

*creative
news editing*

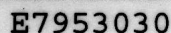
ALFRED A. CROWELL

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JOURNALISM SERIES

Consulting Editor
Curtis D. MacDougall
Northwestern University

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**CREATIVE
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EDITING**

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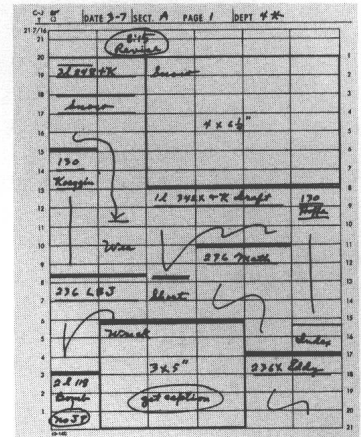
Alfred A. Crowell

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The Boston *Globe*: Fig. 12.8
General Aniline & Film Corporation: Fig. 7.3
The Houston *Chronicle*: Fig. 12.5
The *Courier-Journal*, Louisville: Figs. 6.11, 6.12; 9.1; 14.1-28, 14.30, 14.32-37
The *Courier-Journal* and *Times*, Louisville: Figs. 7.12, 7.14-16; 15.3-27
The *Courier-Journal* and *Times Magazine*: Figs. 16.2-5, 16.7-18
The Louisville *Times*: Figs. 4.8-14; 7.7-11, 7.13, 7.19, 7.20; 12.6, 12.7
The *National Observer*: Fig. 12.1
Newsday, Long Island: Fig. 12.9
The Pittsburgh *Post-Gazette*: Fig. 12.4
Standard Rotogravure Corporation, Louisville: Fig. 16.6
United Press International: Figs. 4.4; 6.1-3
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EDITING

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Staff organization

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The affluent, maturing newspaper press in America for some years has been improving rapidly as a medium for news editing.

Because its attracting millions of new and more sophisticated readers has depended at least in part on more and better editing, the press now provides desirable opportunities for ambitious careers in news editing.

Many publishers have increased their editorial budgets, hired more and better educated editors, run up their costs to improve the contents of their papers. They are buying better packaging, display, and quality editing to beat competition from all news media.

New expectations

The possibilities of man's technology in newspapering as a medium of communication now seem almost unlimited. This is something new that has come about in our generation.

Until the time of the second world war, Americans expected of the press an orderly progress through better products, new materials and discoveries. Improvements in newspaper equipment and procedures were based on developments within a slow, ancient technology. The present and future were thought of as an extension of the past.

But man came out of the war with the understanding of how to build whole new families of machines for the handling of news. A breakthrough in coordinating these machines is anticipated so that the industry may be fully automated by the mid-1970s.

A result of this scientific progress has been to alter the expectation of the press to one of rapid, revolutionary change in our lifetime. The future for

newspapers now is more and more becoming an amazing phenomenon hardly to be imagined.

The implications of man's electronic-age instruments are described as more awesome than the invention of movable type. They portend the physical fact of instantaneous worldwide transmission of information by sight and sound. In time, it is predicted, they will put virtually every human being in contact with his fellows around the earth.

Total change ahead

Computers and other automated machinery will "change totally the way a newspaper operates," according to John Diebold, consultant on newspaper automation. Speaking to the American Newspaper Guild in Philadelphia, he said:

You are working on very old technology. You have only to walk through 10 or 12 of your leading papers in the country to find out how archaic the (newspaper) industry is.

The new technological change is beginning to impinge on your job, and there is going to be wholesale change in the years ahead. It has started.

It is not simply going to change the method you use. It is going to change what you do. It is going to change what the role of the paper is in society. Eventually it is going to change the physical form of the paper.

It is going to materially change the corporate organization and the organizational forms of papers and the role of publishing.

Automation

On the basis of initial research, newspaper publishers who planned major plant or equipment changes, or expansion, have been advised to make

sure that new facilities have computer compatibility. (Computer tape is used in both letterpress and offset production.)

Uses of the computer were thought to include (1) instantaneous word hyphenation and line justification, (2) instant retrieval and printing of information and images, (3) development of satellite plants in which complete newspapers may be produced at once in outlying suburban communities, (4) automatic dummied display advertising and billing of the advertiser, (5) performing of circulation book work.

Possibilities of a plateless press were described by Donald D. Dissly, director of the ANPA-RI Research Center. An electrostatic page image can be created in a page-size area on a printing cylinder in a single cylinder revolution. On the subsequent revolution a different page image can be created in this same page-size area. This process can be repeated for 10, 20 or 1,000 different pages in sequence. Such a press would be light in weight, portable, inexpensive. Several plateless presses stationed in the circulation area could reduce distribution costs and increase speed.

A machine that reads typewritten words, converts them into machine language and transfers it to tape has been made available. The next step in the production line was to hook it up with a computer, and it is now in use.

Anticipated developments indicated that high-speed web offset presses could soon be used by metropolitan dailies of large circulation. Such offset, working in conjunction with computers and photo-composition, perhaps with readers, was thought of as complete automation that can halt rising production costs.

Editing of copy on a screen with a light-beam pencil has been mentioned as a practical possibility.

Effects of automation

As newspapers are increasingly automated, with more production, speed, and flexibility, one of the questions most frequently asked is: How can we reap the benefits of automation?

In the editorial department the problem is: How can we catch up with composing when we have an acute shortage of editors and more pages to fill?

The pressure to close the gap in editorial production is reducing the percentage of hard news in some papers.

As composing becomes more automated and electronic, and editorial continues relatively less automated, the pressure to catch up can become unbearable.

Unquestionably, increasing automation in composing is contributing to the shortage of editors, to the need for more editors and editing.

Automation has decreased man-hour costs in the composing room. One study showed a one-year decrease of 0.23 man-hours per published page resulting in a saving of 6,900 man-hours. At \$3.80 per man-hour, this computed to \$26,220, the equivalent of an average of four journeymen per month.

More editing

The changing editorial content—from reporting oddities and the unique to the important and significant—has been responsible, at least in part, for increasing editorial budgets so as to buy more and better editing for the newspaper press in America.

Content

Changing with the readers and their communities as they change, the papers cater to interests of today's Americans, who are at the same time more sophisticated and more provincial, more globally oriented, and more locally concerned.

Unlike competing media, newspapers no longer assume that the public has a mentality of a twelve-year-old and must be written down to. They print news in a quiet manner for intelligent people.

The editorial content of newspapers for Americans has been changing, fundamentally. Sex scandals, cops and robber yarns, and spectacles do not sell papers now. They do not get and hold today's readers.

Record factual news and entertainment in the papers have been pushed out or back, to be dominated by the latest information concerning sociological problems, news of importance to people. These problems have been in social welfare, urban renewal and cities, ghettos and rioting, employment and crime, respectability and civil rights, education and dropouts, inflation and gold, pollution, transportation, war and the draft, developing countries and food for everyone, government, international relations, space, travel, culture and the performing arts.

Analysis, critical review and personal interpretation have given new opportunities for serving to closed (special Sunday) sections and to the newspaper magazine.

This bill of fare, prepared by educated professionals, is entirely appropriate in the modern American newspaper, now strong and prosperous. For it has become more respectable and institutional, a