Running head: NEWSPAPERS AND PINTEREST

The Adoption of Pinterest by Local Newspapers in the U.S.

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The emergence of social network systems in the last decade has dramatically altered the form, style and content of communication. Via these networks, individuals can connect with other people, convey an image of themselves to their close associates or the public at large, and observe how others within their network are further connected to others (Boyd & Ellison, 2007). According to the 2012 Social Media Report published by Nielsen and NM Incite, a fifth of time spent online by adults in the U.S. is dedicated to social networks (Jaume, 2012).

In addition to simply facilitating interpersonal communication, social media have enabled immediate dissemination of information among large groups of people. For example, social networks have been used to enhance efficiency during major political campaigns as a source of decision making for potential voters (Kushin & Yamamoto, 2010; Woolley, Limperos, & Oliver, 2010) and as a means of communicating during crises and disasters (Lindsay, 2010). Social networks also have served as a rapid response mechanism among members of grassroots movements and participants in consumer activism (Kang, 2012; Segerberg & Bennett, 2011).

Social media are also becoming a resource for the public to receive news or at least a "pathway" to it (Mitchell, Rosenstiel, & Christian, 2012). One study in 2012 found that a third of individuals ages 18 to 30 indicated that they got their news through social networks, compared with 19 percent in 2010 (Sonderman, 2012). In comparison, for that age group, 34 percent got news through television and 13 percent read a print or online version of a newspaper. Another study revealed that people trust political information on social media sites, such as Facebook and Twitter, as much as they trust that kind of information on "traditional news sources" (Tau, 2013, para. 1).

Social networks have also changed the work of journalists and manner in which news is

disseminated. Newspaper reporters have used Twitter to provide updates of trials, including one instance in which a federal judge allowed live tweets within a courtroom by a newspaper reporter (Rushmann, 2009). Local television stations are also using social media, such as Twitter, for news updates (Greer & Ferguson, 2011). Social media represent an interesting combination of news and personalization, simply due to their nature as a means of connecting individuals. Rather than the perception of media as a distant news source, social media have the capability of both transmitting immediate information and connecting individuals around those events.

A relative newcomer to the lineup of social media is Pinterest. Newspapers are using this form of social media to provide a range of content, including interesting quotes, community information, profiles of local people and links to the paper's website (Mozdzer, 2012). One paper even provides mug shots of individuals who are wanted by the police ("Pinned by police," 2013).

Some scholarly research has examined the relationship between traditional media and social networks, such as Facebook and Twitter (e.g., Greer & Ferguson, 2011; Greer & Yan, 2011b). However, information about newspaper use of Pinterest is primarily anecdotal via trade and popular press. Scholarly research on this topic is scarce. In fact, only one study has considered how local news media are using Pinterest, but that research focused on television stations (Ferguson & Greer, 2013). The present study seeks to fill that gap in literature by examining how newspapers are using Pinterest. In particular, the goal of this study is to determine how newspapers, a primarily verbal medium, are utilizing a predominantly visual medium.

Pinterest History

Facebook continues to dominate social media usage, having reached the milestone of a billion users monthly worldwide in October 2012 (Smith, Segall, & Cowley, 2012). According to

a 2012 report by the Pew Internet & American Life Project, just 15 percent of adults who went online used Pinterest, compared with two-thirds of adults who used Facebook and 16 percent of adults who used Twitter (Duggan & Brenner, 2013)

Activity on Pinterest primarily revolves around the practice of posting visuals that might be found on the Web or uploaded by an individual (Pinterest, n.d.). Users attach ("pin") photos, quotes, illustrations and other types of visuals (Lee, 2011) and even videos to virtual boards that allow them to be organized by topic and shared with others (Pinterest, n.d.).

Boyd and Ellison (2007) noted that a central element in social networking is connectivity. As it relates to Pinterest, users not only can post their own content and view the pins of others, but the social network also enables them to share images with other members of the network (Lee, 2011) via "repinning." Using this feature, users simply click a "repin" button on an image and that visual will then appear on the Pinterest site of the person who is linking to that image. One market research report indicated that repinning accounted for 80% of postings on boards (Moore, 2012). Pinterest also enables users to "like" a pin, which extends connectivity and exposure to friends on Facebook (Pragnell, 2012). Starting in late 2012, Pinterest began providing users with three "secret boards" that would be seen only by invitation of the user (Tam, 2012).

In less than two years, Pinterest has experienced a huge rate of growth. In September 2011, the social network had 1.68 million unique visitors (Buck, 2012). By December 2012, one market firm reported that Pinterest had "28 million US visitors" (Carlson, 2013, para. 3). Despite continuing growth, it appears that the month-to-month increase in use of the special network might be slowing. For example, Quantcast reported that Pinterest grew by only two million between October and December 2012 (Carlson, 2013). Market research conducted by technology

firm ShareThis(™) found that Pinterest was preferred above email for sharing online and was the "third most popular sharing channel overall" behind Facebook and LinkedIn (Abrahamson, 2014, para. 1).

Use of social media is differentiated by gender and age. Research by the Pew Internet & American Life Project found that 78% of adult women use social network sites, compared with 69% of men (Brenner, 2013). The study also found that social networks tend to be used primarily by individuals under 50, with ages 18-29 predominating. Gender usage numbers for individual social media vary (Duggan & Smith, 2013). Women tend more to use Facebook, Pinterest, Twitter and Instagram, while men favor LinkedIn. Pinterest, in particular, attracts a much higher percentage of adult females who go online (33%) than adult males (8%) who use the Internet.

Of particular importance to companies is the eventual outcome (e.g., revenue and audience share) from using social media. In 2013, Pinterest released tools that enable organizations to track the extent of repinning, gauge the popularity of content on their Pinterest site, and determine the number of click-throughs to the company's site (Sonderman, 2013). By tracking areas of interest, companies can respond with products and marketing efforts (Donston-Miller, 2013). News media can also benefit from this tool by observing which pins connect with visitors and the content they most want to see (Sonderman, 2013).

Print and broadcast news organizations are using Pinterest in different ways. From a national media perspective, the Weather Channel features a "'Severe Weather board" that was used to show images of the aftermath of tornados in the Midwest (Rubino, 2012). Other cable networks are using Pinterest as a way to promote their programs and actors (Morabito, 2012). Similarly, local television stations are using the social network to display pictures of food, the station's news personnel, animals, as well as information that includes weather and news items

(Wilson, 2012). On the print side, newspapers like *The New York Times*, *The Los Angeles Times* and *The Wall Street Journal* focus their Pinterest on content such as fashion, style and food, while *The Boston Globe* uses the social network to promote the online and print editions of the paper (McCluskey, 2013).

Newspapers and Emerging Technologies

The present status of newspapers is not positive and the future viability of some publications is, at best, uncertain. In its 2013 State of the News Media, the Pew Research Center reported that print ad revenue and newsroom staffing continued to decline, although circulation appeared to be stabilizing, some of which was due to paid digital (Edmonds, Guskin, Mitchell, & Jurkowitz, 2013). The state of the industry has been described as being in a period of "transition" (Carter, 2009) and "restructuring" (Kirchhoff, 2011, p. 28). However, contrary to dying, a study by Cho, Martin and Lacy (2006) found that nearly two-thirds of papers that ceased daily publication were still present in another form, such as weekly editions or mergers.

One aspect of this transition has been the implementation of new communication technologies by newspapers. Early in the use of the Web, the biggest difference between print and online editions was the form of distribution, since content was essentially the same (Harper, 1996).

Another issue in newspapers' initial foray into digital forms of distribution involved the extent to which business strategy played a role in these changes. A study of newspaper management by Saksena and Hollifeld (2002) found that there was little internal planning or input from their audiences prior to implementing an online edition of the paper or had established goals for the online paper. A subsequent study by Adams (2008) similarly found that three-quarters of organizations did not conduct market research before starting an online edition

of the paper. About 30 percent of managers surveyed had a business plan for their website. The top goal for a third of the managers for starting an online version of the paper was "staying at the industry forefront", followed by more than a quarter who indicated that "creating an additional revenue stream" was an important motivator (p. 68).

A related concern is competition. Local newspapers largely experience little competition from other newspapers within a market from the standpoint of traditional print publications. The issue, then, is the extent to which newspapers compete with other online news media. Yang and Chyi (2011) examined visitors to websites of 27 local newspaper websites and found there were no significant competitive relationships between the local paper and news sites in the newspaper's service area for audiences in the local area. However, they found that eight of the newspapers experienced a "competitive relationship" between the "online and print editions" of those papers (p. 67).

Another prominent issue faced by newspapers is revenue. Despite the development of online editions of papers and an increasing use of digital tools by news audiences, these concerns were evident early in newspapers' venture into online publications (Harper, 1996). Despite the long-term Web presence of many papers and the growing use of digital tools by news audiences, online advertising is not making up for shortfalls in advertising on print versions of papers (Edmonds, Guskin, Mitchell, & Jurkowitz, 2013).

One revenue source is the implementation of micro payments, which requires readers to purchase at least some content. However, the key issue is whether people are willing to pay for online news. A study by Sindik and Graybeal (2011) of college students found that individuals who comprise the millennial generation were generally not willing to pay for online news, including content on a local newspaper site.

Sullivan (2006) argued that present day newspapers focus more on revenue than on connecting with their audiences and communities, and noted that papers need to be innovative and provide something unique compared to other information providers. It is likely Sullivan was referring to newspaper content, but social media also may be part of relationship building. Traditionally, letters to the editor were the primary means of readers communicating with their local paper. Today, the use of digital technology can serve as an immediate means of connectivity. Prior to the widespread use of social networks, some papers used email for feedback. Hendrickson (2006) found that reporters and editors they polled felt that including an email address with a newspaper story increased the paper's credibility. The respondents saw this activity as a way to heighten contact with the community and that it might help create a sense of care for the community on the part of the paper.

Early in newspapers' venture online, editors surveyed by Harper (1996) suggested that digital journalism could be a means of reaching younger readers. However, given the emergence of various digital communication tools, websites might be less effective at gaining readers in that age group. For example, Greer and Yan (2011b) examined how newspaper readers, ages 18 to 24, accessed their local papers. They found that as the use of social media and other digital tools increased, website access decreased. While print versions of newspapers were still the preferred source for those respondents, there was an increase in the use of digital tools for all types of news access, compared with both print and broadcast sources.

Ju (2010) examined the use of Facebook and Twitter on 74 large circulation U.S. newspapers. All the papers used Twitter and 71 of the papers had a "Facebook fan page" (p. 21). Size of circulation was "positively related" to the number of fans and friends of the newspapers' social media sites (p. 25). However, the researcher concluded that the number of people

connected to a newspaper's social media sites still was very small in comparison with the number of print or Web readers of the paper. In addition, social networking did not appear to be making a contribution to online readership. A subsequent study of 66 large circulation newspapers found that all the papers had Twitter and Facebook accounts, but that the number of "subscribers" to the papers' social media was a small percentage of print and online users (Ju, Jeong, & Chyi, 2013, p. 8). In another study, Hong (2012) found that the adoption of Twitter was related to people accessing the online version of the newspaper. Newspapers that posted more tweets had more followers. However, "the association weaken[ed] over time" (p. 72).

Social media also may be used by newspapers as a means of branding. Schultz and Sheffer (2012) found Twitter was the most used social network for reporting and for personal branding, but that that reporters were not "branding themselves" (p. 68). They also found that, overall, social media were not being used as a way to differentiate themselves from their competitors. Boyle and Zuegner (2012) analyzed the content of Twitter posts on 70 mid-sized newspapers and found that most tweets contained local news, followed by local sports and national news. More than half of the papers did not solicit feedback on their tweets. Circulation did not predict the number of tweets; however, the number of tweets was related to the number of followers.

Circulation size is one element that differentiates features on newspaper websites. Greer and Mensing (2004) examined trends in newspaper content between 1997 and 2003. They found that, initially, large circulation papers offered the most developed online content, followed by medium and small papers. However, data gathered in 2003 showed that medium and large papers were similar in features, while small papers were still behind the other sizes of publications.

Newspapers of various sizes have adopted a variety of digital tools, such as social

networks, blogs and RSS feeds. Anderson and DeVault (2009) noted that papers in Kansas were variously using social media and blogs to promote the paper's website and disseminate breaking news. The study also revealed that Web 2.0 provided another source for news gathering, engaged readers in stories and provided larger coverage of events. Greer and Yan (2010) found that RSS feeds were placed most prominently on community papers. The existence of tools on the sites was related to the size of the paper's audience. Larger papers had more tools and placed them in more prominent locations on the website. Greer and Yan (2010) also found that the number of Twitter and Facebook followers increased over time, but a small percentage of people were connecting to the papers via social media. Similarly, Greer and Yan (2011a) found that RSS was used on three-quarters of the newspaper websites they examined. Larger papers, overall, had higher instances of digital tools and more social media followers than medium or small circulation papers. However, frequency of social media postings did not vary by size of paper.

Based on prior research of newspapers and digital technologies, the following research questions are posed:

RQ1: What types of content are local newspapers posting on their Pinterest sites?

RQ2: Do types of Pinterest posts differ by size of paper?

Extent of follower involvement with Pinterest sites can guide our understanding of the relationship between what stations post on their sites and how users interact with that content. Prior research has examined social network engagement from the perspective of developing relationships between publics and organizations (Paine & Kowalski, 2008) and with media brands (Mersey, Malthouse & Calder, 2010), as well as political action (Kushin & Yamamoto, 2010). In the present study, engagement focuses on the social media user's interaction with Pinterest site content as occurring at four levels.

The lowest level might simply be signing up with a particular social network, but doing little or nothing with it. In those instances, the individual has an account simply because friends have one or because it is trendy. A second level is posting content about one's self. One study about Twitter found that the majority of postings were about the individual (Naaman, Boase, & Lai, 2010). When it comes to sharing information in general, Berger (2013) argued that people like to communicate themselves and their interests through interpersonal as well as social media channels.

A third level of engagement represents more connectivity, including such actions as following and friending. This level is still passive in the sense of connectivity, since these actions may simply involve a one-time action rather than ongoing interaction or dissemination of content. Similar actions are clicking the "like" button or in some manner sharing the post. However, even though these forms of responses involve some form of cognitive activity, they do not necessarily indicate qualitatively the reason for "liking" another's post. The exceptions are responses of sharing, repinning and retweeting, which enable the individual to add a brief note to the shared link.

Compared with the other levels, the final level of engagement – commenting – is higher in cognitive activity and motivation. Rather than clicking an icon and simply communicating existing content to followers or friends, the individual writes his or her perspective of the information.

An important issue involves the type of content that people like to share. In addition to talking about themselves, people also share and are interested in topics that are unusual and remarkable (Berger, 2013). Berger further noted that there are certain triggers that stimulate people to talk about something. Given the potential for varying levels of engagement in Pinterest

and types of content, we seek to answer the following research question:

RQ3: Is there a relationship between pin content (triggers) and repinning, likes and comments?

Previous studies of newspapers and social media have found that relationships exist between circulation size, postings and followers. Therefore, this study also examines the associations between those variables as they relate to newspapers' use of Pinterest.

H1: Larger circulation newspapers will have a larger following of Pinterest than medium and smaller circulation papers.

H2: Larger circulation newspapers will be more active than medium and smaller circulation papers when it comes to posting to Pinterest.

H3: The number of Pinterest followers will be predicted by the number of pins.

Method

This study utilized a content analysis method to examine a sample of Pinterest boards of English-language, newspapers in the U.S. The list of boards was obtained through newspapersonpinterest.com, which provides an alphabetized listing of newspapers in the U.S. and other countries that have a Pinterest page. In addition to the name of the country, the site also includes the state, city, name of the paper and link to the newspaper's Pinterest page. In March 2013, the site listed 179 U.S. newspapers that had a presence on Pinterest. Pretesting for intercoder agreement required the use of 20 Pinterest sites, which left 159 sites in the sampling frame. Following the pretest, selection of sites for final coding was made through a systematic sampling process starting with the first paper and every other paper after that, resulting in the analysis of 78 newspaper Pinterest sites. During coding, two sites were inoperable and one site was a national newspaper. Substitute Pinterest sites were selected at random from the list of

remaining sites in the sampling frame. During this process an additional national newspaper was removed from the list prior to selection of substitute sites.

Most newspaper circulation numbers were obtained from the *Gale Directory of Publications and Broadcast Media* (2012). Circulation numbers for a handful of other newspapers in the sample were located through a variety of Web resources. Data primarily reflected Sunday circulation or the highest weekly circulation from 2012 or 2013. Circulation of papers in this study ranged from 3,192 to 674,104 (*M*=153,041; *SD*=17,240). To enable more detailed analysis, circulation size was divided into four categories noted in prior research (Hendrickson, 2006): More than 100,000; 50,001 to 100,000; 25,001 to 50,000; and less than 25,000.

The unit of analysis was Pinterest pin boards (*N*=1395). Boards with zero pins (*N*=41) were excluded from analysis. Also excluded were 231 shared boards (e.g., Newspapers Pinning), each of which contained some content that could not be attributed to the local newspaper. The final number of pin boards was 1123. Very large circulation newspapers accounted for 41.2 percent of the boards, large circulation was 17.6 percent, medium circulation was 15.0 percent, and small circulation was 25.5 percent.

Based on previous research of local television Pinterest sites (Ferguson & Greer, 2013) and observations of media Pinterest sites (Buttry, 2012; Wilson, 2012), boards were coded according to four themes: lifestyle, community, news, and newspaper promotion.

Prior to coding the final sites used in this analysis, coding categories and instructions were tested by examining a convenience sample of 20 newspaper Pinterest sites. Sites were tested by the researchers and adjustments made to the categories and definitions until an intercoder agreement level of .72 was achieved, based on Cohen's kappa (Bakeman & Gottman,

1997; Cohen, 1960).

Coding also included the number of followers and pins that were listed at the top of each board. The number of pins ranged from zero to 3,513 (M=73.79; SD=245.52) and the number of followers ranged from zero to 2,534 (M=393.33; SD=396.77). In addition, the researchers counted the number of repins, likes and comments for each board. The number of re-pins ranged from zero to 3,346 (M=58.66; SD=201.64) and likes ranged in number from zero to 2,352 (M=17.50; SD=85.10). The number of comments ranged from zero to 48 (M=0.52; SD=2.26).

Coding of the Pinterest sites was conducted from July 2013 through September 2013. It should be noted that, due to the fluid nature of postings to social network sites, the number of followers, pins, repins, likes and comments on Pinterest are susceptible to constant change. Therefore, quantities of the various elements of the boards reflect a single snapshot of the day and time that the researchers coded the particular sites and boards.

Results

The first research question was answered with the coding of pinboards into four themes. News (N=455, 40.5 percent) and lifestyle (N=395, 35.2 percent) accounted for over three-fourths of boards. The remaining two themes were community (N=196, 17.5 percent) and newspaper promotion (N=77, 6.9 percent).

The second research question was answered by cross-tabulating circulation size by theme (see Table 1). Small circulation newspapers were more likely to use promotion, accounting for 54.5 percent of the 77 promotion boards. Very large circulation dailies accounted for greatest share of boards for the remaining themes. Large and medium-size newspapers were the least productive in overall board production.

Insert Table 1 about here

The third research question was answered with a comparison of the four themes. Of the three interactive features (repins, likes, and comments), only repinning showed tiny significant differences among the four themes: $F(3, 1110)=2.69$, $p=.04$. Tukey post-hoc tests revealed that lifestyle produced more repins and newspaper promotion yielded many fewer repins, but the difference was not statistically significant ($p=.08$).

This study also tested three hypotheses. Using an ANOVA test on the 4 circulation groups for H1, the only difference in followers (Tukey post-hoc) was between the top group and the three smaller groups, $F(3,1115)=180.92$, $p=000$. Very large newspapers had more followers than the other three categories of circulation sizes.

For H2, no differences among the four circulation groups were observed ($F(3,120)=.68$, $p=.56$). All four categories of newspaper circulation posted similar quantities of pins. When we evaluated H3 (followers X pins) with boards, a very small significant relationship was detected: $r(1117)=.10$, $p=.002$. Newspapers that featured more pins tended to attract a higher number of followers, although only slightly so.

We wondered if the results were skewed by collapsing circulation figures into categories and by using so many boards. However, the same relationships were revealed with a database using the total number of boards on each of the sites ($N=78$) rather than individual boards as the unit of analysis. By focusing on the number of boards on each Pinterest site, H1 was supported. The association between circulation and number of followers was very strong: $r(72)=.68$, $p<.001$. Thus, the larger the circulation, the larger number of followers of the sites. For H2 (circulation X pinning), the relationship was small and not significant: $r(72)=.21$, $p=.07$.

However, using total number of boards per site instead of number of pins, the same H2 was stronger: $r(72)=.42, p<.001$. Larger circulation papers produced more pin boards. For H3, which examined total pinning per site and the number of followers, another significant relationship was uncovered: $r(76)=.43, p<.001$. More pins were associated with a larger number of followers.

Discussion

Social media are changing the way journalists disseminate news , as well as the manner in which the public receives and interacts with that information. Several research studies have examined how newspapers are utilizing social networks such as Twitter and Facebook (e.g., Boyle & Zuegner, 2012; Ju, 2010; Schultz & Sheffer, 2012). At present, only one study has examined local media use of Pinterest; however, that study focused on television stations (Ferguson & Greer, 2013). This study sought to determine how local newspapers were using Pinterest.

A key issue was the type of content being posted to the newspaper's Pinterest pages. Commensurate with prior research of newspapers' Twitter postings (Boyle & Zuenger, 2012), this study found that the top percentage of content on the paper's Pinterest sites consisted of news-related items. However, the predominant content of papers differed from prior research about television Pinterest sites, which found that broadcast media placed a higher emphasis on lifestyle themes (Ferguson & Greer, 2013). The differences in television and newspaper Pinterest use suggests that newspaper are more concerned with maintaining news-oriented content, while television stations focused more on entertainment. However, commensurate with television Pinterest research (Ferguson & Greer, 2013), only a small percentage of newspaper pin boards promoted the papers.

This study also found that there were differences in types of Pinterest posts according to the size of the paper's circulation in that small circulation papers were more likely to feature pins dealing with promotion. Smaller papers also had a greater number of boards than large and medium circulation papers. In contrast, very large papers had more news, lifestyle and community themes. Prior research found that the extent to which newspapers provided online content differed by circulation size in that smaller papers lagged behind large and medium papers in the amount of online features they provided (Greer & Mensing, 2004). Similarly, circulation size also was related to content when it came to Pinterest postings. However, in this study, smaller papers had more boards than large and medium circulation papers. The size of paper was also significantly associated with board themes in that small circulation papers were more likely to offer more content related to self promotion, compared with very large papers that featured more news, lifestyle and community boards. A possible explanation for this difference might be that small papers are placing more emphasis on connecting with their community. Prior research found that the newspapers were not using Twitter as a means of personal branding by reporters (Schultz & Sheffer, 2012). The same holds true in the present study in that, overall, there was little use of Pinterest for promoting the papers.

Berger (2013) noted that certain types of messages, such as in those in marketing or public service campaigns, may serve as triggers that stimulate interpersonal discussion. Regarding the four Pinterest themes coded in this study, there were significant, although small, differences between lifestyle and the other boards when it came to repinning. This indicates that lifestyle is a more important type of content to share with others than news, which is interesting given the fact that news comprised 40 percent of the newspapers' pin boards. This finding is pertinent for papers that are attempting to increase connections with their audiences. It might be

advantageous for newspapers to devote more space to lifestyle pins that are more likely to be shared and, thus, extend the newspaper's connections.

Previous research has shown that size of newspaper circulation was related to the number of Twitter followers and Facebook fans (Ju, 2010). Other research found that large papers had more digital tools and more social media followers than small and medium-size papers (Greer & Yan, 2011a). Similarly, an ANOVA test in the present study revealed that very large circulation papers had more followers than the other size categories of papers. There was also a strong correlation between circulation size and the number of Pinterest followers. This makes sense, given the fact that larger papers have a higher number of subscribers and, thus, the potential for a larger number of Pinterest followers.

This study hypothesized that larger circulation papers would provide more postings to Pinterest than other sizes of papers. That hypothesis was partially supported. On the one hand, this study found that circulation size was not a factor when it came to the number of pins on newspaper Pinterest sites, either by the four categories of circulation size or by the sheer circulation numbers. On the other hand, however, there was a significant correlation between the number of boards and circulation. Coupled with the finding above, this suggests that larger papers might have more boards, but are not necessarily more active in providing more pins. At the pinning level, there were no differences between the papers, despite larger staffing and economic resources that large papers might enjoy.

Finally, this study hypothesized that the number of followers to the newspapers' Pinterest sites would be predicted by the number of pins. This hypothesis was supported, but the relationship between the number of pins and followers was small. It might be that the sheer number of pins is not what encourages followers, but rather the themes of the pins.

In conclusion, there are several observations that might be derived from this study. One is the manner in which newspapers are using Pinterest. A higher percentage of content was associated with news and lifestyle. Papers are not using Pinterest as a tool to promote themselves. It appears that newspapers are simply using Pinterest as another means of disseminating content that appears in the paper and online versions of the publications. Sullivan (2006) argued that newspapers needed to be innovative. When it comes to newspaper use of Pinterest, perhaps this means finding ways to use the social medium in a unique manner versus in a fashion that is similar to existing news delivery. Future research should examine the number and topics of news stories that appear on Pinterest as compared with the other distribution methods.

Secondly, papers might be using this social medium as a means of connecting with younger audiences. According to the 2013 State of the News Media report, newspaper circulation appeared to be stabilizing, yet the industry was still losing readership of people ages 25 and older (Edmonds, Guskin, Mitchell, & Jurkowitz, 2013). Given research that shows social media users trend younger (see e.g., Duggan & Smith, 2013), newspapers have a golden opportunity to connect with a younger demographic that might translate into regular readers.

A third observation from the present study was that there was little interactivity, overall, at any level by followers of the newspapers' Pinterest sites. Papers need to be more strategic and intentional in their use of social media. This includes capitalizing on Pinterest themes that most engage followers and incorporating more of that content as a tool to enhance interaction through repinning, likes and comments. Current followers of newspaper Pinterest boards could serve as opinion leaders who communicate meaningful content to others in their social networks. Newspapers might be able to increase brand awareness and readership by focusing on pins that are pertinent and interesting to their target publics who, in turn, pass along that content.

Some limitations should be noted regarding this study; chiefly, the fluid nature of online content that is constantly subject to changes. Some newspapers frequently added new pins, as well as added or deleted boards. At the other end of the activity spectrum, it was not unusual for the researchers to return to a set of boards 30 days later and find the identical number of boards and pins and nothing new, which could suggest a novelty factor where sites are created and then largely ignored. Pinterest sites, once established, may not change much, except for news stories. Therefore, future research should examine both the content of these sites, as well as changes over time.

This study considered only the content of newspaper Pinterest sites. Future research should examine what motivates people to follow the sites. This study found that lifestyle comprised the theme that was tended to be repinned. Audience studies should also consider gratifications sought and received from that activity. Perhaps this might extend even to the individual pin level to determine the specific content of pins that make them more or less likely to be shared.

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Table 1
Circulation size by themes

	Theme			
Paper size	Lifestyle	Community	News	Promotion
Very large	189 (47.8%)	81 (41.3%)	183 (40.2%)	18 (23.4%)
Large	55 (13.9%)	27 (13.8%)	106 (23.3%)	10 (13.0%)
Medium	61 (15.4%)	32 (16.3%)	68 (14.9%)	7 (9.1%)
Small	90 (22.8%)	56 (28.6%)	98 (21.5%)	42 (54.5%)
Total	395 (100%)	196 (100%)	455 (100%)	77 (100%)

Chi square = 56.17 (N=1123; $df = 9$); $p<.001$
Note: Percentages do not all total 100% due to rounding.