Introduction to Digital Communication Analytics

JOUR 5000 • FALL 2019 • 100% Online

Professor       Scott Hamilton, M.A., Doctoral Candidate

Contact info    Cell: 512.970.2155 (Google Voice)
                 Email: scott.hamilton@unt.edu. Any email, cell phone call, or text message received after 5pm on a Friday or last day prior to a holiday/campus closing will not be returned until the next school day. Text messages and cell phone calls are for emergencies or time-sensitive matters.

Office hours    Tuesdays & Thursdays 5-6pm by appointment via the Zoom link in Canvas https://unt.zoom.us/my/scotthamilton or on campus.

Description
This course explores the fundamental concepts and principles that underlie techniques for extracting useful information and knowledge from digital communication data. The primary goal of the course is to help you come to view problems from a data perspective and understand how to systematically and critically analyze such problems. Data-analytic thinking can be applied in a variety of ways, from social media marketing and analysis to customer relationship management, strategic communication through the field of public relations and advertising, to data-driven decision-making and much more. Throughout this course it is critical that students come to an understanding of the nature of data and its significance for society. With this in mind, the course will focus on introducing technical data skills (acquire, manage, analyze, & use) within both a social and societal context.

Course Learning Outcomes
1. Demonstrate an understanding of the history and role of professionals and institutions shaping the digital analytics and communications industries.
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2. Think critically, creatively, and independently to apply DCA models, tools, and techniques to solve problems and answer questions.
3. Compare and contrast the various analytics tools and techniques required of the digital communication analyst.
4. Apply tools and technologies appropriate for the practice of DCA.
5. Organize data, tools, and resources to plan and execute a DCA project and to report in writing analytical findings.

Course Philosophy
This course will be applied and interactive. Assigned work has been developed to integrate and facilitate students’ simultaneous learning of analytical concepts and techniques, as well as the application of the requisite tools critical to digital communication analysts. As students you are encouraged to apply your real-world professional experience to the learning process throughout the course. Further, any previous coursework in business-related fields such as sales and marketing or advertising, and in human behavior, such as sociology, psychology, and social psychology will be immensely useful as you build your skills in analytical thinking and practice these new techniques.

Prerequisites: Graduate standing

Course Structure
This online course consists of readings, discussions, writing assignments, analytics’ assignments, and regular check-ins with the professor. The lectures will introduce the principles, tools, and professional applications of digital communication analytics. Periodically, pre-recorded lectures from developers of various analytics tools may supplement the course materials. Other course activities are opportunities to apply those principles and tools. Students will learn how to collect and translate digital content into data that can be used to enhance decision-making by marketers, advertisers, and public relations and social media professionals, as well as many others. Students are required to keep up with readings and recorded lectures, to turn in all assigned work on time, and actively engage in any Canvas forum discussions.

Required texts

Other readings are provided by the professor in Canvas.

*The Mayborn School of Journalism doesn’t require students to purchase textbooks from the University Bookstore. Many are available through other bookstores or online.

Deadlines
Because a key characteristic of the position of digital analyst requires the ability to quickly plan, execute, and report simple and complex analyses in a very short period of time, students are expected to meet all deadlines without exception.
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**Reading assignments**
Readings should be completed as soon as possible during each new module so that you are prepared for forums and assignments. Readings from texts, articles and/or review of certain websites will be assigned to support achievement of the course objectives. Weekly readings may include last minute articles and tweets as they relate to the class.

**Writing requirements**
The course’s written assignments must be completed using either the American Sociological Association (ASA) or American Psychological Association (APA) style guides and must follow data analytics reporting conventions.

**How your course grade will be determined**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment title</th>
<th>No. of assignments</th>
<th>Assignment points</th>
<th>Point total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Canvas Discussion Forums</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>350</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Check-ins with Professor</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quizzes</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>420</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Analytics Project</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>150</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Grading scale**
Grade %  A 90 – 100, B 80 - 89.9, C 70 - 79.9, D 60 - 69.9, F < 60

**Coursework**

**Canvas Student Discussion Forums (7 @ 50 points each)**
Each week to promote students’ critical thinking and decision-making skills concerning the application of analytic techniques to strategic communication there will be an examination of a digital communication analytics question or problem. In some instances, a visualization will be posted and students will be asked to analyze it or proffer an alternative? Other times, students may be asked to develop a strategy or solution to a question or problem. Whatever the topic, the forum gives students the opportunity to exercise skills in brief problem-solving scenarios. If students do not complete the forum requirements, they will not receive full credit for the written assignment tied to the forum.

**Student-Professor Check-ins (2 @ 40 points each)**
During each check-in either in a direct meeting or through a Canvas recorded video, the student will apprise the professor of the following: 1) their progress in the course thus far; 2) any worries or concerns about the coursework and requirements for it; 3) the need for individual tutoring; 4) personal emergencies or issues that may hinder the student’s ability to successfully complete all coursework on time assigned; 5) additional resources or assistance the student may require; and, 6) any other issues as needed. Students will be awarded points for meeting this requirement. Students who fail to fulfill both check-ins will
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lose points. Also, students who complete all check-ins may be granted consideration if they are reasonably close to the next higher letter grade. If students are arranging a zoom check in meeting, they should email the professor by 5pm Friday of the first week of the course to arrange their initial check-in time. Of course this time can always be changed to accommodate both the professor’s and student’s changing schedule and obligations.

Quizzes (7 @ 60 points each)
The first seven modules will conclude with a quiz covering the basic concepts and most important processes of that given module. Instructions will vary as will the question types. Please see Canvas for details.

Final Analytics Project & Presentation (1 @ 150 points)
During the course, each student will develop their analytical and critical thinking skills as well as their ability to present analytical findings to non-analyst stakeholders by reviewing and analyzing either a case study or a dataset. Students will then present their findings through a written report as well as a live or pre-recorded 10-15-minute presentation of their findings. The student may choose whether to pre-record their presentation or to gain the experience of a live presentation before stakeholders. Since this assignment is intended to hone your professional analytical skills, you must prepare and present your analysis as if you are presenting results to a client. It is therefore essential that your presentation makes use of simple and easy to interpret/read data visualizations and that the overall language used in the presentation is easy to understand by non-analysts.

In the final module, students are provided with a complete packet of information, resources, a final paper template as well as several differing datasets in Canvas from which students can select a dataset to analyze for the project. Nonetheless, students are encouraged to gain their employer’s permission to collect and analyze their organization’s data in order to address 3-5 research questions or hypotheses. This demonstrates to the employer that their employee’s continuing studies provide a real value, even at an early stage.

Project considerations when analyzing the data:

1) What immediately ‘grabs’ you in the data? What secondary impressions do you get beyond any immediately apparent observations? What patterns or anomalies have you observed? Ultimately, what are the takeaways you can find in these data?
2) Which metrics would you identify as being most critical to examine in this case or for these data?
3) Identify both the best and worst performers. Describe how you could apply your findings to a future campaign.

Presentation Guidelines:
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1) All presentations, whether live or pre-recorded, should be no less than 10 minutes and no more than 15 minutes.
2) All presentations should be prepared using Power Point or open source software Libre Office Suite’s presentation program called Impress, which can be found at https://www.libreoffice.org/discover/impress/. Presentations should consist of 6-8 slides including 1 cover slide and 1 reference slide.

FINANCIAL AID SATISFACTORY ACADEMIC PROGRESS (SAP) UNDERGRADUATES
A student must maintain Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) to continue to receive financial aid. Students must maintain a minimum 2.0 cumulative GPA in addition to successfully completing a required number of credit hours based on total registered hours per semester. Students cannot exceed attempted credit hours above 150% of their required degree plan. If a student does not maintain the required standards, the student may lose financial aid eligibility.

ACADEMIC ADVISING
Students must meet with the director at least one time per long semester (Fall & Spring). It is important to update your degree plan on a regular basis to ensure that you are on track for a timely graduation.

- It is imperative that students have paid for all enrolled classes. Please check your online schedule daily through late registration to ensure you have not been dropped for non-payment of any amount. Students unknowingly have been dropped from classes for various reasons such as financial aid, schedule change fees, parking fees, etc. MSOJ will not be able to reinstate students for any reason after late registration, regardless of situation. It is the student’s responsibility to ensure all payments have been made.

Fall 2019 Important Dates

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Deadline</th>
<th>Regular Academic Session</th>
<th>8W1</th>
<th>8W2</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Classes Begin</td>
<td>Aug 26</td>
<td>Aug 26</td>
<td>Oct 21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Labor Day (no classes; university closed)</td>
<td>Sept 2</td>
<td>Sept 2</td>
<td>Sept 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Census</td>
<td>Sept 9</td>
<td>Sept 3</td>
<td>Oct 28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beginning this date a student may drop a course with a grade of W by completing the Request to Drop Class form and submitting it to the Registrar's Office. See link for complete instructions Dropping a Class.</td>
<td>Sept 10</td>
<td>Sept 4</td>
<td>Oct 29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Last day for change in pass/no pass status</td>
<td>Oct 4</td>
<td>Sept 13</td>
<td>Nov 8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mid-semester</td>
<td>Oct 18</td>
<td>Sept 20</td>
<td>Nov 15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Last day for a student to drop a course.</td>
<td>Nov 4</td>
<td>Sept 30</td>
<td>Nov 25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beginning this date, a student who qualifies may request an Incomplete, with a grade of I.</td>
<td>Nov 11</td>
<td>Sept 30</td>
<td>Nov 25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Last day to withdraw (drop all classes). Grades of W are assigned.</td>
<td>Nov 22</td>
<td>Oct 11</td>
<td>Dec 6</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Dates</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Thanksgiving Break (no classes, university closed)</td>
<td>Nov 28 - Dec 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre-Finals Days</td>
<td>Dec 4-5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Last Regular Class Meeting</td>
<td>Dec 5, N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading Day (no classes)</td>
<td>Dec 6, Dec 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Exams</td>
<td>Dec 7-13, Oct 18, Dec 13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>End of term</td>
<td>Dec 13</td>
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**ACADEMIC ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE**

Understanding the academic organizational structure and appropriate Chain of Command is important when resolving class-related or advising issues. When you need problems resolved, please follow the step outlined below:

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Individual Faculty Member/Director
  ↓
Associate Dean, Mayborn Graduate Institute
  ↓
Dean, Mayborn School of Journalism
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**OFFICE OF DISABILITY ACCOMMODATIONS**

The University of North Texas and the Mayborn School of Journalism make reasonable academic accommodation for students with disabilities. Students seeking accommodation must first register with the Office of Disability Accommodation (ODA) to verify their eligibility. If a disability is verified, the ODA will provide you with an accommodation letter to be delivered to faculty to begin a private discussion regarding your specific needs in a course. You may request accommodations at any time, however, ODA notices of accommodation should be provided as early as possible in the semester to avoid any delay in implementation. Note that students must obtain a new letter of accommodation for every semester and must meet with each faculty member prior to implementation in each class. Students are strongly encouraged to deliver letters of accommodation during faculty office hours or by appointment. Faculty members have the authority to ask students to discuss such letters during their designated office hours to protect the privacy of the student. For additional information see the Office of Disability Accommodation website at [http://www.unt.edu/oda](http://www.unt.edu/oda). You may also contact them by phone at 940.565.4323.

**COURSE SAFETY STATEMENTS**

Students in the Mayborn School of Journalism are urged to use proper safety procedures and guidelines. While working in laboratory sessions, students are expected and required to identify and use property safety guidelines in all activities requiring lifting, climbing, walking on slippery surfaces, using equipment and tools, handling chemical solutions and hot and cold products. Students should be aware that the University of North Texas is not liable for injuries incurred while students are participating in class activities. All students are encouraged to secure adequate insurance coverage in the event of accidental injury. Students who do not have insurance coverage should consider obtaining Student Health Insurance for this insurance program. Brochures for this insurance are available in the UNT Health and Wellness Center on campus. Students who are injured during class activities may seek medical attention at the UNT Health and Wellness Center at rates that are reduced compared to other medical facilities. If
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you have an insurance plan other than Student Health Insurance at UNT, please be sure that your plan covers treatment at this facility. If you choose not to go to the UNT Health and Wellness Center, you may be transported to an emergency room at a local hospital. You are responsible for expenses incurred there.

JOURNALISM EQUIPMENT CHECK OUT

Please go to the URL below and fill out the form that allows you to check items out for this term. You just have to do this once each semester.

https://journalism.unt.edu/equipment-checkout

Equipment may be checked out in room 111 in the General Academic Building. Checkouts are for 24 hours from the time of checkout. If you need the items for 48 hours, please send an email with your professor’s approval to adam.scott@unt.edu before you check out the equipment. Extensions will not be granted once the items are checked out.

For your convenience, the equipment room is open during the following times:

Mon-Thurs 9am-10pm
Friday 9am-6pm
Sat-Sun 12-6pm

(Anything checked out after 2pm on Thursday is due Monday morning.) The violations for late returns are as follows:

1st late infraction – 1 week ban from checking out equipment.
2nd late infraction – 3 weeks ban from checking out equipment.
3rd infraction – Semester long ban from any and all equipment checkout.

If you are going to be late, email adam.scott@unt.edu and let him know. Active communication brings leniency in many cases.

GAB 101 will be unlocked only by appt. http://journalism.unt.edu/gab101.

ACADEMIC DISHONESTY

Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, the use of any unauthorized assistance in taking quizzes, tests, or exams; dependence upon the aid of sources beyond those authorized by the instructor, the acquisition of tests or other material belonging to a faculty member, dual submission of a paper or project, resubmission of a paper or project to a different class without express permission from the instructors, or any other act designed to give a student an unfair advantage. Plagiarism includes the paraphrase or direct quotation of published or unpublished works without full and clear acknowledgment of the author/source. Academic dishonesty will bring about disciplinary action which may include expulsion from the university. This is explained in the UNT Student Handbook.

Students suspected of committing academic fraud on the first offense will be subjected to the full discipline of the Mayborn School of Journalism, The Toulouse Graduate School and the University of North Texas. It is a condition of enrollment and participation in this course that all students will read the University’s dishonesty policy, understand and accept it.

MSOJ ACADEMIC INTEGRITY POLICY
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The codes of ethics from the Society of Professional Journalists, American Advertising Federation and Public Relations Society of America address truth and honesty. The Mayborn School of Journalism embraces these tenets and believes that academic dishonesty of any kind – including plagiarism and fabrication – is incongruent with all areas of journalism. The school’s policy aligns with UNT Policy 06.003 and requires reporting any act of academic dishonesty to the Office for Academic Integrity for investigation. If the student has a previous confirmed offense (whether the first offense was in the journalism school or another university department) and the student is found to have committed another offense, the department will request the additional sanction of removing the student from the Mayborn School of Journalism. The student may appeal to the Office for Academic Integrity, which ensures due process and allows the student to remain in class pending the appeal.

CLASSROOM POLICIES
The Mayborn School of Journalism requires that students respect and maintain all university property. Students will be held accountable through disciplinary action for any intentional damages they cause in classrooms. (e.g., writing on tables). Disruptive behavior is not tolerated (e.g., arriving late, leaving early, sleeping, talking on the phone, texting or game playing, making inappropriate comments, ringing cellular phones/beepers, dressing inappropriately).

FINAL EXAM POLICY
Final exams will be administered at the designated times during the final week of each long semester and during the specified day of each summer term. Please check the course calendar early in the semester to avoid any schedule conflicts.

ACCESS TO INFORMATION
As you know, your access point for business and academic services at UNT occurs within the my.unt.edu site www.my.unt.edu. If you do not regularly check EagleConnect or link it to your favorite e-mail account, please so do, as this is where you learn about job and internship opportunities, MSOJ events, scholarships, and other important information. The website that explains Eagle Connect and how to forward your email: http://eagleconnect.unt.edu/

IMPORTANT NOTICE FOR F-1 STUDENTS TAKING DISTANCE EDUCATION COURSES
To comply with immigration regulations, an F-1 visa holder within the United States may need to engage in an on-campus experiential component for this course. This component (which must be approved in advance by the instructor) can include activities such as taking an on-campus exam, participating in multiple on-campus lecture or lab activity, or other on-campus experience integral to the completion of this course.

If such an on-campus activity is required, it is the student’s responsibility to do the following:
(1) Submit a written request to the instructor for an on-campus experiential component within one week of the start of the course.

(2) Ensure that the activity on campus takes place and the instructor documents it in writing with a notice sent to the International Advising Office. The UNT International Advising Office has a form available that you may use for this purpose.
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Because the decision may have serious immigration consequences, if an F-1 student is unsure about his or her need to participate in an on-campus experiential component for this course, students should contact the UNT International Advising Office (telephone 940-565-2195 or email international@unt.edu) to get clarification before the one-week deadline.

EMERGENCY NOTIFICATION & PROCEDURES
UNT uses a system called Eagle Alert to quickly notify you with critical information in an event of emergency (i.e., severe weather, campus closing, and health and public safety emergencies like chemical spills, fires, or violence). The system sends voice messages (and text messages upon permission) to the phones of all active faculty staff, and students. Please make certain to update your phone numbers at www.my.unt.edu. Some helpful emergency preparedness actions include: 1) ensuring you know the evacuation routes and severe weather shelter areas, determining how you will contact family and friends if phones are temporarily unavailable, and identifying where you will go if you need to evacuate the Denton area suddenly. In the event of a university closure, your instructor will communicate with you through Blackboard regarding assignments, exams, field trips, and other items that may be impacted by the closure.

STUDENT PERCEPTIONS OF TEACHING (SPOT)
Student feedback is important and an essential part of participation in this course. The student evaluation of instruction is a requirement for all organized classes at UNT. The short SPOT survey will be made available to provide you with an opportunity to evaluate how this course is taught. You will receive an email from "UNT SPOT Course Evaluations via IASystem Notification" (no-reply@iasystem.org) with the survey link. Please look for the email in your UNT email inbox. Simply click on the link and complete your survey. Once you complete the survey you will receive a confirmation email that the survey has been submitted. For additional information, please visit the spot website at www.spot.unt.edu or email spot@unt.edu. Spots survey dates:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Survey Administration Dates</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8W1</td>
<td>October 8 – October 17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall</td>
<td>November 18 – December 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8W2</td>
<td>December 2 – December 12</td>
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Acceptable Student Behavior:
Student behavior that interferes with an instructor’s ability to conduct a class or other students' opportunity to learn is unacceptable and disruptive and will not be tolerated in any instructional forum at UNT. Students engaging in unacceptable behavior will be directed to leave the classroom and the instructor may refer the student to the Dean of Students to consider whether the student's conduct violated the Code of Student Conduct. The university's expectations for student conduct apply to all instructional forums, including university and electronic classroom, labs, discussion groups, field trips, etc. The Code of Student Conduct can be found at www.deanofstudents.unt.edu
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**Classroom Policies**
The Mayborn School of Journalism requires that students respect and maintain all university property. Students will be held accountable through disciplinary action for any intentional damages they cause in classrooms. (e.g., writing on tables). Disruptive behavior is not tolerated (e.g., arriving late, leaving early, sleeping, talking on the phone, texting or game playing, making inappropriate comments, ringing cellular phones/beepers, dressing inappropriately).

**SEXUAL DISCRIMINATION, HARRASSMENT, & ASSAULT**
UNT is committed to providing an environment free of all forms of discrimination and sexual harassment, including sexual assault, domestic violence, dating violence, and stalking. If you (or someone you know) has experienced or experiences any of these acts of aggression, please know that you are not alone. The federal Title IX law makes it clear that violence and harassment based on sex and gender are Civil Rights offenses. UNT has staff members trained to support you in navigating campus life, accessing health and counseling services, providing academic and housing accommodations, helping with legal protective orders, and more.

UNT’s Dean of Students’ website offers a range of on-campus and off-campus resources to help support survivors, depending on their unique needs: [http://deanofstudents.unt.edu/resources_0](http://deanofstudents.unt.edu/resources_0). Renee LeClaire McNamara is UNT’s Student Advocate and she can be reached through e-mail at SurvivorAdvocate@unt.edu or by calling the Dean of Students’ office at 940-565-2648. You are not alone. We are here to help.
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Statement of Student Learning Outcomes, UNT Mayborn School of Journalism

Since 1969, the UNT Department of Journalism (Mayborn School of Journalism effective September 1, 2009) has been accredited by the Accrediting Council on Education in Journalism and Mass Communication. This national accreditation also extends to the Mayborn Graduate Institute of Journalism, the only accredited professional master’s program in Texas. About one-fourth of all journalism and mass communication programs in the United States are accredited by ACEJMC. National accreditation enhances your education here, because it certifies that the department and graduate institute adhere to many standards established by the council. Among these standards are student learning outcomes, covered by journalism courses in all sequences.

This course, JOUR 5251, will help to meet the student learning outcomes that have been checked by your professor, Scott Hamilton.

Each graduate must:

Understand and apply the principles and laws of freedom of speech and press for the country in which the institution that invites ACEJMC is located, as well as receive instruction in and understand the range of systems of freedom of expression around the world, including the right to dissent, to monitor and criticize power, and to assemble and petition for redress of grievances

Demonstrate an understanding of the history and role of professionals and institutions in shaping communications

Demonstrate an understanding of diversity in domestic society in relation to mass communications

Demonstrate an understanding of the diversity of peoples and cultures and of the significance and impact of mass communications in a global society

Understand concepts and apply theories in the use and presentation of images and information

Demonstrate an understanding of professional ethical principles and work ethically in pursuit of truth, accuracy, fairness and diversity

Think critically, creatively and independently

★ Conduct research and evaluate information by methods appropriate to the communications professions in which they work

★ Write correctly and clearly in forms and styles appropriate for the communications professions, audiences and purposes they serve

★ Critically evaluate their own work and that of others for accuracy and fairness, clarity, appropriate style and grammatical correctness

★ Apply basic numerical and statistical concepts

★ Apply tools and technologies appropriate for the communications professions in which they work