# PhDigital Online 2022 Evaluation Assessment

Cindy Royal, Professor and Director, Media Innovation Lab
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The PhDigital Bootcamp was established to provide digital training to mass communication doctoral students and early career faculty to better prepare them for open faculty positions, drive curriculum innovation and influence university strategic planning. It was also developed to explore the need for digitally focused doctoral curriculum. The 4th PhDigital Bootcamp was held virtually with weekly live Zoom sessions from June 3- July 15, 2022. Online materials to support each module were provided on the website phdigitalbootcamp.com as asynchronous training throughout the week.

**Objectives:**
- Provide a digital certification for doctoral students to demonstrate digital proficiency and the ability to craft courses and curriculum and participate in strategic planning for their academic unit
- Instruct students in the strategic direction of the digital media environment and to encourage innovative scholarship
- Provide digital skills training that can be introduced in curriculum
- To test a prototype for improved doctoral education focused on digital topics in media programs.

The Knight Foundation provided initial funding for this program of $75,000 and extended the funding with a $150,000 grant. We held sessions in 2018, 2019, 2020 and 2022. Since its launch, 79 fellows have completed the program. The full list of fellows and curriculum can be found at phdigitalbootcamp.com.

## Logistics and Planning

- Twenty-two participants were recruited and selected, a website was created to host online modules, a Slack team was established for module discussions and live Zooms were initiated for participants to meet and get to know faculty and each other. Although we did not meet in person with this cohort, faculty explored the creative use of distance learning to provide the best experience possible for the participants.
- Participants were awarded a certificate that was emailed to them upon completion.

## Faculty and Staff

**Several members of the Digital Media Innovation program taught modules in the Bootcamp:**

- Cindy Royal, Director, Product Management, Front-End Development and led research and pedagogy discussions
- Amber Hinsley, Data Journalism
- Kelly Kaufhold, Data Journalism
- Dale Blasingame, Social Media & Analytics, Drone Journalism
- Jon Zmikly, Social Media & Analytics, 360 Video/VR/AR/Chatbots/AI
- Sara Shields, Front-End Development, Drones

## Participants

In recruiting applicants, the program received **55 applications for which 22 were selected**. This reflects a continued demand for a program of this nature. Twenty-two fellows completed the program. Fellows came to the program from across the U.S. and around the globe.

**Ratna Ariyanti**, doctoral student, Ohio University
**Sevgi Baykaldi,** doctoral student, Michigan State University
**Mary Liz Brooks,** assistant professor, West Texas A&M University
**Kelli Burns,** associate professor, University of South Florida
**Yeon Erin Kim Cho,** assistant professor, Grand View University
**Rebecca Cooney,** associate professor, Washington State University
**Jenny Dean,** assistant professor, Texas Wesleyan University
**Kelly Fincham**, lecturer, National University Ireland – Galway
**Avery Green**, doctoral student & assistant professor, University of Mary Hardin-Baylor
**Patrick Johnson,** doctoral student, University of Iowa
**Kruthika Kamath**, doctoral student, University of Wisconsin–Madison
**Yen-I Lee,** assistant professor, Washington State University
**Lisa Lenoir**, doctoral student, University of Missouri
**Nikki McClaran,** doctoral student, Michigan State University
**Susan McFarlane-Alvarez,** professor Clayton State University
**Aimee Meader,** associate professor, Winthrop University
**Serena Miller,** associate professor, Michigan State University
**Shudipta Sharma,** doctoral student, Bowling Green State University
**Terra Tailleur,** assistant professor, University of King's College
**Matthew Taylor,** assistant professor, Middle Tennessee State University
**T.J. Thomson,** assistant professor, Queensland University of Technology
**Cindy Vincent,** associate professor, Salem State University

Audience and market research

Communication skills for working to produce digital media products. (virtual work, project management).

**Goals of a digital media product curriculum?**

Skills (communication, programming, data, design)

Social media and engagement

Coding and technical ability

platforms for dissemination digital media products

Audience Research and Analytics

Technical skills for creating the content/messages of the digital media products (E.g. newswriting, positioning, research)

Multimedia

Entrepreneurial and innovation skills

User testing and design

Design and user experience

(Audience and Public) Engagement strategies

## Final Assessment

Participants were given a final assessment at the end of the Bootcamp. This was completed after the completion of the program, with time to reflect upon learning and outcomes. The results of the final assessment are as follows, compared with the 2018, 2019 and 2020 evaluations.

|  | 2018 | 2019 | 2020 | 2022 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Overall, the Bootcamp instructors were knowledgeable and prepared for their sessions | 5.0 | 4.9 | 5.0 | 4.9 |
| The content of the Bootcamp was relevant to my needs | 5.0 | 4.5 | 4.9 | 4.8 |
| Overall, the online modules helped prepare me for Zoom sessions of Bootcamp* | 4.6 | 4.7 | 4.7 | 4.9 |
| Zoom sessions were effectively deployed to cover the topics ** | 5.0 | 4.6 | 4.6 | 4.7 |
| Overall, the experience of the Bootcamp was (rated poor(1) – excellent(5)) | 5.0 | 4.6 | 4.8 | 4.9 |

*In 2018 and 2019, the question was "Overall, the online modules helped prepare me in-person sessions of the Bootcamp.

**In 2018 and 2019, the question was "The facilities and accommodations for the Bootcamp were" with poor (1) – excellent (5) ratings.

| The amount of material covered was: | 2018 | 2019 | 2020 | 2022 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Too Little | 0% | 0% | 0% | 0% |
| Just Right | 94% | 71% | 94% | 78% |
| Too Much | 6% | 29% | 6% | 22% |

These ratings continue to indicate a high quality, well-run event that delivered significant value to participants. In addition to the general ratings, participants were asked to assess their experience/knowledge on several dimensions. These dimensions were also provided as a pre-assessment, before the online modules began.

**2022 Comparison of Skills Self-Assessment from Pre-Assessment to Post-Assessment Scale of 1 to 5 – Percent rated 4/5**

| Topic | Pre | Post | Point Chng |
|---|---|---|---|
| Frontend Web Development | 11.8% | 61.1% | 49.3 |
| Responsive Design | 5.9% | 72.2% | 66.3 |
| Social Media Engagement | 47.1% | 94.4% | 47.3 |
| Social Certifications | 11.8% | 66.7% | 54.9 |
| Data Visualization and Storytelling | 17.6% | 94.4% | 76.8 |
| Digital Product Management | 0.0% | 77.8% | 77.8 |
| Design Thinking | 17.6% | 77.8% | 60.2 |
| VR/360 | 5.9% | 68.1% | 62.2 |
| Augmented Reality | 0.0% | 38.9% | 38.9 |
| Drones | 0.0% | 50.0% | 50.0 |
| Bots/AI/Machine Learning | 0.0% | 44.4% | 44.4 |
| Entrepreneurship/Innovation | 11.8% | 83.3% | 71.5 |
| Digital Curriculum Trends | 17.6% | 88.9% | 71.3 |

Participants' self-reported knowledge in the Very Experienced/Knowledgeable (5) and Somewhat Experienced/Knowledgeable (4) selections increased across all topics. Participants showed most improved insight in Digital Product Management, Data Visualization/Storytelling, Entrepreneurship/Innovation and Digital Curriculum Trends.

## Selected Comments From Final Assessment

### Describe how you plan to use PhDigital topics/resources in the future.
I'm **inspired to formally initiate conversations with my leadership** about the development of a Digital Media and Innovation major (or similar title). With my 10 years at the College, I have earned a place at the table, and I feel ready to start this dialogue.

In the short-term, I plan to **incorporate web design, immersive storytelling, and data visualization** in a spring course. I would like to continue to look for ways to incorporate other topics covered in this bootcamp throughout my other courses.

The PhDigital program has given me confidence and renewed energy to try and **tackle university bureaucracy and dated ways of doing things.** It has empowered me to be able to speak up more and to champion digital curriculum amongst my colleagues. It has equipped me with deeper digital skills and has sharpened my digital literacies.

This will help to support my arguments when our **undergrad curriculum review** restarts this fall. Specifically, I plan to pitch a new course on news products.

I plan to use the lessons learned to **further develop my digital skills**. I found being in the classroom and not in industry has not exposed me to the latest developments in the field. I appreciated the innovativeness

displayed in the weekly sessions. I plan to revisit them often for inspiration. Thank you for continuing to foster creativity.

**Redesigning** the major.

I am currently developing **two new modules** at NUIG to cover social media for both journalism and broader digital roles. The course has exposed me to newer and more relevant skills in digital journalism in particular that are new even to someone like me who is considered the "Digital" person at my faculty.

PhDigital has encouraged me to take action with both my scholarship and my teaching. It's easy to fall into familiar patterns in both areas and simply keep things the way that they are. The path of least resistance. This program has **inspired me to push myself** - and hopefully lead by example for others - to modernize curriculum through hands-on learning and bolder research.

I am planning to enhance some of the courses that we already have in my university where I am teaching, such as data journalism, by integrating resources that I got from PhDigital. In addition to that, I will explore more on some of the topics and start to conduct my research. What is also very important is now I have a **network which I can rely on asking questions**, gathering more resources, and staying updated with the latest development in digital/multimedia.

I will be **incorporating many of the assignments into my classes**, especially the 360 video, social media analytics graphics, and data storytelling assignments.

The overview was helpful in helping me identify what digital competencies I should learn more about in order to best prepare students for their careers. I plan to **incorporate some of these skills learned in a fall course on engaged journalism.** I have also spoken with the Solutions Journalism Network and I am proposing a **product development course** with them as our client in the classroom in the future.

I've already experienced **applicability of the material in research projects**. I also hope to build modules in my teaching that will focus on PhDigital-related topics. I expect to return to the resources provided over the coming months and years.

## Do You Think PhDigital Should Continue?
Absolutely! This is such **a worthwhile and valuable workshop**, especially for people at poorly-funded institutions that do not provide this kind of professional development or funds to acquire it.

I definitely would support the continued offering of the PhDigital program. It is a **high-quality and well-thought-out course** that enables **connection, community, skill-building, and shared learning.**

Yes. I would love an extended/advanced sessions that stems off of this one!

Yes! There **aren't many learning opportunities like this** for J educators in my country. Thank you for including those of us outside the U.S.

It should be continued because the program is not only designed to make aware the communication faculty about the importance of digital media but also to familiarize them with different digital media tools.

Absolutely, unequivocally yes! While it's tempting to think of academics as lifelong learners, **the existing model encourages a narrow focus that encourages stagnation and inhibits innovation**. "Standing on the shoulder of giants" can represent safety and balance. PhDigital encourages us to instead use that stance to overcome the fear of failing and reach beyond the low-hanging fruit. It's the only way we'll get better and keep pace with the world beyond our classroom walls.

I believe the program should continue since this is one of the **rare opportunities for PhD students and faculty members to gain knowledge** and experience from the speakers. Listening to the speakers' experiences and challenges will also give confidence to the participants to start integrating more and more digital courses in their own institutions. For some participants, like myself, there were a lot of topics that I had never encountered before, only by joining the course, did I get the exposure to try and learn many tools and resources.

Absolutely. It was a great experience and I learned a ton. **I talk about it all the time to colleagues**.

What else exists for academics in media and communication fields? I often seek out workshops, preconference, or teach myself. I am a believer that academia should be intellectual and a learning exchange community, so it would be great to see it continue. The **waters of digital competencies are difficult to navigate** because you are not quite sure which direction to go, but the program acts as a compass helping us identify our weaknesses, while providing a foundation of knowledge helping us identify paths forward.

Absolutely should continue**. I've already mentioned to colleagues** the benefits of the program. It is enlightening. I hope more faculty who fear digital take the course. Perhaps for fearful faculty, an introductory workshop (single session) could be offered; a preview of sorts.

## Thoughts on How These Topics Can Be Integrated Into Doctoral Education

These topics should be integrated into PhD programs, where applicable; particularly in JMC-focused concentrations/programs (I received my degree in a human communication program, with only one concentration area in media studies). I think the model Texas State has, as well as other institutions like BU and Emerson, serves as a **good starting point for other institutions** to model. I think creating tech-focused and specific courses, like the ones all of you have introduced us to, is a solid approach for introducing students to these concepts.

I think we should have more practical courses for PhDs during our coursework that really helps us plan what we need to teach our students who will go out and get jobs.

They should **each be separate courses** that students can take. It would help learn more in depth and also help research become more nuanced.

In my own experience, it is very **rare chance for doctoral students to have first hands experience and learn new resources** or doing projects. We know that the media industry has continued to develop and different inventions have emerged. It is very useful for doctoral education to also give the opportunities for doctoral students to engage more with digital topics so that they know how to develop syllabus and understand on how to use different tools, particularly not all PhD students have the experience working in the newsrooms before.

I am providing you with a summary in my curriculum project of an idea to implement your teachings in PhD programs. I tried to frame the proposal not from a digital skills perspective (because the majority are resistant to learning digital competencies), but from a perspective that we need to help our students get jobs and we are not properly preparing them for non-academic careers...and here are some suggestions of how we can help them, and also, the college benefits from these classes. A suggestion is to identify a doctoral program as a testing site and conduct a case study to see how the doctoral program experiment worked and could be scaled to other doctoral programs.

A digital survey course should be included in doctoral programs, in which students are encouraged to explore ways their research might be made more relevant through intersection with digital technologies.

## Final Thought, Comments

I just loved this program. I walk away more rewarded and with **more knowledge with this program than anything I have ever done before** in professional development or continued education. You should be commended! Thank you again for everything.

I **loved the guest speakers / program alums**. The built-in time to for virtual group work was a great way to interact with classmates (especially since the program was virtual).

I thoroughly enjoyed every week. There are some weeks that appear more directly applicable to my current courses (e.g., social media analytics and immersive storytelling), but **every week I learned something new** that I am now interested in incorporating across the variety of courses I teach in some way, shape or form.

I really enjoyed the **enthusiasm** radiating from all of the instructors. Their curiosity helped inspire me, for I have always thrived on innovative curriculum for students. I have been in charge of programming for fashion media and find it is exhilarating to think outside the box. I can recall how slow newsrooms were to embrace digital and how they cherry picked only certain people to play with newness. I am so excited I was chosen to participate; and now, I can work to implement new ideas in my future role as a scholar and faculty member. Thank you, again, Cindy to you and your team!

What didn't I like! I really appreciate all of the resources. I will be reviewing for months to come.

I really enjoyed the social sessions because a lot of social has changed since I started in academia - particularly in the wider/broader areas where it has become more marketing tool than pure journalism. Also, I really enjoyed gathering with like-minded people because it is very hard to find people who are into the same things even within a department.

I particularly like **learning about how courses were taught** and structured including example assignments. It is challenging to both learn/keep up and design courses, so that was helpful. I appreciate this community providing guidance and support for academics because academics often do not have this support at an institutional level because we have to decide whether we pay to present research (which is tied to tenure) or pay for professional development due to limited funds. Thank you to everyone for sharing their experiences and knowledge. I thought the program was run well and everyone was supportive and wonderful.

I really enjoyed **letting go of fear**, learning about the huge potential of these technologies, and imagining applications within the advertising/PR industries. It was **exciting**, **challenging**, and **engaging**.

## 2022 Overall Ratings for Individual Sessions

Evaluations were provided at the end of each in-person module. The results with comments are provided on the next several pages.

| Module | Instructions Clear | Instructor Knowledge | Content Relevant | Online Materials | Plan to Use | Overall Rating |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Digital Product Concepts | 4.81 | 5.00 | 4.43 | 4.57 | 4.48 | **4.48** |
| Data Journalism | 4.72 | 4.89 | 4.50 | 4.61 | 4.83 | **4.67** |
| Social Media/Analytics | 4.50 | 4.64 | 4.43 | 4.57 | 4.50 | **4.43** |
| Web Development | 4.63 | 5.00 | 4.31 | 4.63 | 4.00 | **4.38** |
| Drones/Digital Scholarship | 4.77 | 4.92 | 4.08 | 4.54 | 3.69 | **4.46** |
| VR/Digital Pedagogy | 4.83 | 4.83 | 4.67 | 4.75 | 4.67 | **4.83** |
| | | | | | | |
| Overall | **4.71** | **4.89** | **4.40** | **4.61** | **4.36** | **4.53** |

The following are selected comments provided from the evaluations for each module.

## Product Management Concepts
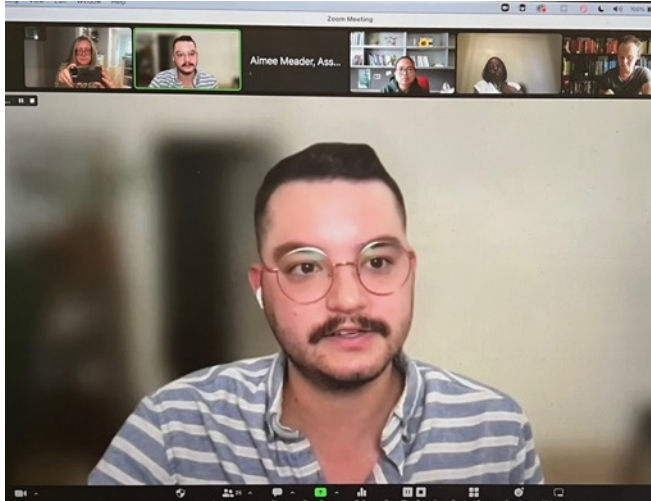


- The guest speaker, Sean Smith, was awesome and really helped tie together the readings and videos and help visualize the materials by providing concrete examples.
- I enjoyed learning about product management and design thinking. I was unfamiliar with these concepts prior to this session. I have already started thinking about how I might incorporate them into my existing courses. I believe that students stand to benefit in their job search by having some familiarity with these concepts.
- I appreciated hearing from the guest speaker and learning the most up-to-date information about ways digital products can be used to solve people's problems. I really enjoyed working on the curriculum with my team members. I love curriculum development.
- The activity is useful to connect what we learn from the materials to curriculum design. The materials and discussion also help to think more about how to help students who are interested in digital media jobs develop their strengths.
- All new information that I had never thought about before. The slide decks and videos were extremely helpful.
- Loved hearing from previous students and their experiences. It helps me plan how I can support my students for their careers

## Data Journalism

- Loved the hands-on activities. I learned so much.
- Kelly's energy and expertise was excellent.
- I really enjoyed this session, including the part when the guest speaker shared on how integrate data journalism skills to her job. I also like seeing various work done by students so that it gave me the ideas on how I assist my students in the future and what kind of projects/products that they can publish.
- Loved learning about Flourish and the additional Google tools available.



- Really liked the range of platforms and software they shared with us.
- I enjoyed learning how you taught students to find data and I enjoyed learning about Flourish.
- Yoojin Cho was an excellent guest speaker. I also really loved seeing the students' journalism projects. Such great work!
- Excited to incorporate what I've learned into different PR and multimedia courses :)

# Social Media
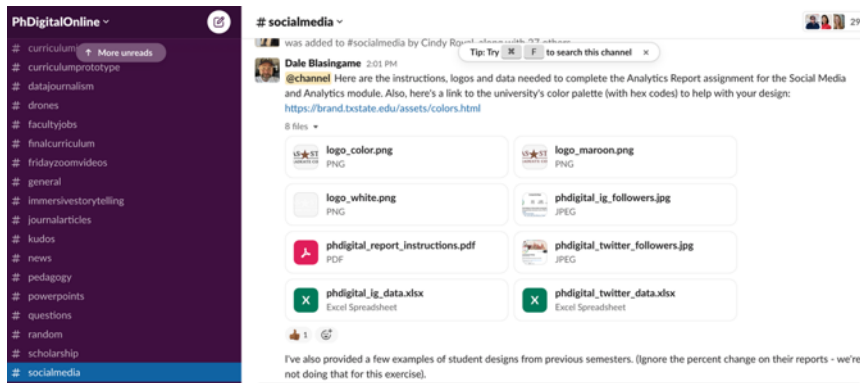


- I enjoyed learning more about how algorithms work in digital marketing.
- Dale and Jon were great hosts and the information shared was really valuable. Also, they're both very generous in sharing their own resources. Relieved to see that it's good enough for us to know the basics of Google analytics

- This is a topic that I really don't know much about, and this module really helped me build some basic skills and give more value to social media, which I struggle with because I don't want to be giving out all my information.
- I enjoyed learning about all that you do to teach and prepare students. The learning about the organization of the course (platform algorithms, analytics, strategy, and reports) was helpful including sharing the information on the major assignments of the course to help me visualize the course as a whole.
- It would be interesting to see how students package this info on their resumes and job portfolios given the intent of the class is to get them jobs.

# Web Development

- I like being challenged and coding is definitely an area of challenge for me. I appreciated that the subject area pushed me to deep dive into the topic and play with tools and troubleshooting.
- Playing with code was tons of fun!
- This session helped review information I learned a long time ago which was helpful (HTML, CSS) as well as introduced me to concepts new to me (JavaScript, Python scraping) that I am interested in learning more about.
- Cindy's energy, knowledge, and enthusiasm are all great! She has a wonderful interpersonal manner and is very good at engaging with questions and comments.



- Loved the interactivity and practice. It helped me get more comfortable with coding for websites.
- Rigorous material, but glad to get introduced to it!
- The CodeActually resources are amazing--thank you for providing these! I look forward to continuing my learning in this area to become more proficient.
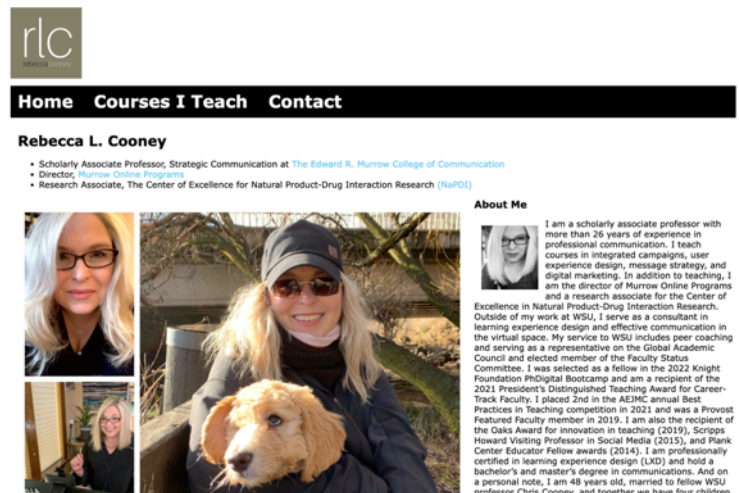
## Drones
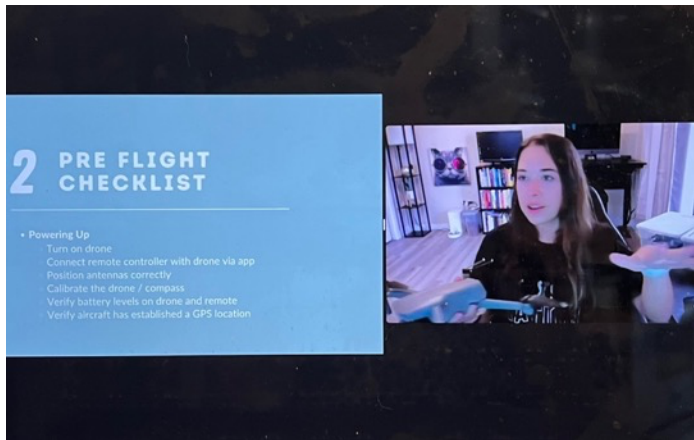


- I found it interesting how drones can be used across the media comm discipline and not just solely for journalism. Dale and Sarah are excellent instructors. I found their sections to be fascinating.
- The drone information was excellent and knowledgeable, although I may not use in the future. I appreciate the discussion on digital scholarship and pathways moving forward. I'm still trying to brainstorm what that might look like for me and my research specifically, but I know this discussion will have impact on shaping that.
- I had never had a drone experience before, so the session has given me many new resources. In addition to that, the digital scholarship also was a fascinating session. I feel more confident now to explore more on other alternative publication opportunities and less intimidated by the existing journal publications.
- Really great to learn about Dale's classes and how he has structured and organized them.



- The conversation around drones and integration into curriculum was really fascinating. I have never considered adding drones to my courses and am now officially intrigued.
- I found the information on the drones to be fascinating. I am starting to think of creative ways to apply this technology to courses, particularly skills-based ones. I found it interesting there is a lack of historically marginalized people involved in the industry. I plan to get my certification--after the dissertation!
- Great session full of rich and timely information.
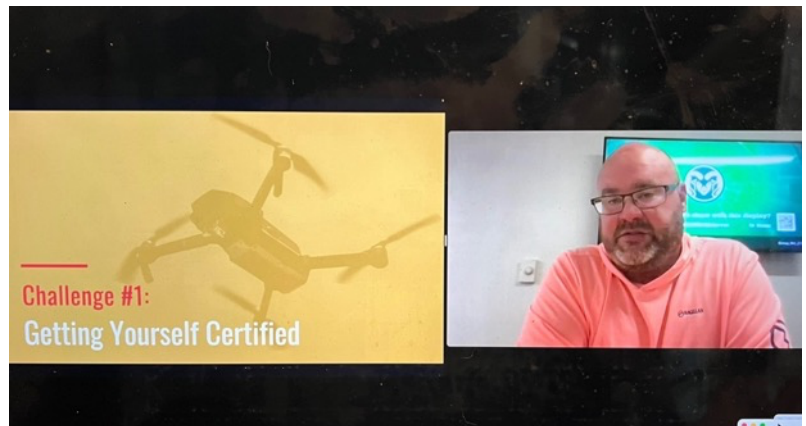
## Immersive Storytelling
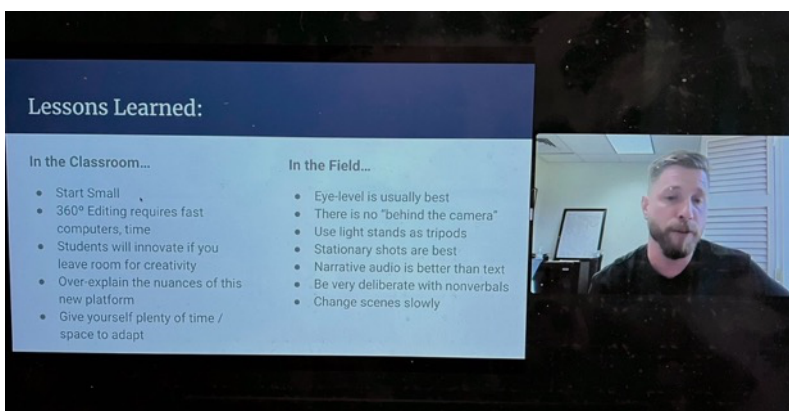


- I love the 360 assignment. I plan to revisit it to ensure I get better footage.
- Total #edtech nerd so loved learning about Twilio, Story Sphere, and all the other immersive storytelling tools
- All of the resources! I've dabbled in all of these technologies before (except chatbots), but I really appreciate all of the teaching resources and examples for how to bring these into the classroom. I look forward to incorporating these into my classes!

- It was great to end the program on a high note and to have covered so much ground in a relatively short amount of time.
- Really liked the explanations for all the different kind of AR/VR/MR available.
- I found drone technology and VR will be areas I plan to engage with further. They are stimulating topics and will be rich with countless practical and research possibilities.
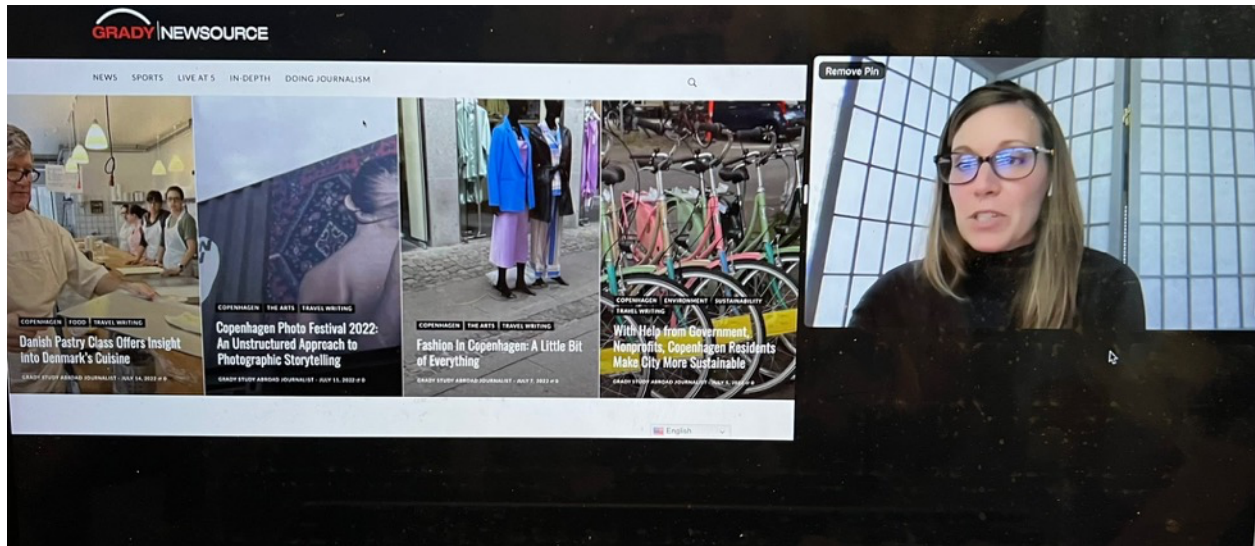


*Previous PhDigital Bootcamp fellow Amanda Bright spoke during the final session of the program to discuss how she has implemented Bootcamp concepts in curriculum, projects and pedagogy.*

## 2022 Themes and Trends in Comments

- It was good to hear many express that the topics were enjoyable and fun, even in light having the sessions online. This is encouraging to hear about technology-based topics. And, many indicated a new-found enthusiasm for this content. Several indicated that the lessons demystified tough technical processes and increased their confidence in using these tools.
- It was also good to hear many articulate the importance of understanding the role of product management and the use of digital language to the future of media and media education.
- Many favorably commented on the techniques in the online environment, particularly in regard to teaching hands-on training in a virtual setting and many complemented the passion and enthusiasm for these topics demonstrated by program faculty.
- Several mentioned how they would share these topics with faculty and use in their courses.
- Most indicated the value of a connection between scholarship and pedagogy around these topics.
- Many liked having the permanent resource of the website and materials for future review.

The PhDigital Bootcamp has completed the funding associated with the two grants. The program has achieved its goals of defining digitally focused doctoral education and developing that brand in the School of Journalism and Mass Communication at Texas State. PhDigital provides insight and data as to the need and demand for improved doctoral programs focused on these topics. The future of PhDigital has not been determined, but the hope is to find ways to begin to support those who have already completed the program, in their teaching and research.