Policy on archiving and online publication
of Journalism students' work

This policy is for student work that is done within a curricular framework e.g. a course places work on the web: where should it be stored, what are the controls on accuracy and other ethics, and how long should it remain available to outside audiences, if at all?

The principle we should attempt to follow is one of promoting flexibility and nimbleness – not "one size fits all." We should continue to have different protocols for location of storage and length of storage for different sites depending on the curricular needs

None of the following applies to sites that are maintained directly by a faculty member, e.g. for research or for an outside organization.

1. Digital platforms

We currently have three platforms for digital work by students and we recommend using them as follows:

1) Wordpress Public: Windows-based, for publicly available student blog-based projects, googleable, includes MRPs if desired. (Currently 35 blogs and expandable)

2) Wordpress Private: Linux-based, non-public coursework, available for admin[1] and viewing from campus only (not from remote locations), not googleable, currently maintain over 600 blogs (enough for every student if desired).

3) Ektron CMS: publicly available and google-able. Houses Ryersonian, RRJ, RBN/MediaLink (soon to become RSJ Wire), Conference sites, Organization sites, MRP template (alternative to Wordpress Public). We recommend that the CMS should NOT be used for courses.

2. Students' blogs

Undergraduate students are required to start their own blog on Wordpress-Private soon after they enter JRN 100. This remains live by default until graduation. On graduation it is deleted. Once a year, students get instruction[2] on exporting either to

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[1] Administrators, staff and faculty can access these blogs off-campus using a VPN connection to the Ryerson network.

[2] Lindsay will arrange this with JRN 100 and JRN 112 instructors, and provide annual email blast to all students.

their own external sites or to Wordpress-Public. To use Wordpress-Public for their blogs, they need to sign a waiver (making Ryerson basically an innocent disseminator) and encouraged to use their own non-Ryerson URL with URL-aliasing.

3. RSJWire

Items from students across the programs, nominated by instructors, will appear on RSJWire and fed to the Journalism home page.

Instructors will nominate strong work for the wire; it would be housed on or linked from the site, and showcased on the RSJ Wire main page (and potentially on the School's home page where desired).

4. Use of outside sites for student work in specific courses

Instructors are encouraged to use Journalism Wordpress Public or Journalism Wordpress Private for all courses. If circumstances arise where this is seen as not feasible, there should be a discussion with the program director and the News Media Technical Coordinator in advance.

5. Vetting of students' work

If it's publicly available, it has been vetted. If not vetted, needs to be available within the school only. The degree of vetting required depends on the stakes involved. Any threat of liability, and any clear breach of ethical standards, is top priority and instructors are expected to be on the lookout for these as part of normal course management. Instructors should bear in mind possible archival uses of digital material and, unless it is on Wordpress Private, should assume anyone can see this material anytime.

Students must consent before their work goes live publicly. In the case of group work with more than one contributor, all parties must agree.

Ektron has a hierarchy of permissions to control vetting, and faculty involved with courses using Ektron will be asked to explore feasibility and benefits of using this hierarchy.

6. Work that is posted on social media (e.g. YouTube)

The university is not liable for students' online activities other than what is done under instructor's supervision. Where social media posts are done as course work, then the considerations above apply.

Students should be referred to a document (now under construction) that explains risks and protocols for using social media.

7. MRPs

MRPs in all media (from text to TV) should be showcased on a School site and available "forever" by default.[3]

8. Copyright

Students retain copyright for their work. If work is published as part of course work, that should be indicated in the course outline and amounts to a one-time permission; we cannot republish the work for any purpose without the author's or authors' permission. Where we wish to have other uses (e.g. archival or promotional use) we must secure students' permission in writing – perhaps at the start of a course.

9. Archiving of School's branded titles.

1) All printed content going forward for Ryersonian and RRJ and any other future such brands should be captured in word-searchable PDFs[4] and posted on the title's own website archives.[5]

2) Creating a retrospective archive in word-searchable PDFs would cost money and funds are not yet available.[6]

3) Multimedia content will be kept live on web "forever", including TV shows. (Lindsay has confirmed this with Yasin.)

4) In the case of a student or instructor requesting work be removed from one of the School's website, material may be removed via a simple written request, given that a four month period has elapsed since completion of the course. If a time period shorter than four months has passed the course instructor should be consulted in case there is a plan to export/republish in the works. The exception is a masthead title or MRP which would have stricter rules about un-publishing.

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[3] Sally and Lindsay are working on a possible design to run by Bill Reynolds.
[4] Lindsay will be discussing workflow with Peter and Lynn.
[5] Existing 'non-searchable PDF archives go back to 2006 for the Ryersonian, 1984 for RRJ.
[6] Ivor to discuss with RULA.