Path B
Case Study 1
Investigate and Recommend

UWGB Communication
Department Blog

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Executive Summary

The University of Wisconsin-Green Bay student newspaper, the *Fourth Estate*, recently failed after its digital launch and is currently being paused for re-evaluation. A main focus of the evaluation is what the path for the future of this publication should look like. One proposed option is to create a Communication Department blog to serve as either a stepping stone for a new *Fourth Estate*, or as a replacement all together. This blog option is seen as a way to re-imagine the *Fourth Estate*, while also creating a portfolio building opportunity for students. Within this Case Study, our group was presented the task of finding a blog platform that best suited the needs of the Communication Department. We started with 14 blogging sites, and eventually narrowed it down to 4. Of the four, we came up with criteria that we deemed important in order to have a high-functioning, sustainable blog. The final step was narrowing it down to one blog platform in particular, WordPress.org.

Before moving forward with this idea, the problems that caused the *Fourth Estate* failure had to be identified. The main problems were that the previous *Fourth Estate* situation did not offer students the appropriate educational experiences, or opportunities to build their portfolios in a professional way. The Communication Department was also not entirely in support of the *Fourth Estate* as it was, which was problematic. In addition to this, there were underlying concerns with the leadership, oversight and overall coordination.

The identified audiences of the *Fourth Estate* and the new blog can be divided into internal creators and oversight and external targeted readers. The creators and oversight consist of University of Wisconsin-Green Bay students, University of Wisconsin-Green Bay faculty, and the University of Wisconsin-Green Bay Office of Marketing and University Communication. The targeted readers include future employers of students, the University of Wisconsin-Green

Bay students themselves, University of Wisconsin-Green Bay faculty and staff, university alumni, prospective students and families of students. While the needs of these audiences were not being met by the recently launched version of the *Fourth Estate*, the needs of these audiences can be met by a properly executed blog.

In order to effectively solve the identified problems and meet the needs of the various audiences, choosing the appropriate blog platform is paramount. We conducted thorough research, and applied various decision making principles in order to come to a conclusion about the best blogging platform to use for the development of a Communication Department blog. We found WordPress.org to be the strongest blog platform out of the 14 we examined. Among many other features, we felt WordPress.org was desirable due to its vast customizability options, proven stability, and ability to grow as our blog grows. WordPress.org also fits well within our budget and is compatible with not only our audiences, but our goals as well. We believe that if WordPress.org is utilized properly to create a professional and engaging Communication Department blog, the past issues with the *Fourth Estate* publication can be solved and the needs of our various audiences can be met.

Case Study Wording

Investigate-Recommend. Case 1:

Investigate various free or low cost blog opportunities to mount a University of Wisconsin-Green Bay Communication blog. Recommend the best option, and justify your selection.

Purpose

Investigate at least four free or low cost blogging alternatives. Recommend the best one for the new University of Wisconsin-Green Bay Communication Department blog.

Rationale

Journalists and PR professionals are spending an increasing amount of time working with sponsored content publishing outlets. A published sponsored blog sanctioned by the Communication Department should be a good addition to any Communication student's personal portfolio.

Major Activities

Research a minimum of 4 free or low-cost blog publishing alternatives, analyze the upside and downside of each alternative, conduct a three argument review of the alternatives and provide the three most powerful arguments for and against each option. Then, select and advocate your proposed solution, and summarize your analysis and thoughts into an elevator talk with an administrator.

Requirements

Present findings and proposed solutions in a professional 20 minute presentation, and 5-10 minute cross-examination. Follow with a written report that is due one week after the oral presentation is given.

Introduction

Overview

The *Fourth Estate* is the student newspaper for the University of Wisconsin-Green Bay campus. Over the last few years, it has been in a research and development phase, as students and their advisor worked to redesign the *Fourth Estate* and prepare it for a digital launch. In February of 2017, the *Fourth Estate* was launched as a digital campus news site. However, the launch was unsuccessful as the final product was not up to acceptable standards.

After the failed launch, the website was taken down, and students, along with new leadership, entered a pause and evaluate phase. In this phase, the current condition of the *Fourth Estate* is being evaluated and various paths for the future of the publication are being examined. One proposed path for the future is to create a Communication Department blog that can serve either as a stepping stone to a new *Fourth Estate* or as a substitute for the publication all together.

If the idea of creating a blog is pursued, the optimal blog platform needs to be chosen so that the blog serves as both a professional portfolio building experience for students as well as an engaging news source.

Problem

The main stated problem with the current state of the *Fourth Estate* is that it is not meeting the needs of the Communication Department or its students. The Communication Department is lacking a reputable publication that they can be proud of. Journalism and Public Relations students are lacking the educational opportunity to write for an established publication and promote work for their portfolio. The unstated problems in this situation are numerous. In

the past, the Media Workshop course in which students work on the *Fourth Estate*, did not have a clearly defined course mission or expectations. Internal coordination and oversight was also lacking. Currently, Media Workshop and therefore the *Fourth Estate*, is transitioning to new oversight, new internal coordination and new expectations. However, a long-term solution for the future of the publication has not yet been found.

Methods

We began by analyzing the case study to determine both the stated and unstated aspects of the problem. We then conducted research in order to determine what the future of a Communication Department blog could look like, and which blog platform would work best. Combining our research with decision making principles learned in class, we were able to select and advocate for a particular blog platform that we feel best suits our needs and solves the problems at hand.

Findings, Analysis, and Insight

The redesign and digital launch of the *Fourth Estate* was a failure because there was not enough oversight and those involved were not well coordinated or well informed. Those who had worked closely with the publication for an extended period of time were too closely attached to the project to realize its faults, and pushed optimism rather than being realistic. The best thing to do after the failed launch was to pause the current path of the publication, so that it could be further evaluated. It is not that the *Fourth Estate* has no future, but rather that the trajectory of the publication needs to be changed before proceeding.

Being that the *Fourth Estate* has been halted, the course Media Workshop has changed drastically for students in the middle of the semester. A new syllabus and new leadership was introduced. Currently, the goal of the class is to have a hands-on experience in decision-making, while also deciding what the future of the *Fourth Estate* should look like. Ideally this should result in a win for students as well as a win for the department as a whole. Students need a way to publish their work and build their portfolio. The department needs a publication that they are proud to put their name on and can use to further their students' education in the future.

For the purposes of this case study, the idea of creating a blog is being explored. The blog needs to be developed in a way that it serves as a professional portfolio builder for students as well as a trusted way to share current news with the campus community. In order to do so, the appropriate blog platform needs to be chosen.

In order to effectively make the best blog platform choice, decision makers should:

- Conduct thorough research about the various blog platforms
- Identify goals of the blog
- Identify and analyze the audiences of the blog
- Craft an evaluation chart with weighted criteria
- Select a blog platform that is superior on the evaluation chart, while also aligning with goals and audiences

After choosing a blog platform, the content of the blog should be chosen. Should it be a blog based solely on the Communication Department? Or, should it encompass an entire college? Or even the whole university? Additionally, how will the content of the blog satisfy both public relations and journalism students, while also being interesting to readers? Current research suggests that blog readers favor shorter, more creative pieces with a human interest element. This

is fitting with the type of pieces a public relations student may write, but is a far cry from the extensive investigative pieces journalism students are looking to write. Could these longer journalistic pieces be successful on the blog platform? If not, would engaging in brand journalism-type pieces be equally as valuable to journalism students? These questions must be considered before moving forward to ensure that the blog meets the needs of all students involved.

We also analyzed several competing universities in the state of Wisconsin (Appendix H). No other university has a Communication Department blog. However, they all have an online outlet for their student-run newspaper. St. Norbert College does use WordPress in blog format to post all of their stories. Clearly, UW-Green Bay needs to develop an online publication of some form in order to stay competitive.

Section 1: Situational Background

The Situation

Prior to the launch of the *Fourth Estate*, there were five semesters of planning that went into launching a digital news website. In the digital state, the *Fourth Estate* would function independently without financial support from the university. Previously, the *Fourth Estate* has been funded through segregated fees allocated by SUFAC (Segregated University Fee Allocation Commission) through the University. During the transition, SUFAC gave the *Fourth Estate* a budget of $3,000 in order to allow the *Fourth Estate* to transition properly.

During the spring 2017 semester, the Media Workshop classes were instilled with the task to launch the *Fourth Estate* effectively and efficiently. With the tools that the previous students had laid down, the current students executed the launch of the *Fourth Estate*. This launch included the website going live, and an actual event in the University Union to celebrate the unveiling. Unfortunately, this launch failed because the product presented was inferior. The following week, the website was taken down, and the Media Workshop course was taken over by new leadership, with a new syllabus and new expectations. This leaves the *Fourth Estate* in a pause and evaluate phase. The future of the publication is currently being determined by a collaborative effort between students, faculty and various administrators, to come to a mutually beneficial decision.

Pulling Back vs. Pushing Forward

The decision-making forces in this class prior to the launch of the digital *Fourth Estate* were weak. The previous advisor had unrealistic and unachievable goals for the *Fourth Estate* as well as a weak plan for working towards them. Those involved with the *Fourth Estate* had been

planning for two and a half years to transition from a print edition to a digital edition, in order to keep up with the current trends and competing universities.

The launch of the *Fourth Estate* mainly focused on the cosmetic view of the site, such as what viewers would see when they visit the site, and how the stories would be laid out. Decisions were not made on the technical side of how to link pages together or how to post ads in order to make money.

The push-forward force was strong, as this was a project two and a half years in the making. The launch was inevitable at this point and the students enrolled in the class were led to believe that we could make it work, no matter what the circumstances were. The pull back force was weak, as the instructor and her most loyal students believed that the digital *Fourth Estate* would overcome every small problem, in order to save its reputable name.

After the launch failed, and the *Fourth Estate* was shut down for further evaluation, the forces changed. We believe that the decision making forces have changed. The push forward forces have become weak and the pull back forces have become strong. Skepticism on if a digital newspaper was even plausible increased after the launch failed. The Communication Department and the university had invested so much time and money into the past two and a half years, it seemed like the *Fourth Estate* needed to be paused and evaluated before continuing forward.

During this pause and evaluate phase, the possibility of creating a Communication Department blog is being explored. This blog could serve as a stepping stone to a new and improved *Fourth Estate,* or as a new publication all together. A map of the quadrants referenced in this section can be found in Appendix D.

Stated vs. Unstated Problem

The stated problem surrounding the *Fourth Estate* is that students are lacking educational opportunities in their chosen field and are unable to promote their work in an academic outlet. The students are unable to have a reputable source of communication for university-wide news. The Communication Department is also lacking a reputable publication, which is something their competitors, such as University of Wisconsin- Oshkosh, University of Wisconsin- Milwaukee, and St. Norbert College all have.

One of the main unstated issues surrounding the situation is that there was a lack of clearly defined expectations as well as a lacking course definition for the students. Students were entering the classroom without goals and objectives and without guidance. Previously within Media Workshop, there was also a lack of internal coordination. While it is acknowledged that the development of the digital *Fourth Estate* was a gradual process and gradual project, the work that students had done previously in the class was not being transferred properly to current students. Finally, there was a lack of oversight from the department in this course. This resulted in the result of the project being unsatisfactory.

Currently, the course Media Workshop is transitioning to new oversight, with new course expectations and new internal coordination. This transition will hopefully aid in the elimination of the aforementioned problems.

Mission Statements and Goals

The goals of the University are found through the Office of Marketing and University Communication. The university seeks to provide an "interdisciplinary, problem-focused educational experience that prepares students to think critically and address complex issues in a

multicultural and evolving world" ("UW-Green Bay Mission," n.d.). As a whole, the university strives to provide an environment that emphasizes the student, and strives to meet their personal needs by requiring excellence among the educational staff ("UW-Green Bay Mission," n.d.). The university will maximize the educational opportunities for the students by providing hands on learning in and out of the classrooms, through internships, and independent studies ("UW-Green Bay Mission," n.d.).

The Communication Department's mission is to "develop core competencies in oral, written, and visual communication for our interdisciplinary program" ("Communication," n.d.). Basic competency is a must in order to enhance the effectiveness in a student's chosen communication area of emphasis. Students also will learn about the major communication theories and become educated on the impact of technology on communication today ("Communication," n.d.).

Students with the public relations emphasis will develop writing skills, become proficient in communication methods, and learn how to respond appropriately to a crisis situation. Their main focus is to be educated on how to develop strategies for relating to internal and external audiences ("Communication," n.d.).

Within the journalism emphasis, students will develop writing skills, develop a portfolio, and engage in hands on experience writing in a journalistic style. Students will have a well-rounded understanding of important issues in their field by gaining knowledge through hands on experience inside and outside of the classroom. Students will also participate in on-campus publications ("Communication," n.d.).

Section 2: Audience Analysis

The main audiences in this case are separated into two categories; the internal creators and oversight and the external target audiences of the blog. The creators are primarily public relations and journalism students, but may also include students pursuing other majors. Oversight is going to be mainly provided by faculty and the UW-Green Bay Office of Marketing and University Communication. The target audiences are those consuming the content that is published on the blog. The breakdown of these audiences can also be found in a chart in Appendix B.

UW-Green Bay Students

When examining the demographics of UW-Green Bay students, 66% of students are female and 34% of students are male ("Fact Book," 2016). In addition, the majority of students are white and are between the ages of 17 and 23 ("Fact Book," 2016). They are leading busy lifestyles and they are mobile dependent. They want and need quick and easily accessible information to accommodate their hectic lifestyles. They also get their news mainly online ("How Americans," 2016).

There are currently more public relations students than journalism students. The majority of these students know about the current condition of the *Fourth Estate*.

Students as Creators

There are several things we can infer about the students that will be creating the content for the blog. First, journalism and public relations students are hoping to be hired after graduation. We can infer that they enjoy their chosen field and wish to develop a portfolio of their work to show future employers. It is reasonable to assume they wish to receive a hands-on

education that prepares them for their chosen field. Receiving an education that prepares them for either journalism or public relations careers requires them to obtain a thorough knowledge of how each side functions. The two fields are connected in many ways. It would be beneficial for students of both emphases to be provided with opportunities that allow them to experience the connection and collaboration that takes place first-hand.

Students pursuing degrees other than journalism or public relations may have an interest in the fields, may be looking for a way to promote campus organizations, may have a desire to publish their work or may want to learn more about the Communication Department in general. Many of these students are unaware of the current situation surrounding the *Fourth Estate*. In the future, it may also be worth considering including students within the Communication Department that have chosen other emphases, such as Organizational Communication.

Students as Target Audience

There are several things we can infer about the students that will be consuming the content of the blog. First, journalism and public relations students may want to remain updated on University news and news within the Communication Department in particular, such as upcoming events or course information. They may also want to read relatable content that complements their education in an interactive format.

Students pursuing other degrees outside of the Communication Department may want to remain updated on University news and learn about the Communication Department as well.

UW-Green Bay Faculty and Staff

UW-Green Bay faculty and staff span across a variety of demographics and psychographics. However, the majority of them get their news from either television or online

("How Americans," 2016). We can assume that they believe news should be professional and credible.

Faculty and Staff as Oversight

The faculty and staff that will mainly be providing oversight will be Communication Department employees who are aware of the current condition of the *Fourth Estate*. We know they have a passion for their chosen fields and can assume they want students to learn and succeed. We can also assume they care about the reputation of the Communication Department and wish to uphold the mission of the University and Communication Department. We can also infer that they work diligently to fulfill the goals outlined by each.

UW-Green Bay Faculty and Staff as Target Audience

We can assume that the UW-Green Bay Faculty and Staff that will be consuming the content would like to remain updated on university news, especially news that relates to them and their students. We can also assume that some may like to contribute to story content. They may or may not be aware of the current condition of the *Fourth Estate*.

UW-Green Bay Office of Marketing and University Communication as Oversight

The employees of the UW-Green Bay Office of Marketing and University Communication have many jobs including distributing University news both internally and externally as well as performing numerous public relations and marketing tasks. We can infer that their main goal is to uphold the mission of the University, while also ensuring that all publications endorsed by the University are professional and portray the University in a positive light.

Future Employers as Target Audience

Future employers of journalism and public relations students are a target audience. We know they are looking to hire students that have experience and that have a strong portfolio of their work. They are looking for professional, quality content.

Alumni as Target Audience

Alumni are also a target audience. We know they attended UW-Green Bay and span across a variety of demographics and psychographics. However, they mainly get their news from television or online ("How Americans," 2016). Some alumni may be donating to the University as well.

We can infer that communication alumni will be interested in Communication Department updates. We can infer that all alumni will be interested in University news. Additionally, we can infer that they care about the reputation of the University. It will be important to make sure a blog is professional and appears as an asset to the University that is potentially worth investing in.

Prospective Students and Families as Target Audience

Prospective students and families are target audiences as well. The majority of prospective students are under the age of 17 and mobile dependent. They want and need quick and easily accessible information to accommodate their lifestyles. They get their news mainly online ("How Americans," 2016).

We know prospective students are interested in pursuing a college degree and are interested in UW-Green Bay. We can assume that they are considering other universities as well and can assume that they will be interested in learning about campus life, Communication Department information, outside-the-classroom opportunities, the admissions process, and an assortment of other pertinent information. Families of prospective students may be interested in learning about similar campus information.

Families of students currently attending may be interested in University news, especially news that relates to their child specifically.

Section 3: Key Messages

We have developed several key messages for the blog that focus on consistency during the current transition.

The blog will:

- Further the goals of the University and Communication Department
- Provide beneficial opportunities for both public relations and journalism students at UW-Green Bay
- Promote internal strength within the Communication Department
- Maintain high-quality content that informs target audiences
- Be well-designed to maintain sustainability for the future of the communication program

Section 4: Investigating and Recommending a Blog

Why are blogs effective?

Blogs can be effective for several reasons. First, they are a trusted source for online information. They are rated as the fifth most trusted source for online information, above numerous social media platforms ("6 Stats," 2015). Blogs also allow organizations to glean useful quantitative and qualitative data. These insights allow them to better analyze their audiences and allow them to practice continuous improvement on a regular basis.

Next, blogs can create a positive brand image. 60% of consumers feel more positive about a company after reading custom blog content ("The Anatomy," n.d.). Blogs can give organizations a voice, allow them to resonate with their audiences through storytelling and communicate their mission, vision and goals. In addition, blogs allow for relationship-building. Organizations are able to achieve dialogue over monologue through immediate, interactive features on blogs. These rich communication options will help them connect with their audiences. Building relationships with target audiences builds trust. This will ultimately impact return on investment in a positive way.

Today, 23% of total Internet usage time is devoted to social networks or blogs ("Social Media," n.d.). Additionally, blogs can be a cost-efficient communication tool. Blogs can be developed and maintained for a relatively low monetary cost. The biggest cost with a blog is the time spent developing not only the blog itself, but content as well. However, blogs can make a big impact in terms of sharing information and brand identity with readers.

Key Blog Facts

There are several facts to be aware of when determining if a blog is an effective option for an organization. First, the most active demographic group for blogging is 21-to-35 year olds which account for 53.3% of the total blogging population ("Inside Blogger," n.d.).

In addition, building up readership takes time and patience. Maintaining the blog is also time-consuming. It is necessary that those responsible for the blog remain creative and deliver fresh content to sustain readership and engagement. They also need to stay on top of blogging trends and continually analyze their audiences' communication preferences. It is easy to fall behind in the immediate and ever changing world of blogging, and doing so will negatively impact overall brand image and engagement.

Furthermore, the decision to blog must be a long-term commitment. This is especially important taking into consideration the current situation at hand. If we chose to build a blog, we have to be fully dedicated now and position it to be a sustainable communication channel for the future.

Transparency is also important when it comes to blogging. In order to build relationships, honesty is essential. Competitors will read the blog, and 'trolls', or people who post negativity on or about your blog, will impact blogging as well. It is essential to have a strategy in place on how to handle potential negativity.

A strategy must be put in place before a blog is developed. The strategy must be consistent with the goals of the university, the UW-Green Bay Office of Marketing and University Communication and the Communication Department, specifically the public relations and journalism emphases.

Finally, as with any online communication venture, there will be litigation risks such as defamation or copyright infringement. There will also be security risks such as the distribution of intellectual property or confidential information.

How are blogs effective?

There are several ways users can currently maximize the effectiveness of blogs. The relevance of this section to the current situation will be addressed later.

First, including digital elements such as pictures, videos and graphics is highly effective. Blog articles with images receive 94% more views ("6 Powerful," n.d.). Including credible sources and accurate information as well as adhering to AP style is necessary. The most effective word count is between about 1100 and 1300 words ("Searchmetrics Ranking," n.d.). Incorporating attention-grabbing headlines, developing creative and newsworthy content and staying on top of trends as previously mentioned are also ways to be effective on a blog in addition to regular and consistent posting.

Finally, the average person spends 2.6 seconds skimming a page before focusing on a specific section and scrolls through about 60% of the post they choose to read ("Do People," 2014). Chunking is an effective way to combat these tendencies. Chunking refers to the grouping of information in an efficient way that aids short-term memory and content processing ("Chunking Method," n.d.). Chunking in blogs can be achieved by separating content by headers and sub headers, lists or short paragraphs. For example, 'Top 10' lists prove to be very popular and effective posts among blog readers.

Why are we recommending a blog?

We believe that a blog is an effective long-term solution for the journalism and public relations emphases and Communication Department as a whole. First, it can fulfill the goals of the university specifically, by offering an environment that emphasizes teaching excellence and meets the educational and personal needs of students through effective teaching and through university-sponsored cultural, recreational and extracurricular programs. It also helps to meet the needs of the university by offering scholarly activity, including research, scholarship and creative endeavors, that supports its programs at the baccalaureate degree level ("UW-Green Bay Mission," n.d.).

Second, a blog can fulfill the goals of the Communication Department by developing core competencies in oral, written and visual communication ("Communication, n/d").

Third, a blog has the ability to fulfill the goals of the Public Relations and Journalism emphases by teaching students how to effectively write, edit and publish as well as "dig for stories" and develop an interest in public affairs. In addition, it can aid in teaching students how an organization should present themselves to internal and external audiences as well as how to use and integrate various communication modes into a coherent strategy for relating to the public ("Communication, n/d").

There are several options and limitations with implementing a blog. First of all, the blog will provide both journalism and public relations students with an experience that allows them to see first-hand the collaboration needed between both fields. It can also provide portfolio-building opportunities to both. The blog is a great opportunity for public relations students because it is not a traditional journalistic platform. Blogs are platforms public relations professionals use in the real world to connect with their publics. However, we believe there is a limitation when it

comes to the outlined Communication Department blog standards. The standards that are currently outlined require all blogs to be in journalistic format. If all blog posts adhere to these standards, we believe the full potential of the blog cannot be reached.

However, these types of posts are exactly the type of portfolio-building opportunities journalism students need. There are several options we could pursue:

a. Incorporate both types of posts (Combine journalistic style posts with shorter posts proven to be more effective for blogs)
b. Incorporate brand journalism into the posts which is not covered in any other course
c. Link journalistic stories to blog posts if we decide to pursue a *Fourth Estate* website as well

Goals of the Blog

We have developed numerous business and communication goals for the blog (Appendix C). These goals are separated by audience (internal and external) as well.

Internal Business Goals

Internal business goals include strengthening the public relations and journalism emphases by giving experience to students, strengthening the Communication Department, reinforcing the image of the Communication Department, increasing student participation and serving as an outlet for the UW-Green Bay community to receive news.

Internal Communication Goals

In order for the overall business goals to be met, we have outlined several communication goals for our internal audiences. These include creating awareness of the blog, increasing support

for the Communication Department and educating students about the advantages of gaining experience.

External Business Goals

External business goals include providing information about the Communication Department to aid in its growth and promotion, becoming a preferred resource for students, alumni, prospective students and families to learn about the university and Communication Department, enhancing the relationship between the university and its publics while also improving the reputation of the student publication.

External Communication Goals

In order for the overall business goals to be met, we have outlined several communication goals for our external audiences as well. These include creating awareness of the blog and increasing support for the Communication Department.

Blog Objectives

We have developed several measurable objectives consistent with the goals we have outlined. We have separated them by audience category (internal and external) as well as by projected time frame of completion. The exact measure of effectiveness for the long-term objectives will be determined based on the success of the short-term objectives.

Internal

Short-term - 6 months

- To create hands-on, portfolio-building opportunities for 100% of journalism and public relations students

- To add 15 student writers from other departments, specifically to create content for the blog on a weekly basis

- To create awareness among 100% of current communication students, specifically to increase their understanding of the University and the Communication Department

- To create awareness among 60% of non-communication students, specifically to increase their understanding of the University and the Communication Department

- To create awareness among 75% of faculty and staff, specifically to increase their understanding of the University and the Communication Department

Long-term - 1 year

- To increase readership among internal audiences

External

Short-term-6 months

- To create awareness among 50% of prospective *communication* students and families, specifically to increase their understanding of the University and the Communication Department

- To create awareness among 30% of prospective students and families, specifically to increase their understanding of the University and the Communication Department

- To create awareness among 60% of alumni, specifically to increase their understanding of the University and the Communication Department

Long-term-1 year

- To increase readership among external audiences

Effectiveness will be evaluated through awareness surveys and opinion surveys during and after the first 6 months. Long term objective effectiveness will be measured through calculating the number of page views and visits as well as the number of blog subscribers.

Section 5: Investigating and Recommending a Blog Platform

At the onset of this case study, we began researching an array of possible blog platforms. Originally, 14 popular blog platforms were investigated. As we compared these various options, we ultimately chose four that we felt were the strongest and further evaluated those. We selected Wix, Weebly, Blogger and WordPress.org as the best options.

In order to lay out the various attributes of each, we crafted an evaluation chart. In the chart, 12 main criteria were outlined including cost, customizability, mobile flexibility, whether or not hosting was included, custom domain availability, theme versatility, ease of use, search engine optimization, compatibility with our target audience, analytics availability, comment capability, and storage capacity. The full evaluation chart can be seen in Appendix F. To further our decision making process, we weighted four of the criteria more heavily than the others. We chose to emphasize cost, customizability, mobile flexibility and compatibility most heavily. Cost is very important when selecting a blog platform, being that this blog is under the Communication Department. The budget for this project will be minimal; somewhere around $100-$300. Because of this, it is key to ensure that the money spent carries a lot of value and is allocated cost-effectively. Customizability is important to consider because the proposed blog will be a unique combination of a professional channel for students to publish their work, as well as an engaging platform for students to read content and gather news. The platform that is chosen must be able to be customized so that it suits these multi-faceted needs. Mobile flexibility is a must-have feature. Given our target audiences, we realize that much of our audience will be looking to access the blog on a mobile device, whether it be a mobile phone or tablet. It is essential that the chosen platform is ready to convert to mobile. Compatibility with our audiences is also paramount. In this case, we are considered out internal audiences, the creators and the

oversight. The content of the blog will determine compatibility with the audiences that may read the blog, but the platform itself must work for those we are encouraging to take part in the blog project. The chosen platform must be suitable for beginners, as many students who create content for it will likely not have any prior experience blogging. However, since the blog is to serve as a portfolio building opportunity, the blog also needs to be suitable for professionals. Weighting these four criteria the most heavily helped craft our arguments for each platform, and ultimately make the most informed decision.

Wix

Wix is one of many platforms that offers users the opportunity to create a blog. Wix is very cost-friendly, as it offers its most basic services for free. Without investing a cent, users can create a blog that is hosted by Wix with a connectable subdomain. For users looking for more, monthly plans can be purchased for anywhere from $5 to $25 per month, depending on the desired features and storage ("Wix," n.d.). Regardless of subscription plan, Wix is incredibly mobile friendly. Wix web pages are automatically optimized for mobile devices. Wix also boasts over 100 themes and a variety of customizable widgets (Banner, 2017). Wix has built-in comments, analytics and editing software as well ("Best Blogging," 2017). However, Wix is not without drawbacks. When a blog is created with Wix, expansion is somewhat limited. Once a theme or template is chosen, it is very hard to change if the needs of the blog should change. Wix also offers only 10-20 plug-ins and extensions, meaning it has no social media plug-ins or search engine optimization plug ins ("Best Blogging," 2017). It also lacks some of the features offered by its competitors, such as a spam blocker ("Best Blogging," 2017). Storage and bandwidth are also limited for users of this platform. 500 MB of storage are included for free, and this increases depending on the paid plan chosen. However, for $10 per month, users still only are allowed

3GB of storage. If a user is willing to shell out $14 per month, they get 10GB of storage and can upgrade it to 20GB for $17 per month or more. Bandwidth is also limited with Wix. Only 1GB of bandwidth is available with the free package, or even the $5 per month subscription. Only users who upgrade to $14 or $25 per month can unlock unlimited bandwidth ("Wix," n.d.). If the connectable subdomain is not desirable, users must pay at least $14 per month to get a custom domain name ("Wix," n.d.). This is quite expensive considering a custom domain can be purchased separately on other host sites for around $15 per year.

To summarize, the three strongest arguments in favor of Wix are:

1. It is affordable and cost effective.
2. It is mobile friendly.
3. It offers a variety of themes and widgets.

The three strongest arguments against Wix are:

1. The features Wix offers limit the ability to expand the blog.
2. Storage and bandwidth is limited.
3. It is expensive to have a custom domain with a Wix blog.

Weebly

Weebly is a popular website building site that also offers the option to create a blog. Weebly is extremely easy to use. We rated it a 9/10 in terms of ease of use, as did many other sources that reviewed the site. It features a "drag and drop" style design that is ideal for beginners ("Weebly," n.d.). Weebly is also mobile friendly. It automatically optimizes the site, and also has a mobile app for both Apple and Android devices. Like Wix, Weebly also includes hosting, even with its free package ("Weebly," n.d.). However, the actual features of Weebly are

limited. Weebly offers very few plugins, and only around 100 themes. It lacks some of the important features that other sites offer, such as an html editor and a spam blocker ("Best Blogging," 2017). While Weebly can be used for free, it can quickly become expensive if users decide they would like more out of their blog. Weebly plans can reach $25 per month for users that want their more advanced options, such as a custom domain and ads ("Weebly," n.d.). Another drawback of Weebly is that it truly is more of a website building site than a blog site. It is ideal for businesses that would like a blog linked through their website. However, Weebly began as a website builder, not a blog builder. While they have added the blog creating option to adapt to recent trends, it is not their focus and therefore not what they do best (Banner, 2017). Blogs created on Weebly are rather basic than blogs created on other platforms with a more developed blog builder.

To summarize, the three strongest arguments in favor of Weebly are:

1. It is very easy to use and build a site with the "drag and drop" style interface.
2. It is very mobile friendly.
3. It includes hosting in all of its packages.

The three strongest arguments against Weebly are:

1. The features Weebly offers are limited compared to their competitors.
2. The paid packages can quickly become expensive.
3. Weebly's main purpose is to build websites, not blogs and therefore their blog builder is not extensively developed.

Blogger

Blogger is a dedicated blog creating platform, as its name might suggest. Blogger is extremely cost-friendly as it is completely free. Hosting is also included, so there are not additional monetary costs associated with getting a blog started using this site ("Blogger," n.d.). Blogger is very easy to use, and often recommended for beginners. It also has a strong and accessible support network, should users encounter any roadblocks along the way ("Best Blogging," 2017). Blogger also offers users unlimited storage ("Blogger," n.d.). Blogger also offers users analytics, a comments section, and an html editor ("Best Blogging," 2017). However, what Blogger offers in ease of use, it sacrifices in terms of customization. There are no additional plugins for Blogger, and few themes in comparison to their competitors. This means it lacks social media plugins or spam blockers (Banner, 2017). Blogger is also owned by Google, presenting some unique challenges. A Google account is required in order to use Blogger. In addition, Google ultimately has ownership over the blog, and can remove any posts if it deems necessary (Banner, 2017). Ultimately, Blogger is great for beginners but offers limited opportunities for growth. It is not recommended for professionals or businesses, because its basic features are not ideal for growing blogs (Banner, 2017).

To summarize, the three strongest arguments in favor of Blogger are:

1. It is the most cost-friendly, being that it is completely free.

2. It is very easy to use.

3. There are no storage limits.

The three strongest arguments against Blogger are:

1. There are minimal customization options.

2. Being owned by Google, a Google account is required to use the service and Google has ultimate ownership.

3. Blogger has limited opportunities for growth.

WordPress.org

WordPress.org is a platform that can support a variety of websites and blogs. It should not be confused with its more simplified sister, WordPress.com. WordPress.org is highly customizable, more so than many of its competitors. It boasts a little over 47,000 plugins, from search engine optimization to social media and so much more. It also offers an assortment of customizable widgets and over 500 themes ("Best Blogging," 2017). In comparison to other options, it is the ultimate in customization and control. With WordPress.org, users have complete control over the design and function of their blog. WordPress.org is also extremely popular and stable. It has been around since 2003, and currently supports as much as 27% of the web ("WordPress," n.d.). The features that this platform offers are able to grow with the blog. WordPress.org offers search engine optimization, a spam blocker, analytics, comment capability and social media options so that users have everything they might need now or in the future ("Best Blogging," 2017). However, this site is the least cost-friendly among the other three options examined. The software itself is free, however it does not include hosting, which will be an additional cost. However, there are plenty of hosting options that would still fit within a modest budget. Currently, Blue Host, a site recommended to accompany WordPress.org, is offering a promotion for a hosting package at $2.95 per month, and that includes a custom domain (Banner, 2017). Even if another hosting site was chosen, there are plenty of alternatives around $7.99 per month and custom domains can be purchased for around $15.99 per year ("WordPress," n.d.). WordPress.org does require a higher level of involvement in starting up the

blog than some other sites. It is not a "drag and drop" style construction, but instead has users fully customize their blog from start to finish. Because there is more control with this site, that also means more work in the set-up. There is also a small learning curve that goes along with creating a blog using WordPress.org since it is so customizable ("Best Blogging," 2017). However, this learning curve is still do-able for even beginners.

To summarize, the three strongest arguments in favor of WordPress.org are:

1. It is highly customizable in terms of design and function.
2. It is popular and stable.
3. Features have the capacity to grow with the blog.

The three strongest arguments against WordPress.org are:

1. It is the least cost-friendly due to the cost of hosting.
2. It requires a higher level of involvement from creators.
3. There is a small learning curve involved with the set-up.

Section 6: Explanation for Proposed Decision

During a time of change, it is very normal for people to have a variety of questions regarding what is happening. These questions can come from people both within the organization and outside of the organization. It is very important to make sure they are answered so that those that need to be, are well informed about the reasoning behind the decision to make the change. Some common questions that may arise during a time of change are: what is the decision?, how was the decision made?, why was that decision made?, what were rejected alternatives?, how does the decision fit with the organization's mission or vision?, how will the decision affect the organization?, and how will the decision affect employees? It is important for these questions to be addressed in order to make the transition as smooth as possible. For this case in particular, there are two different major decisions being advocated for: the decision to create a Communication Department blog and the decision to use WordPress.org as the blog platform.

What is the decision?

The Blog

The decision is to add a blog to the Communication Department. The department does not have a blog currently, but we feel that it would be beneficial for students to have a blog to write for in order to help grow their portfolios.

The Platform

The decision is to use WordPress.org as the platform for the blog.

How was the decision made?

The Blog

This decision was made, in part, by looking at the chart in Appendix D. As shown in this chart, there are four different options for where we could be in our decision making process. With the current situation surrounding how the *Fourth Estate* was panning out, we felt that the best option for the *Fourth Estate* at this time would be to pull back and evaluate other possible solutions. This is depicted in quadrant 3 of the chart; pull back-strong/push forward-weak. Even though a lot of time and effort has gone towards relaunching the *Fourth Estate*, it is time to pull back on that option and push forward with something new: the Communication Department blog.

The Platform

The platform was chosen based off of criteria that was discussed previously. While other blogging platforms were comparable to WordPress.org, we felt that its customization options stood out immensely when compared to the other choices. Because this blog could potentially change and evolve over time, it would be best to have it be highly flexible in terms of customization. Also, this blog is unique in the sense that it must combine two distinct purposes. It must serve as a professional way for students to display work for their portfolio, as well as be an engaging source of news content for students. Customization allows the creation of a blog that meets both needs.

Why was the decision made?

The Blog

As can be seen in Appendix E, the NRD model for this situation makes a strong case as to why the Communication Department needs a blog. There is a need for the Communication

Department to have access to information and for students to grow their portfolios. A remedy for this need is to add a Communication Department blog. A possible disadvantage that could stem from this remedy would be the *Fourth Estate* no longer existing.

The Platform

WordPress.org is the best option for a blogging platform based off of the criteria that was outlined earlier. While it would take a longer time commitment to set up the blog initially, it would be the best choice for customizability which was a heavily weighted criteria for our evaluation chart.

What were the rejected alternatives?

The Blog

Continuing with the *Fourth Estate* in its current form is a rejected alternative for this case. We felt that because of its lack of content and glitchy digital formatting, that the *Fourth Estate* needed some time to be re-evaluated before pursuing it again.

The Platform

Rejected solutions for the platform were the other platforms that we looked at prior to our final four. Through our research we discovered 14 blog platforms. After surveying these platforms, we selected four that we felt were the strongest for further research and evaluation. Ultimately, only one platform was chosen, leaving 13 rejected alternatives.

How does the decision fit into the mission or vision?

The Blog

The blog will also provide students with an outlet to have stories published. This will help students build their portfolios as well as give them experience writing in this format. Employers will be looking to see where journalism students have been published and this will be a professional platform for them to publish their work. It will also be beneficial for public relations students to show that they can adhere to blogging standards.

The Communication Department is always looking to improve the quality of education for their students. We feel that by having a blog, the subject matter of the content will give students a better idea about classes before they take them and allow them to be more prepared that way. This will also help students who have taken the classes reflect on what they have learned and how they've grown.

The Platform

WordPress.org is a platform that is very regularly used for both professional use and personal use. It powers approximately 27% of the websites on the Internet which not only proves its stability but also its prominence ("WordPress," n.d.). It is possible that students may work with this specific platform again, and some employers even seek this experience in prospective employees. By becoming experienced with this platform now, it will help students to expand upon their knowledge and continue to improve themselves as well as grow their portfolios.

How does the decision affect the organization?

The Blog

Students taking the Media Workshop course would have to adapt to the new class atmosphere of having a blog instead of writing for the *Fourth Estate*. This will be challenging for the students who are more familiar with the *Fourth Estate* because they may have put work into preserving the *Fourth Estate* and may not want to help advocate for the change to a blog. Students who have taken Media Workshop 1 and are enrolled in Media Workshop 2 can help these students with the transition to a blog.

Communication students would need to be prepared to write for a communication blog. Depending on the sustainability options for the Media Workshop course, other communication students could also write for the Communication Department blog even if they aren't enrolled in the course. This means that students need to be prepared to write for the blog and learn about different formatting types for blog posts.

Professors would need to teach the course and make sure it stays on track. This is very important in order to keep things organized and provide students with a sense of direction. It will be important for those teaching the course to understand how WordPress.org works in order to provide assistance to the students publishing the content.

The Communication Department would have to provide oversight to the blog as well as funding.

The Platform

Media Workshop students would need to learn about WordPress.org and adjust if they aren't familiar with the platform. It will be very critical for the course to have students that understand the platform on a higher level in order to get the blog set-up and formatted correctly.

Communication students would need to be prepared to write for the blog and be familiar with the platform. Similarly to the Media Workshop students being familiar with the platform, other Communication students may also be writing for the blog outside of the class. This means they would also need to know about WordPress.org in order for them to properly format their blog posts.

Professors would also need to become familiar with the platform in order to aid students with the blog. In order for students to be able to effectively learn about the WordPress.org, they should be able to ask the professor who is teaching the course for assistance when working with the platform.

The Communication Department would need to provide money in order to run the blog. We were provided a budget to stay within for our platform choice and WordPress.org will fit into that budget of $100-$300.

Section 7: Details for Moving Forward

Budget

It is important to stay within or around our budget. The budget we have available is approximately $100.00-$300.00 per year. We have to take into account what option(s) will be the best or most bang for our buck. We do not have unlimited funds and it needs to be cost-effective for the university. We need to consider what will be the most cost effective, sustainable, and forward moving for the students and faculty. We believe the most efficient option would be WordPress.org. WordPress' mission is to provide a "home for your brand" ("WordPress," n.d.). This shows their dedication and commitment to making sure customers are satisfied with putting their brand or label out on the web and for their audiences to see. The software from WordPress.org itself is free, but hosting will be required for an additional charge. You can get hosting, no ads, and support starting at only $7.99 per month. A custom domain is available with a charge of around $15.99 per year. Storage is also unlimited, based on the hosting plan.

Timeline

Our timeline for putting the blog into action would start the fall semester of 2017. During this semester, students of the Media Workshop class will be introduced to the blog and learn the proper principles in regards to running the blog and creating content for it. They will learn and use their writing skills by creating reputable content for the blog also. During the semester, there will be checkpoints in the middle of the semester and at the end of the semester. These checkpoints would be for evaluation of the blog. Evaluation would be based off of a set of criteria developed for sustainability, content, and continuous improvement. The class would

continue on into spring of 2018. Students will continue to find and create content for the blog and once again there will be checkpoints in the middle and at the end of the semester.

The Media Workshop class could also be offered during the summer of 2018. Students could have the option to participate with the blog through a summer internship or through a class that is available online.

During fall of 2018, there will be a 1 year evaluation between students and oversight. There would also be a measure of sustainability using the proposed criteria and also through discussion between the students and the oversight. A survey could also be conducted to distribute to students for evaluation from reader perspective.

Measuring Success

Measuring the success of the blog will be determined by its sustainability. In order to measure the success, we will think in terms of Potential-Present-Perpetual. Potential represents the potential or future demographic of people that will be attending or coming into UW-Green Bay. The Present represents the demographic that is attending or employed at the UW-Green Bay campus. The perpetual is those that have graduated or alumni of UW-Green Bay.

Sustainability

We want to be able to maintain the UWGB Communication Department's blog and have a continuous market. When sustainability fails, people can get stuck because they focus too much on the Potential demographic or the Present demographic. In order to maintain sustainability, you must think in terms of all audiences.

Establishing and maintaining sustainability is very important. We first must be able to make it work. Whatever a brand is trying to establish, it must cater to its goal and show others that it is accomplishing that goal. The initial hook is that the product or platform is actually doing what it is proposed to be doing. The benefits of using that platform is icing on the cake. The idea of it being good for me and good for others is important.

Be bold, be brave

We need to think of creating a platform and being a brand that does not think of itself of a department, but as agents of change. We want to start something new and innovative and it is not a coincidence that bold players are the often most adorned by conscious consumers.

Make it easy

Our department needs to be the ones making the initiative for a change. It is important to enable the user to be a part of the change or purpose without too much effort on their part. We need to satisfy the consumer's needs as well as the students, and then consumers or the students can feel good about using the platform.

Make it edgy

The platform or blog that is used needs to be fun, quirky, trendy, clever, and charming. It needs to be innovative and up-and-coming. Doing so will entice people to use the blog and lead them to expect more from their department.

Section 8: Elevator Speech

Our elevator speech that we would pitch would be that the blog will...

- Promote internal and external strength within the Communication Department

- Promote and further the goals of the Communication Department

- Cater to the potential, present, and perpetual

- Maintain high-quality, sustainable content allowing students to publish their work

- Leverage the ease of use, affordability, and mobility that it offers.

Section 9: So What?

After choosing Path B, which consisted of proposing potential blog post platforms to utilize, we found three key insights. The first piece of knowledge we gleaned from the experience was how to respond professionally to the unexpected. The situation that we found ourselves in was completely unexpected, and presented a unique set of challenges. However, we also felt that it presented a unique set of opportunities. We had to quickly adapt and take the challenge of re-imagining the *Fourth Estate* head-on, maintaining professional standards all the while. We also learned some key lessons in proper decision making techniques. The best way to look at the situation surrounding this case study is to realize that it is a learning opportunity. Through this course and this case, we discovered some very practical techniques for making a good decision that will be useful in the future. This situation was also a real-life example of how continuous improvement is always possible, both for individuals and organizations.

Conclusion

The aforementioned situation with the *Fourth Estate* is not ideal. However, the silver lining of this unexpected failure is that it presents the opportunity to reinvent the identity of the *Fourth Estate* and create something new. This shiny new thing would be the Communication Department blog. Through audience and situation analysis, we found that adding a Communication Department blog would be an effective way to solve the problems that arose, and satisfy the various internal and external audiences. This Communication Department blog would serve as a great opportunity for students to build their portfolio, while also enhancing the Communication Department as a whole, and keeping UW-Green Bay competitive. It would also serve as an engaging source of information for the UW-Green Bay community.

WordPress.org is the best platform to utilize as we move forward with the Communication Department blog. It a is a tried-and-true platform that offers a high level of customizability, as well as all the features we may need now or in the future. Using WordPress.org to create a professional, yet modern blog will benefit everyone involved, and create an opportunity for the Communication Department that was not there before.

Continuous Improvements

After the completion of this case, it came to our attention that there were ways in which we could have improved upon our analysis. Given the situation, we should have considered evaluating the criteria for quickly mounting the chosen platform. We also could have included organizational communication students as possible content creators to help aid with the sustainability issue. In addition, if given more time for preparation, we could have conducted some research in the form of surveys or focus groups to get a better grasp on the needs of our main audience of University of Wisconsin-Green Bay students. These improvements would only have made our case study stronger.

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Appendix

Appendix A: 100 Facts

1. The University of Wisconsin-Green Bay Communication Department does not currently have a blog.
2. The University of Wisconsin-Green Bay's student newspaper, The *Fourth Estate*, is currently in a state of evaluation, and the future of it is unknown.
3. There are a multitude of blog and website platforms available for those interested, from newbie to experienced.
4. Wordpress is a website platform that offers wordpress.com and wordpress.org.
5. Wordpress.com serves as the host for websites created through the platform.
6. Wordpress.com is mobile friendly.
7. Wordpress.com is easy to use, even for newbies.
8. Wordpress.com offers plenty of themes.
9. Wordpress.com has the ability to create custom domain for users with a small charge.
10. Wordpress.com offers a variety of plugins and extensions.
11. Wordpress.com offers customizable widgets.
12. Wordpress.com is SEO capable. SEO stands for Search Engine Optimization.
13. Wordpress.com offers a spam blocker.
14. Wordpress.com offers analytics.
15. Wordpress.com is comments capable.
16. The themes and plugins offers at wordpress.com are very basic.
17. Wordpress.com limits storage based on the plan that is purchased. The user receives 3 GB free, 6GB for $2.99 and 13GB for $8.25.
18. Wordpress.com requires the user purchase the $2.99 plan to remove ads and get technical supports.
19. The audience of wordpress.com is anyone who wants to start a blog with little investment, from hobby bloggers to professional bloggers.
20. Blogger is a blog platform.
21. With Blogger, website hosting is included.
22. Blogger is mobile friendly.
23. Blogger offers SEO.
24. Blogger offers customizable widgets.

25. Blogger is easy to use, even for beginners.

26. Blogger offer analytics.

27. Blogger is offers a comments section.

28. The user cannot have a custom domain with Blogger.

29. Blogger does not offer any plugins or extensions.

30. Blogger has a limited number of themes to choose from.

31. Blogger is free.

32. Blogger targets users that blog as a hobby or those who have personal blogs.

33. Blogger does not limit the user's storage space.

34. Webs is a website building platform.

35. Webs pricing starts at $5.99 per month.

36. With webs, the user can make changes at any time for free.

37. Webs offers many customizable templates.

38. Webs offers a SEO booster.

39. Webs allows for social media integration.

40. Webs provides analytics.

41. Webs offers users a custom domain with a charge.

42. Webs offers users 1GB of storage, but unlimited pages.

43. Webs is mobile friendly.

44. Webs offers free trial.

45. Webs is geared towards professional blogging.

46. Weebly is a website building platform.

47. Weebly offers a basic package for free and a starter package for $8 per month.

48. Weebly is easy to build and very user-friendly.

49. With Weebly, hosting is included.

50. Weebly offers a free trial.

51. Weebly offers SEO.

52. Weebly offers site capture.

53. Weebly has many customizable themes.

54. Users have to have a paid plan in order to remove ads from their website.

55. Weebly offers subdomain for free, but requires a paid plan in order for users to create a custom domain.

56. It is difficult to export a webpage or blog from Weebly.

57. Weebly limits the user's storage space. They offer 500MB for the basic package and 1GB for the starter package.
58. Weebly does not offer any spam blockers.
59. Wix is website and blog platform.
60. With Wix, hosting is included.
61. Wix offers a multitude of themes.
62. Wix is mobile friendly and even has an app.
63. Wix offers customizable widgets.
64. Wix offers forum and chat options.
65. Wix offers a free package, as well as paid packages that start at $5 per month.
66. With Wix, a connectable subdomain is free, but there is a charge for a custom domain.
67. Wix displays ads.
68. Wix limits the user's storage and bandwidth. Wix offers 500 MB for free, 500 MB for $5 per month and 3 GB for $10 per month.
69. Wix targets beginners, as well as creative professionals looking to display their work and business owners.
70. Squarespace is website and blog platform.
71. The cost of Squarespace includes hosting.
72. With Squarespace, users get a custom domain.
73. Squarespace is mobile friendly.
74. Squarespace is easy to use.
75. Squarespace offer customizable widgets and plugins.
76. Squarespace requires an additional plugin in order to offer SEO.
77. Squarespace offers analytics.
78. Squarespace offers a spam blocker.
79. Squarespace limits the number of pages users have depending on the package they purchase.
80. Squarespace offers plans that range from $12 to $18 per month.
81. Ghost is a website platform.
82. Ghost offers free 14 day trial.
83. Ghost is mobile friendly.
84. Ghost serves as the host of the website.
85. Ghost gives users unlimited storage.
86. Ghost offers users a custom domain
87. Ghost offers SEO.

88. The price of a Ghost website or blog ranges from $19 per month to $199 per month. The price is driven by page views and the number of blogs.
89. Ghost does not offer any plugins or extensions.
90. Ghost is not ideal for beginners, as it is not the most user-friendly.
91. Ghost works best for hobby bloggers with an interest in web development.
92. Ghost is not ideal for professional or business blogs.
93. Drupal is a website and blog platform.
94. Drupal offers custom domains.
95. Drupal is free.
96. Drupal offers many themes. The ability of Drupal to be mobile friendly depends on the chosen theme.
97. Drupal offers SEO.
98. Drupal has a spam blocker.
99. Drupal does not include hosting. Users have to seek a website hosting program from elsewhere.
100. Drupal does not allow for comments
101. Drupal has a very steep learning curve for new users.
102. Medium is a website platform.
103. Medium is very user-friendly.
104. With Medium, hosting is included.
105. Medium is mobile friendly.
106. Medium offers analytics.
107. Medium allows for comments.
108. Medium has an established readership.
109. With Medium, the content is not the users alone.
110. Medium does not offer custom domains.
111. Medium does not have any plugins or extensions.
112. The user cannot choose their own theme with Medium.
113. Medium does not offer SEO.
114. Medium does not have a spam blocker.
115. Medium is free to use.
116. Medium works well for hobby bloggers and companies that would like to have their blog post hosted outside of their company website.
117. Joomla is an open source software content management system.

118.   Joomla is a self-hosted solution.

119.   Joomla can be used to build any kind of website or blog.

120.   Joomla has hundreds of templates

121.   Apps for Joomla sites are available to add more features.

122.   The Joomla community is much smaller than WordPress community.

123.   Joomla support options are limited to community support.

124.   Joomla is free but you will need domain and hosting.

125.   Pen.io's approach is rather different from contemporary blogging platforms.

126.   Pen.io doesn't require a login - Define a URL for a post and set a password.

127.   Pen.io images can be dragged into place.

128.   You can create multi-page posts using a tag with Pen.io.

129.   Yola allows you to have two sites and three web pages with its free plan.

130.   Yola has 1GB of both storage and bandwidth, and no third-party ads.

131.   Yola has dozens of customizable templates to choose from.

132.   Yola has a straightforward site builder, flexible layouts and drag-and-drop widgets.

133.   Contentful provides a way to separate your content from design.

134.   Contentful's "API-first" approach stores content on servers and you can call it into any design or platform as you like. If you want to build a completely different site in a few years, it's easy to bring everything in as its set up to be portable from the start.

135.   Jekyll takes your raw text files and turns them into a robust static site.

136.   Jekyll hosting is free.

137.   Making your blog with Jekyll avoids the need to work with technicalities such as databases, upgrades and so on, so there are fewer things to go wrong, and you can build something completely from scratch.

138.   Svbtle describes itself as a "blogging platform designed to help you think."

139.   Svbtle is fairly similar to Medium.

140.   LiveJournal blurs the lines between blogging and social networking.

141.   Tumblr is a hip microblogging hosted platform with a social network aspect.

142.   Tumblr is a great blogging platform optimized specifically for bloggers who want to publish short-form content, such as micro-blogs, quotes, images, videos, and animated GIFs.

143.   Tumblr is a community of users, ready to promote and comment on other's work.

144.   Tumblr is free.

145.   Tumblr hosts your blog for no additional cost.

146.   Tumblr provides subdomain and allows you to hook up custom domains as well.

147.   Absolutely no skills is required to start and run a Tumblr blog.

148.   There are many designs options on Tumblr, although many of them cost money.

149.   There are no plugins and extensions on Tumblr.

150.   Tumblr is perfect for hobby bloggers, one-topic blogs, microblogs, and blogs publishing different types of content (quotes, posts, images, videos, etc.)

151.   Tumblr is not for business or professional use.

152.   Tumblr does not have many advanced features and extensions.

153.   Tumblr is a great for small blogs limited content and irregular posting schedule.

154.   WordPress.org is a downloadable blogging (and website management) software.

155.   WordPress.org is the most popular blogging platform available.

156.   Installing it and then configuring WordPress.org will take 20 minutes to an hour.

157.   WordPress.org is perfect for bloggers who want to make money on top of their blog, bloggers who want to make the blog a part of their business, professional bloggers, and hobby bloggers who want to have control over everything.

158.   WordPress.org blogs allow you to easily monetize the blog with Adsense advertisements.

159.   WordPress.org gives you control over every aspect of your website.

160.   WordPress.org forces you to manage your own backups and security.

Appendix B: Audience Analysis KISS Chart

Audience	Know	Infer	Should Do	Should Not Do
Primary: Students	Many do not know much about The *Fourth Estate* Students span across a variety of demographics and psychographics Have a busy lifestyle Are pursuing a college education Do not currently have access to a Communication-specific publication Are mobile-dependent	Will be interested in information about specific courses, upcoming events, and other information related to the department Are interested in information that is relatable Are interested in information that benefits them	Make sure blog posts are relatable Make the blog interactive Make the blog information useful to students Make blog posts short and concise to cater to shorter attention spans Reach out to students personally for participation Emphasize the benefits of reading or participating in the blog Make reading the blog easy, accessible and convenient	Force students to read/participate in the blog Make the blog lengthy and time-consuming to read or access Write blog posts that are not relevant for UWGB students
Primary: Faculty/Staff	Currently work for UWGB Span across a variety of demographics and psychographics Do not currently have access to a Communication-specific publication	Will be interested in department updates Concerned with the image and reputation of the university Look to improve and grow their students Are interested in the work of their students	Make sure blog posts are done professionally Make sure blog posts are accurate and updated in a timely manner Make sure blog posts reflect the university in the best possible light Make sure blog posts reflect the	Publish blog posts that are incomplete or unprofessional Portray the university in a negative light Write specifically about certain classes or professors in an unflattering way

			interest of faculty and staff as well.	
Secondary: Alumni	Attended UWGB Have a college education Span across a variety of demographics and psychographics Some may be donating to the university	Will be interested in department updates Concerned about the image and reputation of the university Interested in the continuation of their actions as students Interested in how the department and university has changed since they were a student	Make sure blog posts are done professionally Make sure blog posts reflect the university in the best possible light Make the blog appear as an asset to the department that could potentially be worth investing in	Publish blog posts that are incomplete or unprofessional Portray the university in a negative light
Secondary: Prospective Students	Interested in pursuing a college education Considering attending UWGB Have alternative choices for universities Have a high school diploma Span across a variety of demographics and psychographics	Will be interested in campus life, department information, outside the classroom opportunities, admissions process, available scholarships and curriculum. Do not yet know about many of the features of the UWGB campus Are interested in information that benefits them Are interested in information that is relevant to them	Make sure blog posts are relatable Make the blog interactive Emphasize the unique aspects of UWGB Demonstrate the benefits of being a part of the blog, as well as other programs the university has to offer Make blog posts short and concise to cater to shorter attention spans	Make the blog lengthy and time-consuming to read or access Portray the university or department in negative way
Secondary: Family of Students	May be interested in campus as prospect for their child.	Interest is dependent upon their child	Make sure blog posts reflect the university in the best light possible	Portray the university in a negative way

	Will be interested in campus if child is enrolled at the university Span across a variety of demographics and psychographics	May not yet know about many of the features of the UWGB campus	Emphasize the benefits of attending UWGB Demonstrate the various programs and events going on at UWGB Demonstrate learning and personal growth among students	Publish blog posts that are unprofessional

Appendix C: Goals of the Blog

	Business Goals	Communication Goals
Internal	Grow the public relations and journalism emphases by giving experience to students Strengthen the Communication Department through the blog Increase student participation Reinforce the image of the Communication Department Serve as an outlet for the UW-Green Bay community to receive news	Create awareness of the blog Increase support for the Communication Department Educate students about the advantages of gaining experience

	Business Goals	Communication Goals
External	Provide information about the Communication Department to aid in growth and promotion Be a preferred resource for students, alumni, prospective students and families to learn about the University and Communication Department Enhance the relationship between the University and its publics Improve the reputation of the student publication	Create awareness of the blog Increase support for the Communication Department

Appendix D: Pulling Back vs. Pushing Forward Quadrant Map

	Pull Back – Strong	Pull Back – Weak
Push Forward – Strong	1) "Shoot for the moon and something good might happen" "It's a crap shoot either way" Enhancing our commitment, enhances our chances of success."	2) We shall overcome" "Optimism trumps pessimism" "We can make it work"
Push Forward – Weak	3) "Why throw good $ after bad?" "Investing in a lasting proposition" "Future risks far outweigh future gains"	4) "Caught on the horns of a dilemma" "Stuck in the middle of two losing propositions" "Damned if you do, damned if you don't"

Appendix E: NRD Model

Need	Remedy	Disadvantages
Communication department access to information	Communication Blog	Getting rid of the 4e

Appendix F: Evaluation Chart

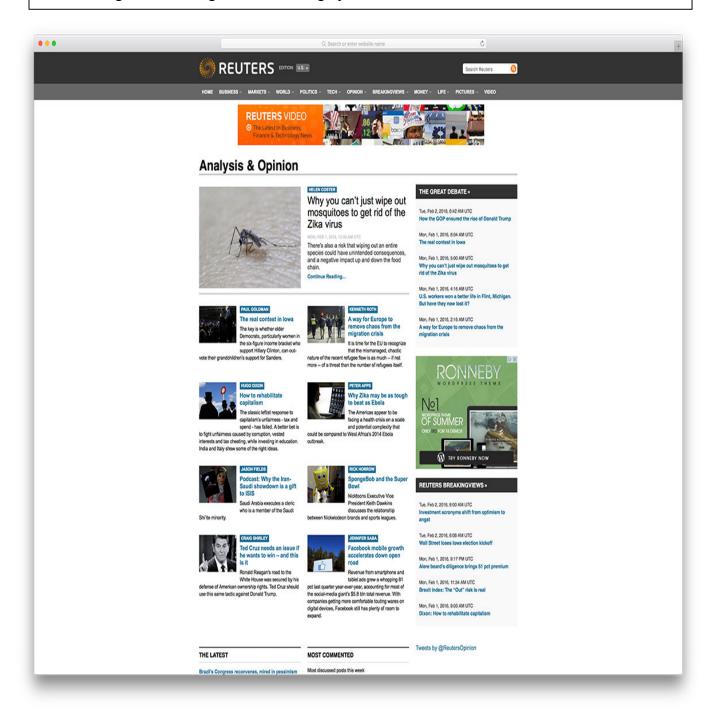***Criteria highlighted in yellow are weighted most heavily**

Platforms → Criteria ↓	WordPress.org	Blogger	Weebly	Wix
Cost	Varies based on hosting plan, most around $7.99/month	Free	Free OR $8/month OR To unlock all the available features, you could pay up to $25/month	Free OR $5/month OR $10/month
Customizability	10/10	6/10	7/10	6/10
Mobile flexibility	Has an app. Looks to be flexible. 5 Million downloads via android	Has an app. Looks to be a bit confusing. 5 million downloads via android. Seems to be more like a diary. Blogger is automatically optimized for mobile browsing and search engines.	The Weebly site is automatically optimized for mobile browsing and search engines. Weebly has an app for iPhone, iPad and Android which makes it easy to build and manage sites	Wix is automatically optimized for mobile browsing and search engines.
Hosting	Not Included	Included	Included	Included

Custom Domain	Yes, w/ charge of $14.99/year	No	Yes, w/charge	Yes, w/charge
Theme Versatility	3,000+	Very few	Less than 100	100+
Ease of Use	8/10	9/10	9/10	8/10
SEO Capability	There are SEO plugins available.	There are SEO plugins and support	There are SEO plugins and basic support	There are no SEO plugins and support
Compatibility with target audience(s)	Good for almost any blogger, including beginners, professionals, businesses and hobby bloggers.	Good for beginners and personal/hobby use	Good for businesses, professionals and beginners	Good for beginners and businesses (Website with blog on the side)
Analytics Capability	Linked to Google Analytics	Linked to Google Analytics - must have Google Analytics account	Preferred to link Google Analytics to Weebly site	Preferred to link to Google Analytics
Comments Capability	Ability to approve comments before publically visible	Ability to approve comments before publically visible.	Ability to approve comments before publically visible	Must add a comment box to the single post page. To add a comment box, add one of the following: Facebook Comments Discus Comments

				Comments app (third-party app)
Storage	Unlimited, based on hosting plan	No limit	500MB for free, 1GB for $8	500 MB for free, 500 MB for $5, 3GB for $10

Appendix G: Blog Post Examples Using WordPress.org

The blog of Reuters News Agency covers a great deal of ground by way of information. There are many geographical editions to this blog. Its Alexa ranking at 368 places it right there among the most popular blogs. It has a solid reputation as an authoritative news source and is widely followed all over the globe. The blog is filled with highly readable information.

TechCrunch is a technology news blog that doubles up as a guide for all tech related stuff. It keeps you informed on events in tech companies, whether large or small, and carries opinions about and analysis of these companies. Whether Yahoo is slashing its workforce or there are breakthrough advances in technology- this is where you will find the news. You can tap data on funding for tech companies and startups here. TechCrunch Daily, Weekly Newsletters and interviews with big names in technology can be also be accessed here.

Appendix H: Analysis of Competition

Competitor	Communication Department Blog	Online Campus News	Online Campus News Platform
UW-Oshkosh	No	University: "UW-Oshkosh Today" Student: The Advance-Titan	Website Website & PDF
St. Norbert College	No	University: "Staying Informed" Student: St. Norbert Times	Website WordPress
UW-Fox Valley	No	University: "News" Student: The Fox Journal	Links to Post-Crescent Website
UW-Madison	No	University: "News" Student: "The Badger Herald:	Website Website