy in a new century"
3. In terms of the digital divide such as in the article by Antonelli, 2003: "The digital divide: understanding the economies of new information and communication technology in the global economy"
4. And in terms of information communication technologies such as the article by Piatkowski, 2003 "The economic and institutional determinants of the 'new economy' in transition economies".

- **Information Technology**
  - User surveys (Cho et al., 2003) -more using Internet and fewer using traditional media
  - Marketing and the WWW (Angelides, 1997; Chyi et al., 1998)

There is great deal of literature on the use of different technologies. Examples of this include:

1. The article by Cho et al., 2003 in which the authors claim there are more people using the internet and fewer using traditional media.

2. another example is in terms of marketing and the world wide web. Articles such as Andelides, 1997 "Implementing the internet for business-a global marketing opportunity" and Chyi et al., 1998 entitled "Competing with whom? Where? And how? A structural analysis of the electronic newspaper market".

■ Traditional Media
   ▪ Alexander (2000)
   ▪ Bickers (1999)
   ▪ Finnegan and Kasisomayajula (1988)
   ▪ Johnson et al. (1999)
   ▪ Hischier and Reichart (2003)
   ▪ La Frele et al. (2000)

And the fourth category, traditional media has found several relavent articles including the article by

1. Alexander (2000) which looks at the impact the WWW on traditional media. In a survey of 520 undergraduate students, they found that newspapers will still viewed positively, with the WWW used primarily for entertainment.

2. Bickers (1999) article found a resurgence in traditional media to foster growth

3. Finnegan and Kasisomayajula (1988) examined community ties with respect to cable tv and newspapers

4. Johnson et al. (1999) compared traditional and nontraditional media outlets with respect to the 1996 US presidential election

5. Hischier and Reichart (2003) compared traditional and internet newspapers in terms of environmental impacts

6. And La Frele et al. (2000) focused on teens use of traditional media and the internet in terms of market segments

**Traditional Media Project Pre-Test: Benito, MB**

- First draft of instrument completed in January 2004 by Anna
- Issues in pre-test
  - Business Owner
  - Newspaper editor
  - Volunteer

As far as the pre-test of the survey instrument, only a few concerns were noted. The first draft done in January by Anna was reworked to produce a working copy which was then administered to three residents in Benito.

Issues in the pretest with

1. The business owner – was to ensure that the business is not brand new, or else to gather data from several business owners who have been open various lengths of time. And to make sure we speak to the owner or person directly engaged in marketing and promotion of the business.

2. Issues with the newspaper instrument involved being able to elicit detailed facts regarding the history of the newspaper. This data may not be readily available so we need to be sure we have an appointment time booked and that we ample time to wait for the information. Also, the information that is given by a regional vs a local paper may differ in terms of the impact of traditional media on the four types of relations, so in areas where there are both regional and local papers we should be sure to interview both.

3. As far as volunteers – it seems beneficial to engage someone who is not regularly associated with the NRE project, or if we do to make sure we also interview people without prior knowledge of the work we do. In the case of Benito, it was difficult to not influence the responses of the volunteer person due to our personal relationship.

## Traditional Media Project Next Steps

- Complete research in Mackenzie, BC.
- Complete literature review.
- Continue with research project in the five remaining sites.

So, the next steps then in the project will be:

1.  To complete the research we are presently doing in Mackenzie, BC
2.  To continue to work on the literature review
3.  And to organize the research projects that need to be done in the five remaining sites.