

The Internet and the Ethnic Press of New York and New Jersey

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ABSTRACT

Immigration is not the only contributing factor to the current surge of ethnic publications in the United States. The Internet and World Wide Web also play a significant role in various ethnic press operations. This research involved surveying ethnic and immigrant news organizations in New York and New Jersey and studying how they have used the Internet and the Web in their publications. Specifically, this research looked at how many ethnic publications in the region have created Websites to complement their print activities, and what changes, implications and challenges do online publication bring to the ethnic press community.

This study allowed various leaders in ethnic journalism to reflect upon the potential of Web technology to expand and improve many ethnic press operations. Ninety percent of the respondents believe that the Internet and the Web have an impact on the revitalization and continued operation of the ethnic press. Most respondents agree that while it may still take years until anyone can determine whether cyberspace will eventually take over the printed mode of circulation of most ethnic papers, the Internet has certainly helped in the operation, distribution, and expansion of many ethnic publications in New York and New Jersey.

INTRODUCTION

American society always has been a patchwork of diverse cultures. Home to dozens of national groups, the United States have become more of a salad bowl than a melting pot over the years, with people from all corners of the globe forming an assorted whole. Now, more than ever, the face of America continues to change due to the increasing number of ethnic immigrants who come to settle here in the U.S., especially in key states such as New York and California. Both dubbed as “majority-minority” states because of their proliferating ethnic populations, these states also have experienced a booming ethnic press, especially within the last decade. Primarily

a result of the immigrant influx, the ethnic press continues to thrive. New York City alone is home to more than 200 ethnic press offices, which include the headquarters of various African, Asian, Caribbean, European, Jewish, Latino, and Middle Eastern publications.

Immigration is not the only contributing factor to the current surge of ethnic publications. While it is known from academic studies that immigration patterns have shaped the fortunes of the ethnic press community historically, today's ever-changing communication technologies, particularly the emergence of the Internet and World Wide Web, also play a part in various ethnic press operations. Yet, whether modern communication technologies such as the Internet have contributed to the revitalization of the ethnic press still needs further exploration.

The ethnic press gives both old and new immigrants a sense of belonging that mainstream media cannot match. While mainstream media only report about ethnic minorities usually in news stories having to do with crime and extravagant displays of culture, the ethnic press covers a gamut of issues affecting most immigrants' main concerns. These issues range from matters affecting the individual to those having an effect on the entire community. Stories such as those dealing with local employment and businesses, immigration law, and cultural readjustment often are covered---issues that usually receive little to no attention in mainstream publications.

Recent studies done by New California Media (NCM), an association of more than 400 print, broadcast, and online ethnic media organizations in that state, and the Independent Press Association of New York (IPA-NY), a sponsored project of the Independent Press Association (IPA) which provides assistance to New York's ethnic and community presses, have shown that ethnic media in these two states play a key role in reaching immigrant populations otherwise neglected by the mainstream press. In March 2001, IPA-NY released *Many Voices, One City*, a directory listing 198 ethnic newspapers and magazines serving the greater New York and tri-state areas. The directory is the most comprehensive guide in existence, covering 52 ethnic and

national groups publishing in 36 languages. The fact that such a high number of ethnic publications existed in New York alone attracted noteworthy (mainstream) media attention, resulting in articles in both *The New York Times* and *The Wall Street Journal*, among others. In November of that same year, NCM started a quantitative study on the reach, impact, and potential of ethnic media in California. The results, which were released in April 2002, confirmed the high penetration rate of ethnic media in that state. The study revealed that California's ethnic media reach 84% of its three largest minority groups, namely Hispanics, African-Americans and Asian-Americans.¹ Shortly following this release, in June 2002, IPA-NY published the second edition of *Many Voices*, this time listing 270 ethnic and community publications. That number brings the original count of ethnic press membership in IPA-NY up by 72 in less than a year, and the number continues to grow elsewhere, including the neighboring state of New Jersey, which according to the 2000 Census holds the third-largest percentage of residents from overseas, just after New York and California.²

Both the IPA and NCM have a well-defined presence on the Internet---the main communication medium whereby they present these findings as well as other projects of their respective organizations. In addition to these studies, both provide online access to English versions of stories covered in various ethnic publications. The IPA and IPA-NY also present web directories and links to various ethnic publications online. Clearly, the efforts of both the IPA and NCM indicate a gradual connection between lesser-known ethnic media outlets and their more prominent mainstream counterparts. A bridge slowly forms as significant findings about the impact and potential of ethnic media are revealed. More importantly, the ongoing contributions of these two organizations in the field of media research also provide crucial information that has long been overdue as far as studies in the ethnic press arena are concerned.

It is also important to note other insightful scholarly works that have contributed to establish the place of ethnic media in academia. These include: *The Dissident Press: Alternative Journalism in American History* by Lauren Kessler (1984); *The Ethnic Press in the United States: A Historical Analysis and Handbook* by Sally M. Miller (1987); *Ethnic Minority Media: An International Perspective* by Stephen Harold Riggins (1992); *Outsiders in 19th Century Press History* by Frankie Hutton and Barbara Straus Reed (1995); *Mass Media and Cultural Identity* by Anura Goonasekera and Youichi Ito (1999); and *Community Media in the Information Age: Perspectives and Prospects* by Nicholas W. Jankowski and Ole Prehn (2002). While these works have made substantial contributions both to the history and continuing developments of ethnic media in the United States, there is still much to be done.

One aspect that needs to be explored further is how the ethnic media, particularly ethnic print media, maintain existence in the American salad bowl at a time when technological advances continue to shape and redesign the way we communicate in the so-called marketplace of ideas. Lauren Kessler notes in the opening chapter of her book that in this marketplace, the press is (or at least ought to operate as) an open forum for the exchange of ideas. This marketplace serves to present to the public “a diversity of theories, thoughts, sentiments and opinions.”³ The old American marketplace of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries rejected this diversity, thus paving the way for various dissenters, such as immigrants, to form and establish their own marketplaces. According to Kessler, “the dissidents, unable to gain a fair hearing for their ideas in the established media of their time, set off to create their own newspapers and periodicals.”⁴ As a result, the ethnic press was born. Immigrants who formed these early ethnic papers wanted one thing: access to the popular media marketplace. Although the number and popularity of these ethnic publications fluctuated over the years, the booming ethnic press of today owes much of its growth to the evolving marketplace. Now in the twenty-

first century, that marketplace includes not only traditional print media, such as newspapers and magazines, but also online print media, such as those on the Internet and World Wide Web.

Access to the popular media marketplace is now easier more than ever due to the latest communication technologies available. Not only is the technology available, it is also made to be cost-effective and user-friendly, thus allowing an increasing number of ethnic publications to take advantage of what online media have to offer. The question then is, does new technology such as the Internet foster growth in the ethnic press community?

Studies on the impact of communication technology on media outlets have been carried out for many years. For example, since 1994, the Middleberg/Ross Media Survey (www.middleberg.com) have catalogued and analyzed journalists' use of the Internet, "detailing everything from their search habits and email practices to their views on the credibility of online information."⁵ These studies are fundamental in chronicling the important relationship between media and the latest technologies. However, most studies on the connection between media and cyberspace tended to concentrate on mainstream media, not on the ethnic press. One study that examined the impact of the Internet on mass communication, and at the same time paid attention to the effects of recent technology to the ethnic press, is Kewen Zhang and Xiaoming Hao's paper entitled, *The Internet and the Ethnic Press: A Study of Network-Based Chinese Publications*. To date, it is the only documented study on both the Internet and the ethnic press.

Zhang and Hao's study looked at the role of the Internet in the revitalization of the ethnic press. According to the authors, "in places where the Internet is accessible, ethnic groups are active in taking advantage of this new communication technology."⁶ Zhang and Hao note that numerous publications spring up and circulate "on the worldwide computer network, thanks to its ease and speed of access. An Internet user can connect to a system on the other side of the globe as easily as (and generally not much slower than) they can to a system in the next

building.”⁷ They also both add that cost is becoming a less significant inhibitor of Internet usage. With these in mind, the authors have considered the Internet’s ramifications on the overseas Chinese ethnic press. Zhang and Hao analyzed, from a global perspective, how the potential of the Internet affected the operation of Chinese publications worldwide.

The purpose of this research is to build upon the work of Zhang and Hao and continue to look at the role of the Internet in the ongoing emergence of the ethnic press. In particular, this study will look at the ethnic publications of New York and New Jersey to see what specific roles do the Internet and World Wide Web play in contributing to their revitalization and continuing presence in the American marketplace of ideas. According to Sally Miller, “until the last decades of the nineteenth century, immigrant newspapers tended clearly to lag far behind the American papers in terms of technology, distribution techniques, and variety of features.”⁸ The earlier ethnic press simply lacked the financial means, technical knowledge, and networking resources to compete with the more popular and mainstream publications of that time. Miller, however, adds:

Toward the beginning of the twentieth century, a notable trend occurred among the more successful papers toward modernization and professionalization. They began to utilize the latest technology, to expand their distribution and advertising networks, to increase their use of so-called American features such as fashions and comics, and in content to move away from sharply defined ethnic-based political commentary toward a tone of journalistic objectivity.⁹

This trend toward modernization and professionalization has helped many ethnic papers not only survive but also increase in number and circulation over the years. With the arrival of the Internet and World Wide Web, ethnic journalists have yet, another challenge to face as mainstream media have been quick to grasp this new technology. At the same time, Web technology have proven quick to permeate the mainstream, allowing ethnic media professionals to use the Internet as a tool to aid them in various press operations. This research will reveal the ways in which the

ethnic presses of New York and New Jersey have employed the Internet and the Web, and to what extent do ethnic publishers and editors think can these communication technologies affect and impact their various respective publications.

METHODOLOGY

A survey was conducted using a random sample from 269 ethnic publications in New York and New Jersey during the months of March and April 2003. Pertinent information on all publications, including editors' and publishers' names, phone numbers, and email addresses were from the latest edition of IPA-NY's *Many Voices, One City*. Editors and publishers were contacted by phone, fax, or email to participate in the survey. To increase the number of participants in the study, a second attempt to survey non-respondents was made in July 2003. The survey's questionnaire set is in Appendix A.

Response Set:

Although the *Many Voices* guide listed 269 publications, some listings were omitted to establish boundaries for the research. Seven out of the 269 IPA-NY listings were non-ethnic listings; therefore, they were not included in the study. Four of the listed ethnic publications were not based in either New York or New Jersey. Those were omitted as well. Additionally, 30 listed phone numbers were either disconnected or not in service at the time of research. For statistical purposes, those listings were also omitted in the study, thus bringing the number of valid contacts to 230.

Seventy-two total respondents (31 %) participated in the survey. Sixty-one responded by phone, seven by fax, and four by email. On instances when neither the editor nor publisher was available, a staff member took the initiative to answer the survey. Non-responses can be attributed to various reasons. Sixty-five of those who were contacted did not return faxed

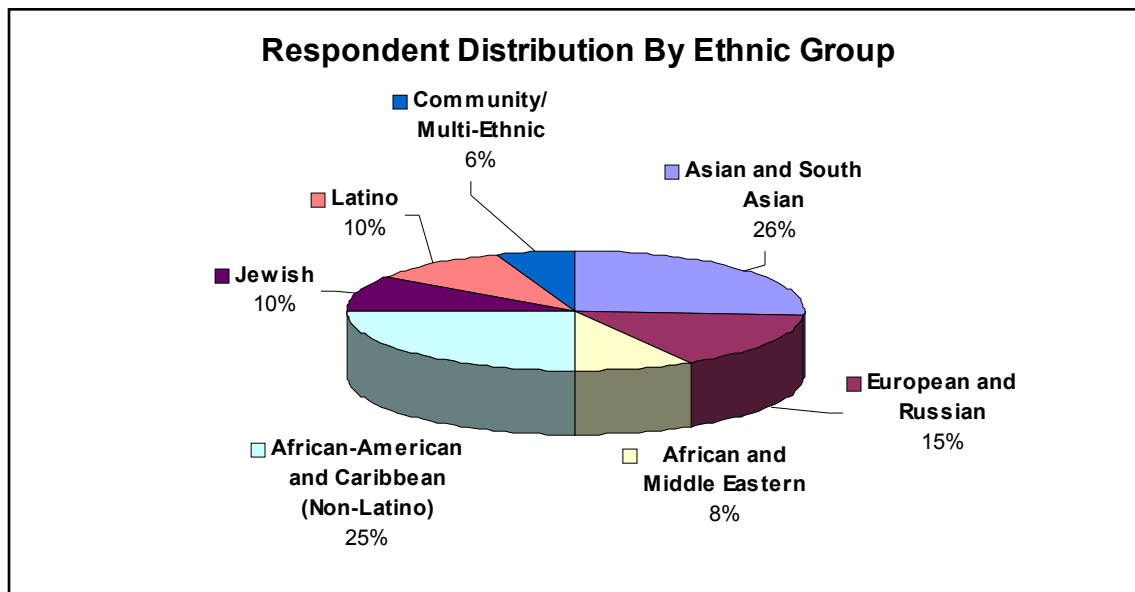
surveys. Forty contacts did not return emailed surveys. Twenty-nine press offices picked up either by answering machine or voicemail. Twenty-four offices were successfully reached by phone, but contacts were unable to participate due to time constraints and/or language barriers.

RESULTS

Overview:

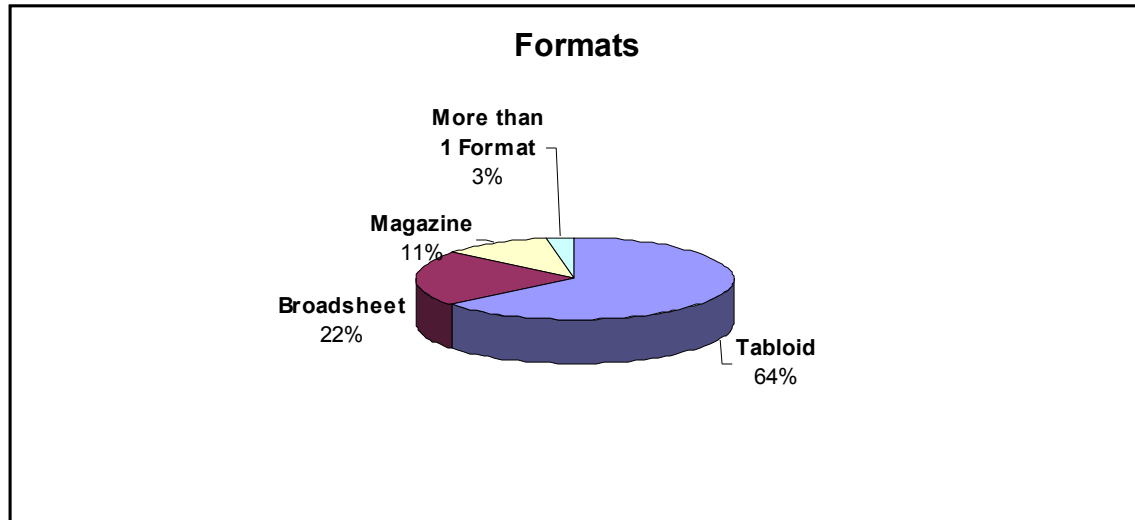
Although the response rate was low, the ethnicity of respondents ranged from a variety of backgrounds: Afghani, African, African-American, Albanian, Armenian, Bangladeshi, Caribbean, Chinese, Community/Multi-Ethnic, Filipino, French, Greek, Haitian, Hungarian, Indian, Irish, Jewish, Korean, Latino, Muslim, Pakistani, Romanian, and Scandinavian.

The following graph reflects the ethnic distribution of respondents:



Graph No. 1

Formats of respondents' particular ethnic publications also reflected some level of diversity. The majority of respondents worked for tabloid ethnic publications, followed by broadsheet publications, then magazines. A small percentage of respondents offered more than one format of publication. Graph no. 2 shows this distribution:



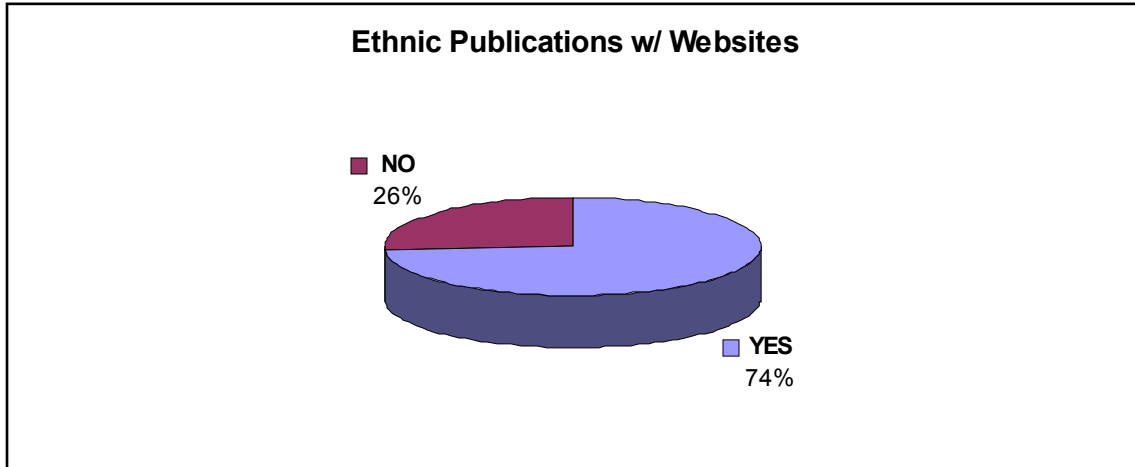
Graph No. 2

Findings:

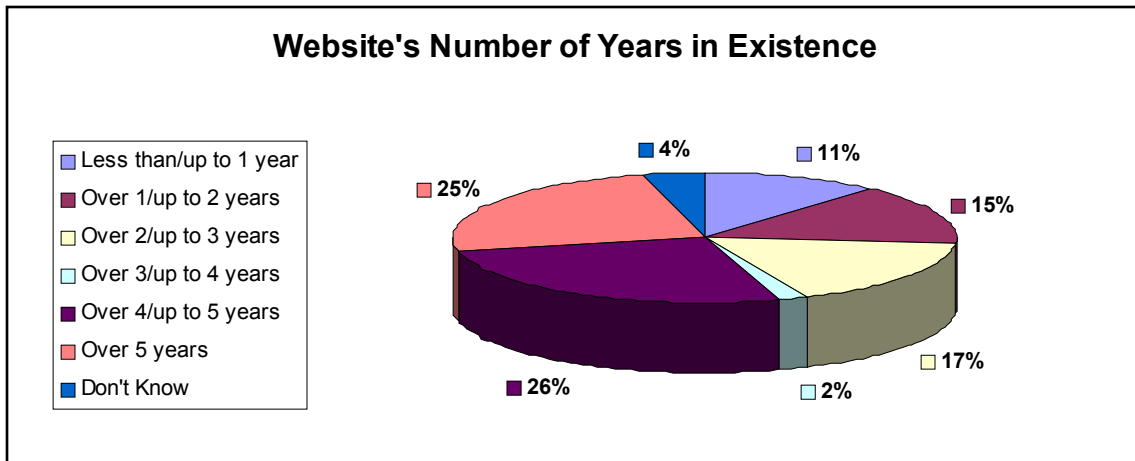
Seventy-four percent of those who responded said their publications have an existing Website or homepage affiliated with their respective publications. The Websites' number of years in existence ranged from less than or up to one year, to over five years. The majority of respondents (51 %) claimed their Websites to be older than four years, signaling an early trend in online publication of ethnic papers and magazines.

Many ethnic publications first went online in the mid-to-late 90's, with 54 percent of respondents establishing their Websites between 1994 and 1999. Forty-two percent of the respondents claimed to have established their websites between 2000 and the present. This signals not only an emerging trend but also a continuing trend of online distribution among ethnic publications in New York and New Jersey.

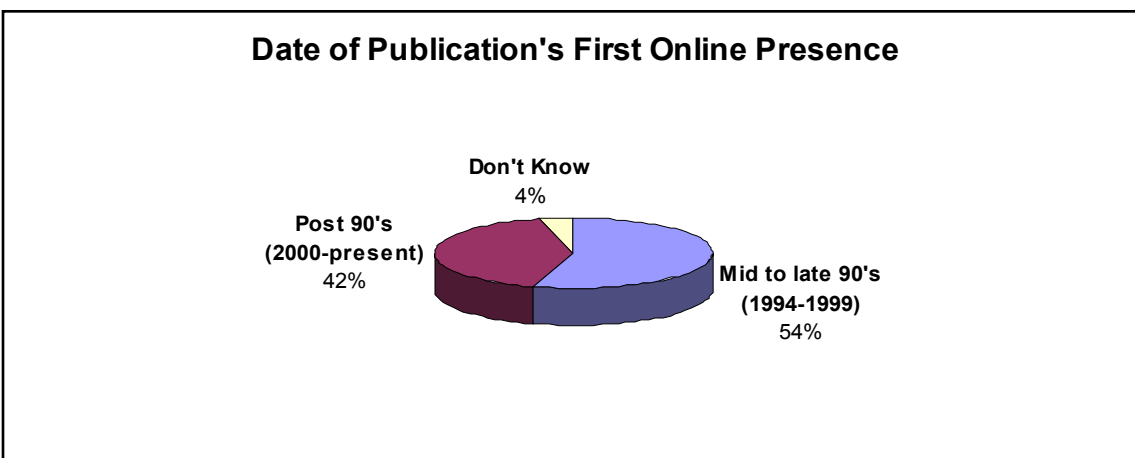
Graphs no. 3, 4, and 5 reflect the previously discussed data.



Graph No. 3

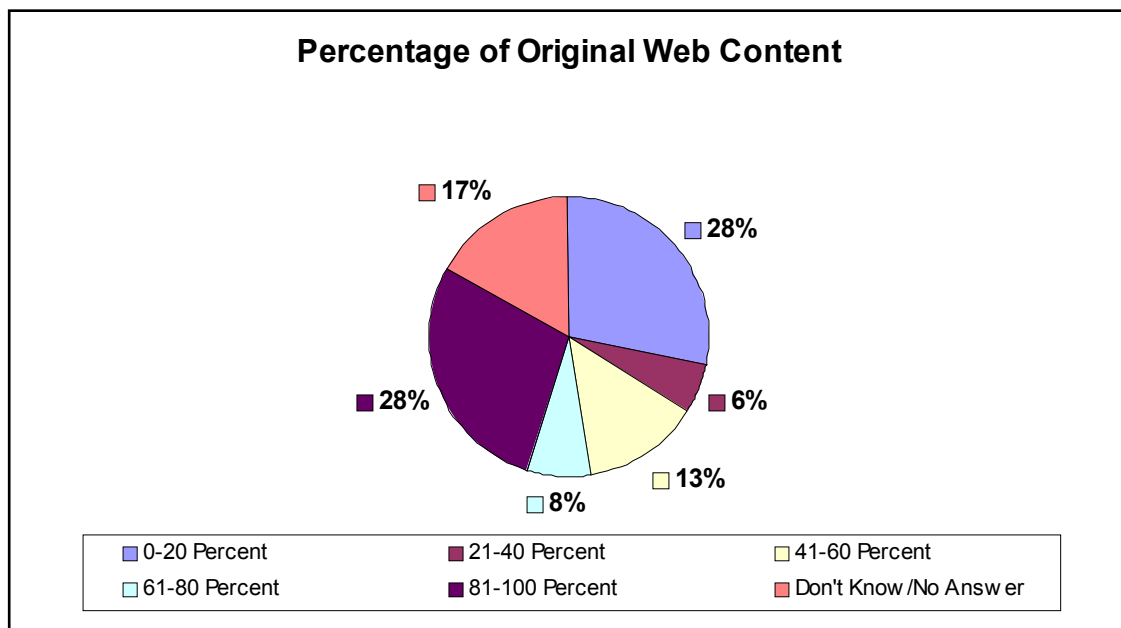


Graph No. 4



Graph No. 5

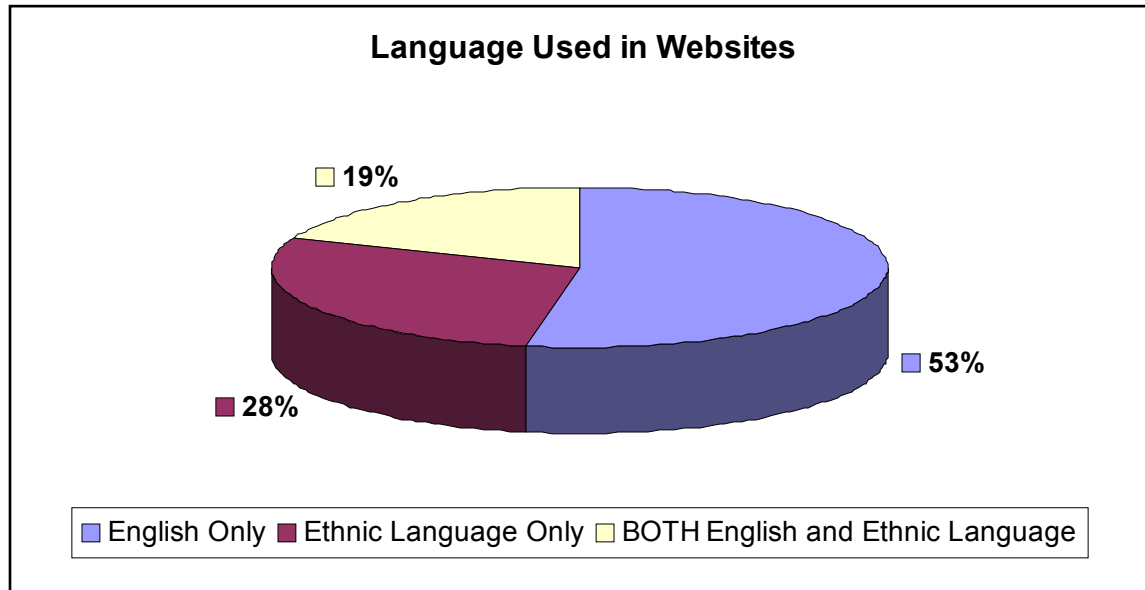
The original Web content of most online ethnic publications ranged from 0 to 100 percent. Twenty-eight percent of the respondents claimed their Websites to be almost the same as the printed version of their publications, having 0-20% of original content in their Websites. On the opposite end of the spectrum, an equal number of respondents said their Websites are almost completely different from the print edition, publishing 81-100% of original content online. In short, most websites are either totally the same or totally different from their printed versions. Graph no. 6 illustrates the distribution of ethnic publications according to how much original Web content they present their audiences:



Graph No. 6

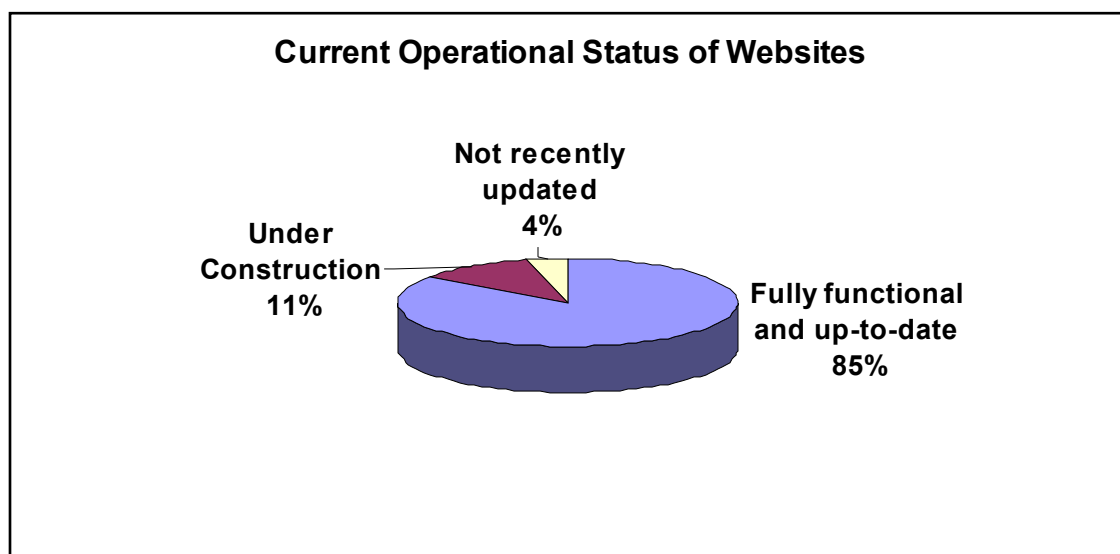
Fifty-three percent of those who responded use only English in their Websites. Twenty-eight percent use only their respective ethnic languages. These were Chinese, French, Korean, Romanian, Russian, and Spanish. Nineteen percent used a combination of English and one or more ethnic languages in their online publications.

The following graph reflects the language/s used in ethnic publication Websites:



Graph No. 7

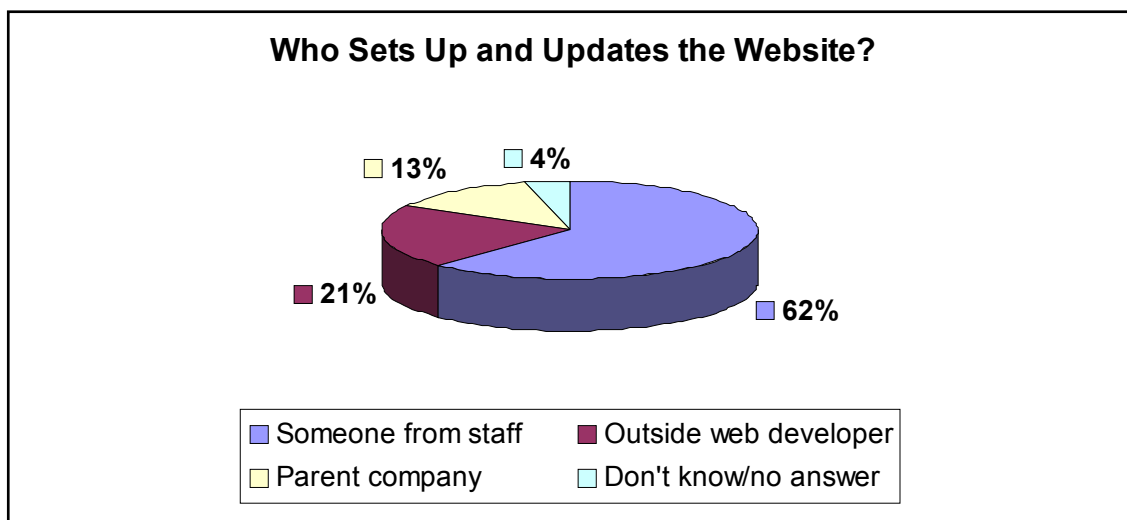
Among those who responded, 85% of the Websites are fully functional and updated on a regular basis. Eleven percent of the ethnic online publications are either a work in progress or under construction. Four percent claimed their Websites to be not recently updated within the last three months.



Graph No. 8

Among the ethnic publications with Websites, a majority of press offices (62%) have specific staff members devoted to Web operation and maintenance. Among their main responsibilities is to set up and update their online publication whenever necessary. Some ethnic press operations enlist the help of an outside Webmaster or Web developer to take care of all online-related business, which includes Web design and online communication in addition to regular operation and maintenance. A small percentage of ethnic online publications exist in conjunction with the Website of either a sponsor or parent company. In most cases, these press offices have little to no control as far as the operation and maintenance of the Website.

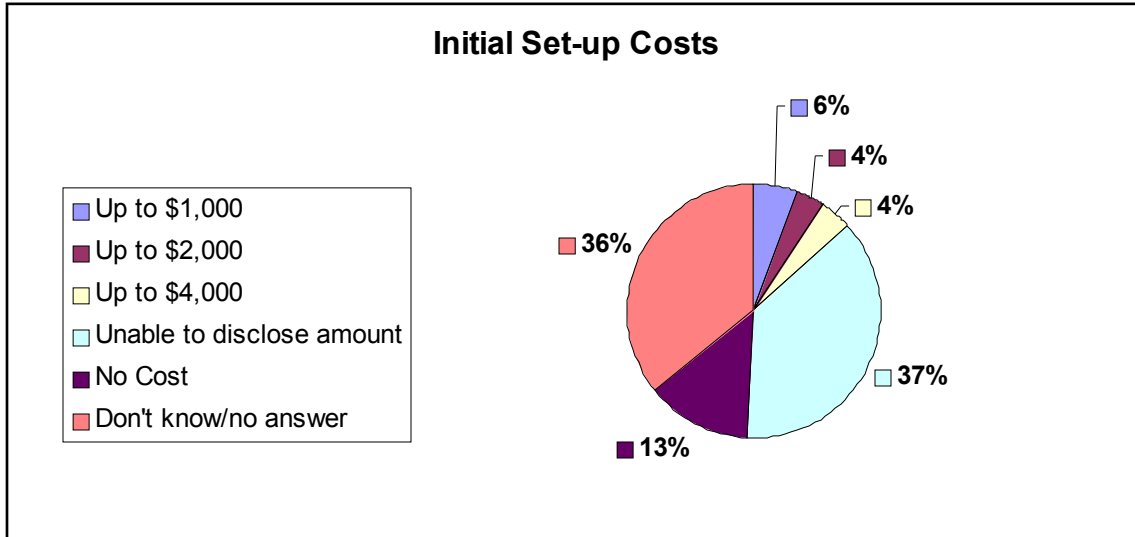
Graph no. 9 reflects all this information:



Graph No. 9

The initial set-up costs of most ethnic online publications range from \$0.00 to \$4,000. Those who claim that they paid nothing for setting up the Website either have a sponsor or parent company taking care of that aspect, or they may have voluntary contributions in cash or in kind to help out with initial set-up costs. Most respondents were unable to disclose initial set-up costs. A significant number were also not aware of this amount.

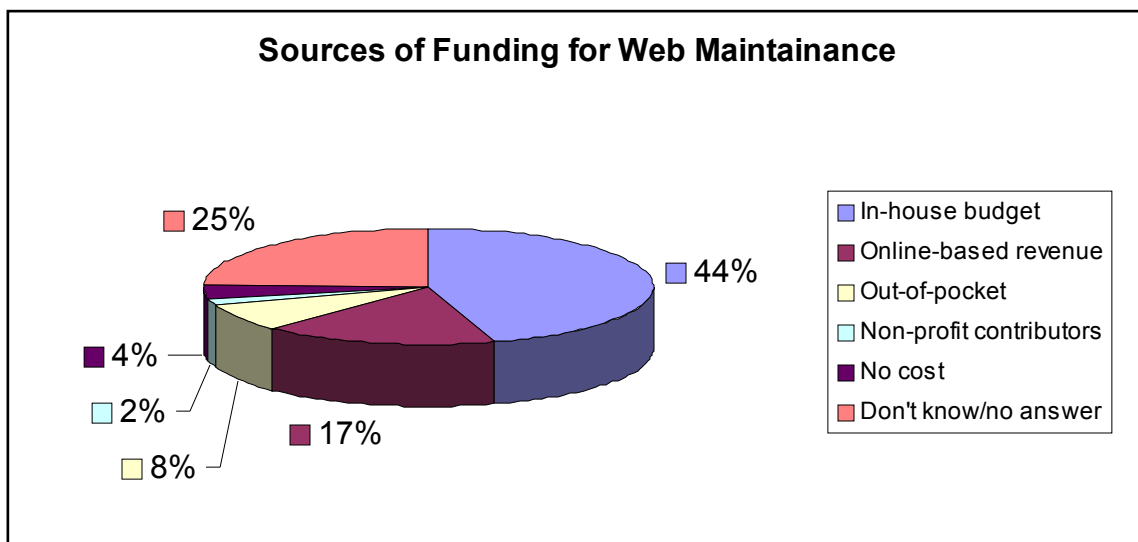
Graph no. 10 illustrates cost distribution among respondents:



Graph No. 10

For Web maintenance, forty-four percent of those who responded said their press offices allocate part of their budget for this purpose. Seventeen percent claimed their Websites to be paid for by revenue from online advertising and subscription. Eight percent of respondents claimed to pay for their websites out of pocket. Two percent claimed their websites to be paid for by non-profit contributors. Four percent pay nothing for web maintenance. Four percent pay nothing for web maintenance.

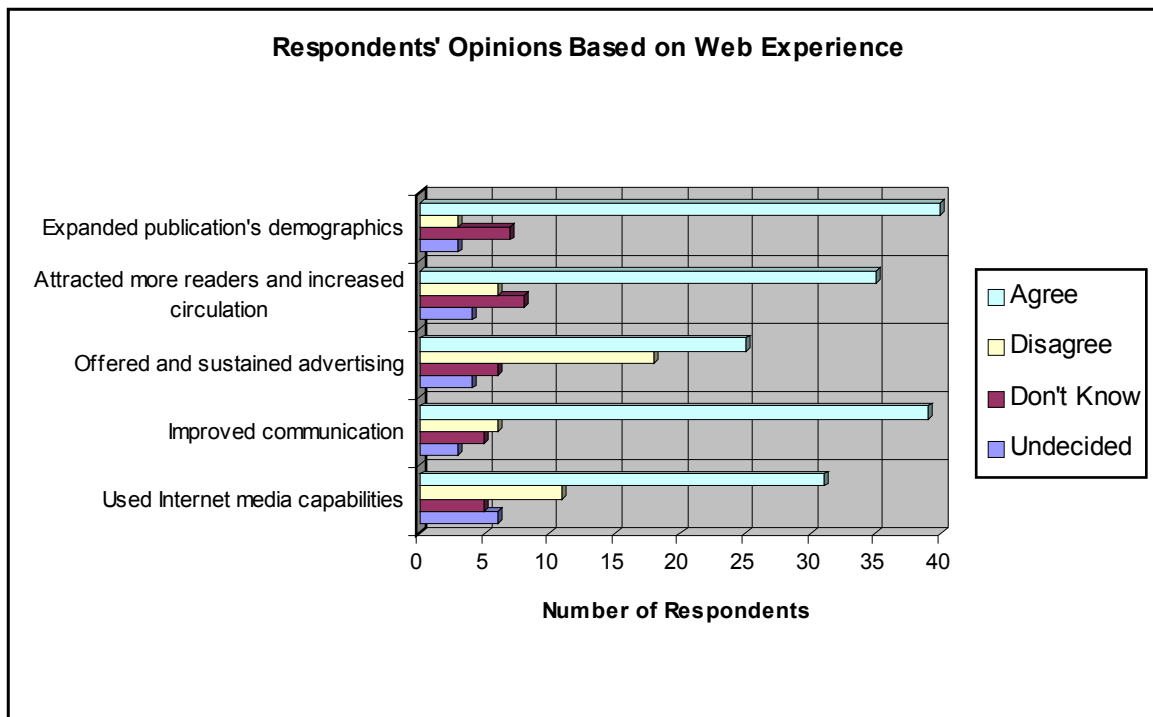
Graph no. 11 reflects the distribution of sources of funding for Web maintenance based on information given by respondents:



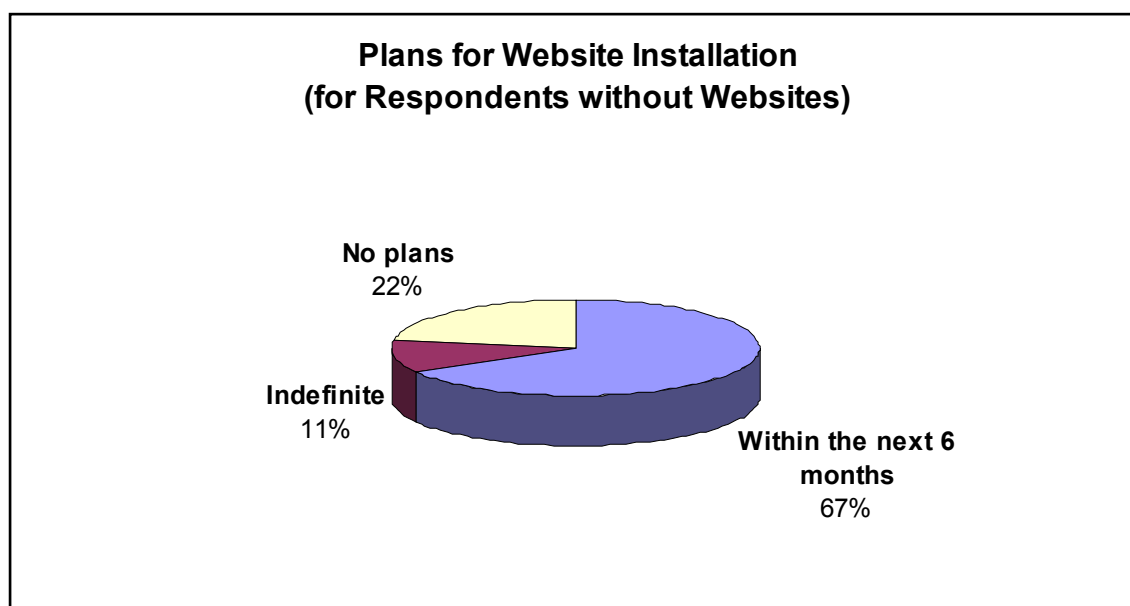
Graph No. 11

Based on experience with their respective Websites, most respondents agree that since their publication's first online presence, their audience demographics expanded and the circulation of their printed publications went up. Most respondents also agree that their Websites were able to offer and/or sustain advertising. In addition, most agree that their Websites allowed for improved communication with their readers through the use of email, online guest books, and reader forums. A significant number also agree that they have used various Internet media capabilities such as hyperlinks, graphics, audio and video to enhance their publications' Websites.

Graph no. 12 illustrates the range of respondent opinion based on Web experience:

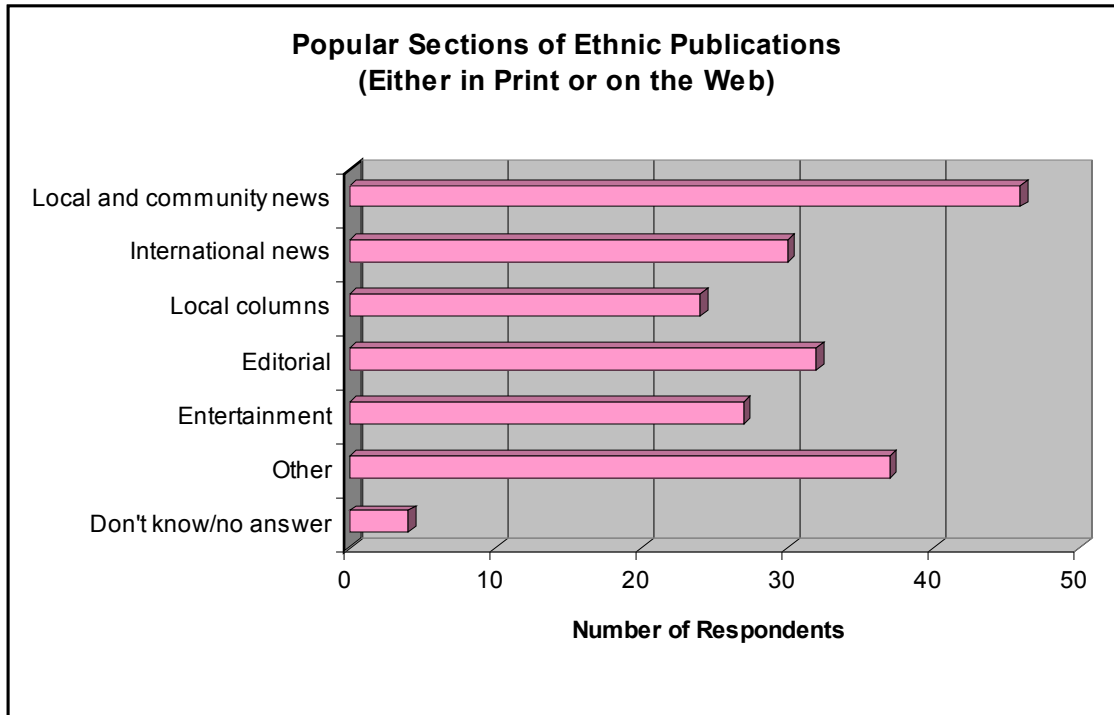
**Graph No. 12**

For publications that currently have no Websites, sixty-seven percent of those who responded said they plan to put up a Website within the next 6 months. Eleven percent said they plan to put one up, but the timeframe is indefinite. Twenty-two percent of those who responded said they have no plans to put up a Website for their publication.



Graph No. 13

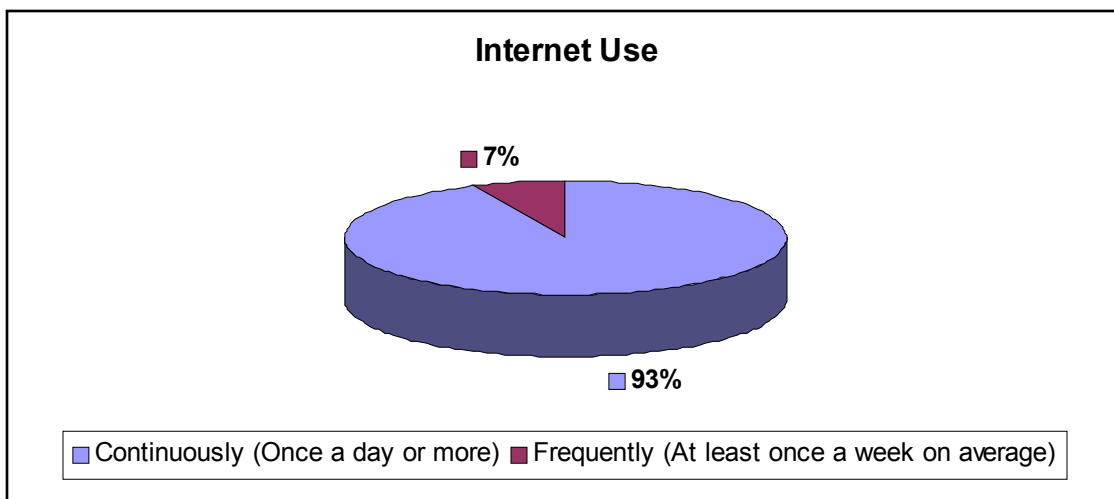
The following graph (Graph no. 14) shows the most popular sections of ethnic publications, either in print or on the Web. Local and community news top off the list with 46 respondents claiming this feature to be their most-read section. “Other” features follow close behind, with 37 respondents admitting that their economic and business reports, historical and cultural columns, sports, health sections, educational supplements, and/or language tutorial sections as their readers’ most favorite sections. Editorial ranked third among the most popular columns, followed by international news, which includes news from the publications’ respective home countries.



Graph No. 14

Graphs no. 15, 16, and 17 have to do with use of the Internet by ethnic publications.

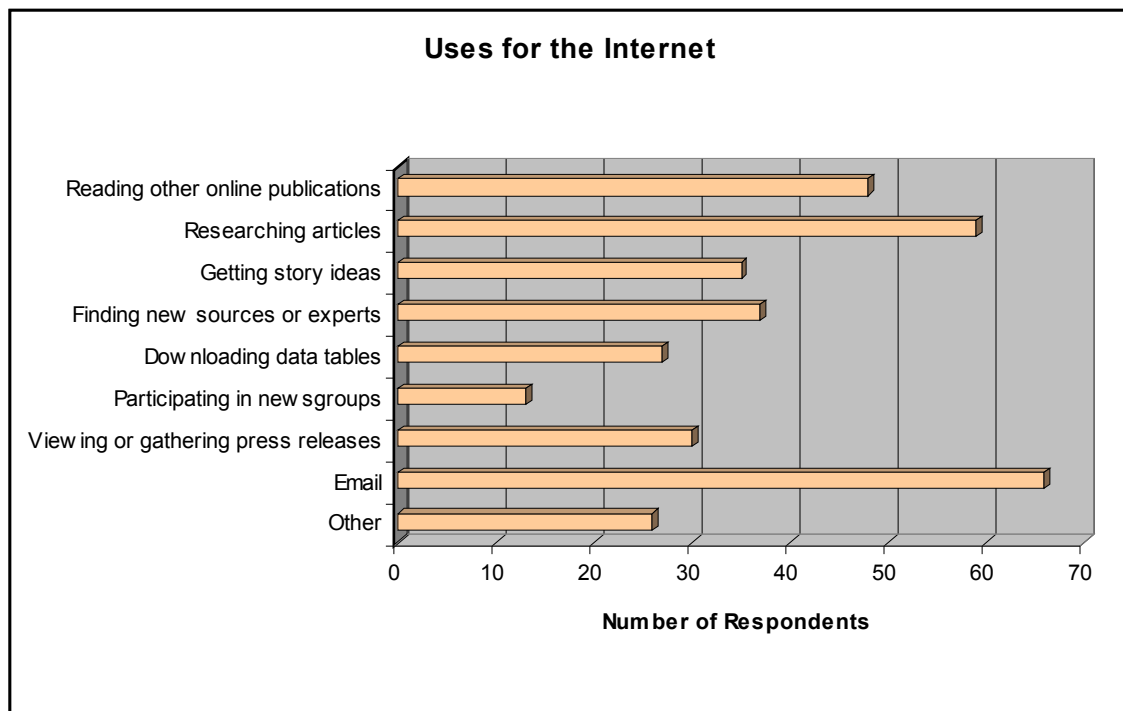
All respondents verified use of the Internet on a regular basis. Ninety-three percent admitted to using the Internet continuously for all related journalistic work, with *continuously* defined as being once a day or more on average. A small percentage (7%) responded *frequently* to this question, with *frequently* defined as going online at least once a week on average.



Graph No. 15

Most ethnic publications use the Internet for email, among other things. They also use the Internet a lot for researching articles and reading other online publications.

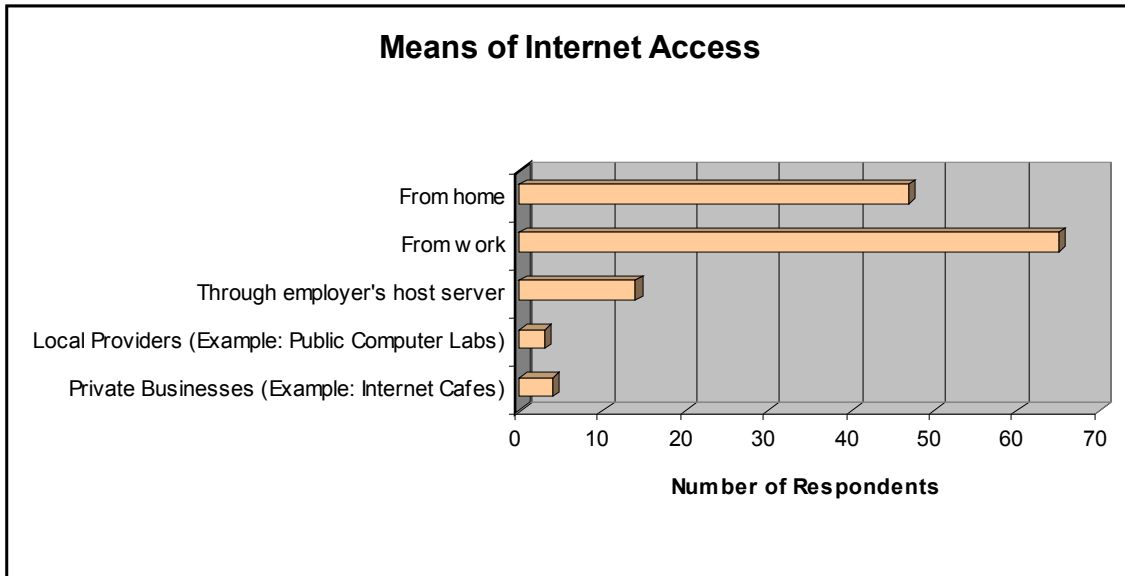
Graph no. 16 points out other uses for the Internet by the ethnic press:



Graph No. 16

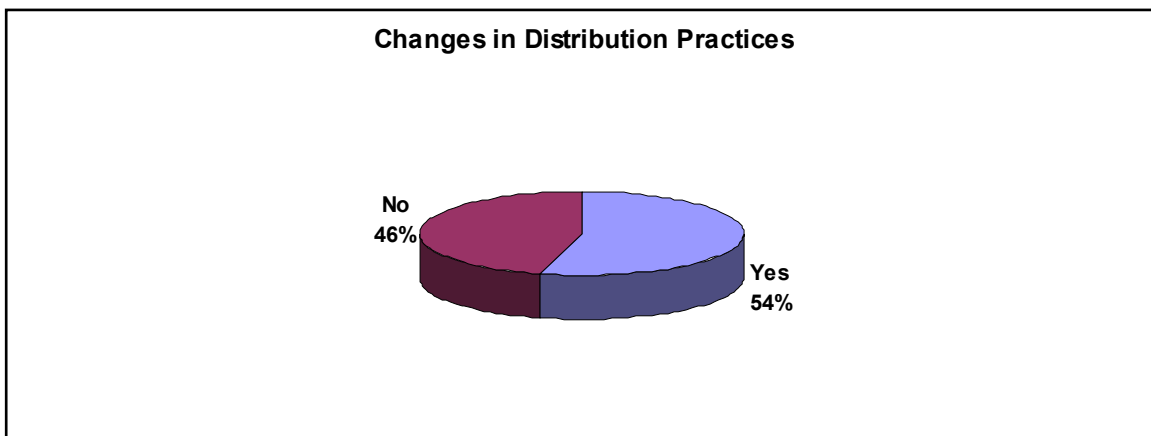
Those who responded said they access the Internet primarily from work. Some also have access from home. A small percentage access the Internet through their employer's host, meaning their press office has their own Web server. Still, an even smaller percentage access the Internet from other places in addition to their work and home. These places include private businesses such as Internet cafes, and local providers such as public computer labs in libraries.

Refer to graph no. 17 for an overview of responses in this area.



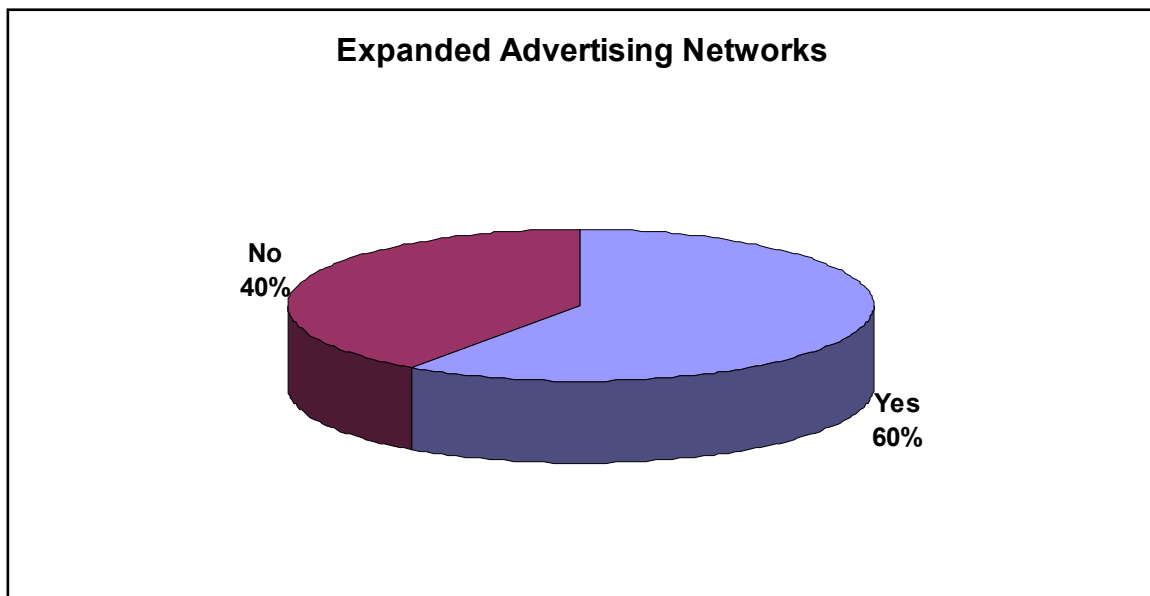
Graph No. 17

Graph no. 18 reflects changes in distribution practices of ethnic publications. Fifty-four percent of the respondents said their publications have made slight changes to the way they distribute their publications over the years. Some have gone from free distribution to newsstand sales, some from newsstand sales to straight subscriptions. Other ethnic publications that used to sell are now distributed free, either by hand or through business establishments that distribute various ethnic publications. Others started distributing their publications online, through Websites and email delivery.



Graph No. 18

Graph no. 19 reflects an expansion in advertising networks by most ethnic publications. Among those who responded, sixty percent admits to having expanded their advertising networks over the years. Ethnic press offices have done this in various ways. Most ethnic publications have expanded their advertising networks by reaching out to more local businesses and advertisers in addition to direct solicitation and telemarketing. Others employ the help of agencies such as the IPA to attract mainstream advertisers. Still, others have gone online and used the Web medium as space to attract and keep more advertisers.

**Graph No. 19****Discussion**

Through this study, various ethnic journalists had the chance to reflect upon the potential of Web technology to further contribute in the modernization and professionalization of the ethnic press. This research shows that publishers, editors and staff members from different ethnic publications in New York and New Jersey share many opinions on the changes and implications the Internet and World Wide Web can bring to their news organizations.

Jordan Moss, editor of the *Norwood News*, says it's the question at the moment. "Web publishing can work out, but print [editions] will last until we can completely figure out how to use the Internet to its maximum potential."

According to Garry Pierre-Pierre, publisher-editor of the *Haitian Times*, "Technology always changes things and the way we operate." The impact of the Internet can go both ways. "It can be positive or negative," says Pierre-Pierre.

Louise Carol, assistant editor of *Irish America*, says the Internet is "something ethnic publications need to exploit." Mette Barslund, publishing director of *Nordstjernen*, agrees. He says the Internet has great possibilities for the ethnic press if these possibilities are coupled with creativity. He also adds, "the content and context of ethnic papers will survive if the Web version is able to provide unique material and unique articles that no one else can provide."

Marc Luo of the *World Journal's* Internet department says, "It's hard to say what the impact of the Internet is at the moment." However, he adds that "[the website] is something we need to have for better or worse because it gives [our publication] the competitive edge."

Graph no. 20 summarizes the opinions of most editors and publishers of ethnic publications when it comes to the probable impact of the Internet on ethnic press operations. Despite the rise of ethnic publications online, 10 percent still believe that the Internet does not have an impact, and therefore, will not change the way ethnic publications function in the American marketplace of ideas.

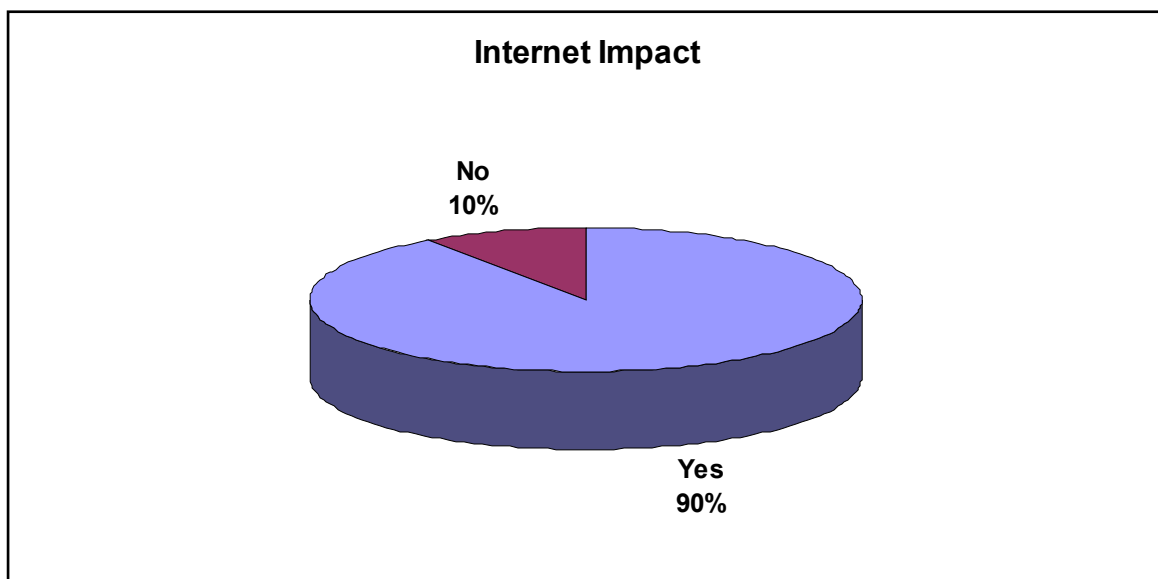
The attitudes of audiences and the availability of Internet access to most audience's homes remain two of the biggest reasons why some ethnic media professionals think online publishing will not work, at least for the time being.

I-Der Jeng, editor of the *China Press*, says the Internet will not make newspapers cease to exist because “people believe in things put on paper.” He believes that newspapers will always be here despite technological advances.

Tom Tracy, crime reporter for the *Flatbush Life*, agrees with Jeng. “I don't think people can bring their laptops to the bathroom.” According to Tracy, his publication’s audiences are mostly senior citizens. “For now, papers will stay the way they are because of the audience base.”

Veronica Baxin, owner and publisher of *La Voz de Mexico*, agrees. According to Baxin, the paper will stay as the preferred medium of her publication’s audience because of the unavailability of Internet access in most of their homes.

Liberty Times USA General Manager Amelia Ko believes the Internet has an impact, but many people are still reading the [printed version]. She says printed publications will last for a while because of people's reading habits.



Graph No. 20

The other ninety percent of respondents believe that communication technologies such as the Internet and World Wide Web have an impact on the revitalization and continued operation of the ethnic press. Most respondents agree that while it may still take years until anyone can determine whether cyberspace will eventually take over the printed mode of circulation of most ethnic papers, the Internet has certainly helped in the operation, distribution, and expansion of many ethnic publications in New York and New Jersey.

Salin Guchan, program coordinator and intern for *The Network Journal*, says the Internet makes work easy and cost-effective for small publications. "It certainly allows room for independence and self-sustenance," says Guchan.

Publisher Jawed Anwar of *Muslims Weekly* says the Internet is a great help to editors, reporters, and writers. "I think it will be difficult to continue a publication without the Internet," says Anwar.

Jose Morillo, editor of the *Dominican Times Magazine*, agrees. "The Internet makes everything easier and faster," says Morillo. "It certainly facilitates in a lot of the business aspects of the publication."

Many respondents attribute the Internet's impact to its ability to produce work in a cost-effective manner.

Steven, managing editor of *Highbridge Horizon*, says the Internet presents the opportunity for "online-only" publications at a low-cost production. "That will help the ethnic press continue to exist, whether or not they can meet the cost," says Steven.

Rameen Javid Moshref, executive director of *Afghan Communicator*, agrees. He says the Internet is "the cheapest and most efficient way for ethnic media to produce work that is read worldwide."

Others attribute part of the Internet's potential to its ability to reach and be reached by audiences beyond the scope of the printed material.

Luz Rone, public relations representative for *Impacto Latin News*, says Internet reach extends from local to global; therefore, people outside the reach of the printed version can access ethnic papers through the Internet.

Acting Assistant Editor Jee Jung of *Korea Times New York*, agrees. He says the Internet is important in reaching especially those outside the New York Metropolitan area who have no access to the print edition.

Still, others believe that because the Internet creates a lot of exposure for ethnic publications, it plays an important role in promoting the names of various newspapers and magazines within the local area.

Armando Varela, editor of *Hoy*, says the Internet helps ethnic papers gain more exposure, create image, and attract different kinds of audiences. "We are a street paper," says Varela. "Because the Internet reaches a different kind of audience, it definitely gets [our paper] into homes."

L.P. Pelayo, sports editor for the *Filipino Reporter*, agrees. According to Pelayo, "The ethnic press needs the Internet and World Wide Web to exist for the simple fact that their name and company have to be known in order to stay in business."

Annan Boodram, editor-in-chief of *The Caribbean Voice*, says the Internet "helps to intensify communication among individuals and entities with the same ethnic and cultural underpinnings." He says news is quickly disseminated globally, issues are discussed, and views are aired easily with the help of the Internet. According to Boodram, ethnic media usually use the Internet "to help publicize itself, expand readership, increase coverage and reach, solicit suggestions for improvement and story ideas, and expand its network of writers." In short, the

Internet “helps ethnic media be more competitive, more relevant, and more responsive to readership [in order to] better fit its niche.”

CONCLUSION

The Internet continues to usher a new wave of online publications, one that reflects the same diversity of the American salad bowl. A revitalization of traditional ethnic press is achieved as more and more ethnic papers and magazines go online. The current upsurge of ethnic publications in New York and New Jersey is due to a number of factors, one of them being the arrival of efficient, user-friendly, and cost-effective communication technologies such as the Internet and World Wide Web.

The current Web technologies allow for better operation, reach, and promotion of ethnic publications. By improving content and helping to increase advertising and distribution networks, the Internet helps ethnic press operations achieve further growth and success. The potential offered by Web technology makes this continued trend in modernization and professionalization possible, thus allowing ethnic papers to survive and grow, both in number and circulation.

Some ethnic journalists gave advice on how to deal with this continuing trend of “modernization” within the ethnic press. Julius Kalnoky, president of *Nepszava/Szabadsag*, says the Internet and WWW will eventually “take about half of the readers of the ethnic press.” How does one deal with this apparent possibility?

Shafqat Chughtai, editor-in-chief of *Sada-e-Pakistan NY*, says the Internet is a good way to reach more audiences. “It can help if your publication has the resources,” he says.

According to Michael Chu, publisher of the *Asian-American Times*, “you need a lot of creativity, especially if you're publishing a Website.”

Albert V. Tuitt, publisher of the *Uptown Express Newspaper*, says publishers have to be selective of what to put on the Net if they want their papers to continue.

According to Aris Sevag, managing editor of the *Armenian Reporter*, “we need to take another look at what service is being performed, what need is being served by the print edition. “Some info can be quickly accessed online,” says Sevag. “The contents of the paper may change depending on need.”

Lolita Long, publisher of sister publications *Weekly Gleaner* and *Weekly Star*, says that if more readers will have Internet access, then “papers will need to catch up more with the technology.”

Editor Anthony Advincula of the *Filipino Express* leaves these final words: "We cannot deny the truth that most national dailies are not well-concentrated on issues of ethnic groups." According to Advincula, since the Web allows for more reach, "Our voices can be heard louder than before because of the technology." In the end however, it is “the willingness, the movement, [and] the action that contribute to the continued emergence of the ethnic press.”

Suggestions for Future Research:

The possible impact of Internet technology to the ethnic press is an area that has received little attention in the academic community. While there have been numerous studies chronicling in detail the relationship between Web technologies and media outlets, most of those studies tended to concentrate on the mainstream media, thus neglecting the needs and opinions of the ethnic press community. To date, there has only been one scholarly study on the relationship between the Internet and the ethnic press: Zhang and Hao’s study on electronic Chinese publications. That study primarily was concerned with the overseas Chinese press and the implications of the Web on their various global operations. Zhang and Hao’s case study of online Chinese language

publications “examined the potentials of such publications in supplementing and expanding the functions of the traditional ethnic media, strengthening cultural and communal ties of the ethnic groups, and mobilizing them for action”¹⁰.

This preliminary study on the ethnic press of New York and New Jersey branches off from Zhang and Hao’s study, building upon the idea on the relationship between the Internet and the ethnic press and applying it to not one particular ethnic publication but all available ethnic publications in the region. The possible impact of the Internet on the ethnic press, however, is a broad scholarly endeavor waiting to be explored. There are more aspects to consider, much more details to look into---one that is outside the scope of a one-semester independent study such as this one.

This study revealed the tip of an iceberg. Through the survey conducted via this research, media professionals from various ethnic publications are now aware that their colleagues are as exploratory as they are with Web hosting and online publication. We now know that there are increasing numbers of ethnic newspapers and magazines published on the Web, and that these Websites are opening doors for the ethnic press community in terms of reach, operation, promotion and distribution.

What needs to be looked at for future research is to what extent is the Internet helping or harming the current circulation numbers and the financial budgets of ethnic publications. A full-scale market research will have to be organized to look at audience attitudes, number of Website visitors, and availability of online access in audiences’ homes.

APPENDIX A: 2003 INTERNET and the ETHNIC PRESS SURVEY

1. What format is your publication?

- a) Tabloid
- b) Broadsheet
- c) Magazine

- d) Other: _____
 e) More than one format: _____

2. Do you currently have a Website affiliated with or connected to your publication?

- a) YES
 b) NO (Please proceed to Question No. 13)

3. If YES, what is your publication's complete Website address or homepage URL?

4. How long have you had the Website?

- a) Less than or up to 1 year
 b) Over 1 and up to 2 years
 c) Over 2 and up to 3 years
 d) Over 3 and up to 4 years
 e) Over 4 and up to 5 years
 f) Over 5 years: (How many?) _____
 g) Don't know / No answer

5. What is the date (month and year) of your publication's first ONLINE presence?

6. Roughly what percentage of your Website's contents is original (as opposed to simply duplicating the printed material)?

- a) 0-20%
 b) 21-40%
 c) 41-60%
 d) 61-80%
 e) 81-100%
 f) Don't know / No answer

7. What language/s do you use on the Website?

- a) English only
 b) Ethnic language only: (What language?) _____
 c) Both
 d) Different ethnic languages, NO ENGLISH: (List) _____
 e) Other
 f) Don't know / No answer

8. What is the Website's most recent operational status?

- a) Fully functional and up-to-date
 b) Currently "under construction"
 c) No longer on-line
 d) Other
 e) Don't know / No answer

9. Who is mainly responsible for setting up the Website?

- a) Myself
 b) Person(s) from the staff
 c) Outside help (Someone other than a staff member)
 d) Other: _____
 e) Don't know / No answer

10. Did it cost your publication anything for initially putting up the Website?

- a) No cost
- b) Yes, up to \$1,000
- c) Yes, up to \$2,000
- d) Yes, up to \$3,000
- e) Yes, up to \$4,000
- f) Yes, over \$4,000
- g) Yes, but unable to disclose the amount
- h) Don't know / No answer

11. How do you finance the maintenance of your publication's Website?

- a) Out-of-pocket
- b) In-house budget
- c) Donations from private individuals or companies
- d) Financial contribution by non-profit organizations
- e) Other: _____
- f) Don't know / No answer

12. Please indicate if you agree or disagree to the following statements based on experience with your publication's Website:

- Since its installation, the Website has expanded the usual demographics of the printed publication.

AGREE
DISAGREE
DON'T KNOW
UNDECIDED

- Since its installation, the Website has attracted more readers and therefore allowed for increased circulation.

AGREE
DISAGREE
DON'T KNOW
UNDECIDED

- Since its installation, the Website has been able to offer and/or sustain additional advertising space.

AGREE
DISAGREE
DON'T KNOW
UNDECIDED

- Since its installation, the Website has improved communication with readers through any or all of the following (Circle all that apply): general email / subscriber email / online guest books / forums.

AGREE
DISAGREE
DON'T KNOW
UNDECIDED

- Since its installation, the Website has enhanced the traditional printed version of the publication by utilizing any or all of the following Internet media capabilities (Circle all that apply): hyperlinks / enhanced graphics / audio / video.

AGREE
DISAGREE
DON'T KNOW
UNDECIDED

13. If your publication currently DOES NOT have a Website, do you expect to put one up?

- a) Yes, within the next 6 months
- b) Yes, within 1-2 years
- c) Yes, within 3-5 years
- d) No, I do not plan to put up a Website for my publication.
- e) This question does not apply to me because my publication already has a Website.

- f) Don't know / No answer

14. In either the print or Web formats, which feature of the publication do you think your audience reads most? (Circle all that apply)

- a) Local and community news
- b) International news
- c) Local columnist
- d) Editorial and other commentary
- e) Entertainment
- f) Other: _____
- g) Don't know / No answer

15. How often do you or members of your staff use the Internet?

- a) Continuously (Once a day or more)
- b) Frequently (At least once a week on average)
- c) Sometimes (At least once a month on average)
- d) Rarely (Less than once every two months)
- e) Almost never

16. If you or members of your staff use the Internet, what do you use it for? (Check all that apply)

- a) Reading other online publications
- b) Article research
- c) Story ideas/pitches
- d) Finding new sources, experts
- e) Downloading data tables
- f) Participating in newsgroups
- g) Viewing/gathering press releases
- h) Email
- i) Other: _____ (Please specify)
- j) Don't know / No answer

17. How do you access the Internet? (Check all that apply)

- a) No access
- b) From home
- c) From work
- d) Employer's host
- e) Local provider (such as the public library)
- f) Private businesses (such as Internet Cafes)
- g) Other: _____ (Please specify)
- h) Don't know / No answer

18. Have your publication's distribution practices changed over the years? If so, in what way?

19. How has your publication expanded your advertising networks over the years?

20. Do you think the Internet and World Wide Web have an impact on how the ethnic press will continue to exist in the United States? If so, please elaborate.

(END OF QUESTIONNAIRE)

NOTES

¹ “Findings Substantiate Key Role of Ethnic Media, and Provide Statistical Basis for Business Initiatives,” New California Media ONLINE, 23 April 2002, <http://news.ncmonline.com/news/view_article.html?article_id=796> (11 November 2002).

²

Katherine Sigelman, “New Jersey? It’s As Sought-After As the Hawaiian Islands,” American Oggi, 23 July 2002, Edition 28, “Voices That Must Be Heard,” Independent Press Association-New York ONLINE, <<http://www.indypressny.org/article.php3?ArticleID=278>> (18 January 2003).

³

Lauren Kessler, The Dissident Press: Alternative Journalism in American History (Beverly Hills: Sage Publications, 1984), 8.

⁴

Kessler, The Dissident Press, 15.

⁵

“The Middleberg/Ross Media Survey: Change and its Impact on Communications,” Middleberg/Ross Media in Cyberspace Study, <<http://www.middleberg.com/toolsforsuccess/cyberstudy.cfm>> (24 February 2003).

⁶ Kewen Zhang and Xiaoming Hao, “The Internet and the Ethnic Press: A Study of Network-Based Chinese Publications,” <http://www.isoc.org/inet97/proceedings/G1/G1_2.HTM> (21 January 2003).

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⁷ Zhang and Hao, “The Internet and the Ethnic Press.”

Sally M. Miller, ed., The Ethnic Press in the United States: A Historical Analysis and Handbook, (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1987), xvi.

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Miller, ed., The Ethnic Press in the United States, xvii.

¹⁰ Kewen Zhang and Xiaoming Hao, “The Internet and Ethnic Press: A Study of Electronic Chinese Publications,” *The Information Society*, <<http://www.slis.indiana.edu/TIS/abstracts/ab15-1/zhang.htm>> (22 November 2002).

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