

## **Margaret Ely, Web Producer at The Washington Post and Web Producer for the Public Broadcasting Service in Arlington**

### **Megan Cloherty, Producer, It's All Journalism**

Welcome to It's All Journalism. My name is Megan Cloherty, I'm here today with fellow producers Anna Miars and Michael O'Connell.

And we all know that journalism is changing, but what does that mean to someone coming into the industry right now? Margaret Ely, is a relative newcomer to journalism. A graduate of the Indiana University School of Journalism, she started out as an intern for The Washington Post Metro Section, where she helped curate the regional home page. Now, she is a producer and reporter for The Post's Local Living Section. She's also a web producer for the Public Broadcasting Service in Arlington, Va. Welcome Margaret, thanks for coming.

### **Margaret Ely, Web Producer, The Washington Post**

Hi everybody, thank you for having me.

### **Megan Cloherty, Producer, It's All Journalism**

So, I mean, not to say that you're new, new, cause you went to school, you know, it's not like you're in high school or something. You've been in it a couple of years. Tell us your journey, how you got to The Post from IU.

### **Margaret Ely, Web Producer, The Washington Post**

I was my sports editor in high school for one year. That was it. It was a lot of fun and I've always loved to write. I loved my English classes. I can write an essay in five minutes, 500 words I can knock it out. I really wasn't sure when I got to Indiana, I took Zulu. I've been to South Africa and I took Zulu for a semester. I just had no idea what I wanted to do. But, I took one journalism class and I fell in love with it. We did a current events quiz and I aced it. That makes me sound really silly. I was just like this is so fun and there's so much you can do. You can do broadcast or you can do public relations, Indiana kind of gave you all of that. It just rung with me for some reason.

### **Michael O'Connell, Producer, It's All Journalism**

Was that the intro to journalism class? J-110.

### **Margaret Ely, Web Producer, The Washington Post**

Yes, J-110. It's a class they've been teaching forever.

### **Megan Cloherty, Producer, It's All Journalism**

By the way, Michael went to IU, so he's going to have reminiscent moments.

### **Michael O'Connell, Producer, It's All Journalism**

They'll be a lengthy discussion about college basketball in the middle of this.

My memory of J-110, it was a huge room, lots of students. It really was the weed out class. The people who weren't really really interested in journalism, that thought they wanted to be in journalism, they put them in that class. History of journalism, current events, it was like everything and tests were killer. By the second class, people had made the decision that journalism wasn't for them. But those that were able to muscle through it, that was when got to the news writing and everything else. It was an interesting process. I'm glad to see that hasn't changed too much.

### **Megan Cloherty, Producer, It's All Journalism**

Sorry, we interrupted you. So you found journalism after this one class.

### **Margaret Ely, Web Producer, The Washington Post**

This one class and that was it. The thing about going to a big school like Indiana, and it took me a little while to learn this, was that you have to find your niche. You have to find a place for you. I think what Indiana gave me was a niche. It's a pretty tiny building. Most of your journalism classes are in this building. There's only roughly 800 of us out of 40,000 students.

And on top of that it has really good student media. So I was taking all these classes that I loved and was acing and that could actually be applied. You know you're learning how to write a news lede or you're learning how to edit copy. I think I took like a copyediting class. All things that you can actually, you know, it's not just like taking economics. Which is an interesting class to me, I like econ, but I can't get any real world, I'm not using that for my career right now.

### **Michael O'Connell, Producer, It's All Journalism**

I'm sure the program has changed in many ways since I was there, but I know that I came out of it feeling like it was almost like a trade school. You came out and you had these skills that had been really honed and you were able to look for a specific job. Whereas I know that there are a lot of people who I was in school with, my friends, who were in different majors and they came out of it and were like 'I don't know what I want to do. I can't apply this to anything.' But I always felt like I came out of there with a set of skills that at least I could market. And that's probably true for a lot of the major journalism schools.

### **Megan Cloherty, Producer, It's All Journalism**

I just think it's interesting too that she chose newspaper.

**Margaret Ely, Web Producer, The Washington Post**

Yes, I did take ... newspaper was kind of ... I don't know it's what I did in high school. I liked to write. I never actually took any magazine writing classes. I don't know why. Maybe I wasn't a big magazine reader. You know, I flip through Glamour every once and a while. I read more magazine pieces now. I thought that you could learn the fundamentals from newspaper reporting and use that. I mean I feel like I could go work for a PR firm and still have the skills that I needed. We have really good...and a really good faculty. I had a few teachers who I loved, one who used to be the bureau chief of the AP in Japan.

So anyway, that's how I got started in journalism, at least learning to love journalism. But what I think has gotten to me where I am now is everything I did outside the classroom. And, that's the one thing I would push to anybody who wants to get into almost any field. You can go to school and get A's in all your classes, but I don't think my GPA even matters anymore. I mean I didn't do that well in econ, but does anyone really care? No, I don't know, no. I keep bringing back econ. Econ and stat.

**Michael O'Connell, Producer, It's All Journalism**

I think people want to see what skills you have, but also they want to see your enthusiasm and evidence that you're using those skills in some way. That you have a direction. We've had a lot of guests in who have sort of said that when they look at resumes or are assembling resumes that they want to make sure you have something in there that says this is who I am and this is what I want to do and these are the skills that I have and how I want to use them.

**Anna Miars, Producer, It's All Journalism**

I will say that I came out of college right as newspapers were starting to falter in a big way and that's what I thought I was going to do. That's what I did internships, you know, I was at local papers. And, so I kind of thought that's what I wanted to do, that was going to be my direction and then realized I'm not sure I'm going to have job stability or a pay check that going to work for me. So anyway, I was lost in this, because I didn't have that direction, this is what I want to do. I thought I did and I wanted to go one way, but then when I had to switch gears and do something different, it was a real struggle. It's important to have that, but there are times when you don't and you kind of have to.

**Michael O'Connell, Producer, It's All Journalism**

You know it's weird because, I'm considerably older than the three of you and my memory of what journalism was when I went into it was there were a lot of people who came into it who did go to j-school. They had come into it in odd

ways.

I think it still happens a lot. The podcast we just posted, [John Sullivan](#), you know, he had other jobs he was doing and suddenly he found journalism. He had this other background that he was sort of building off of coming into it.

I work with reporters who 'I like to write, I can't do anything else, so maybe I thought I could become a journalist.' And they've become very good journalists. On the one hand, I don't want to sit here and beat the drum and say that everyone needs to go to j-school. People are different. We've even had people who've come in and said that the core skills, if you can master those and tie those in with other elements of who you are as a human being and your perspective and intelligence and your ability to communicate. You pull all those elements together, that's how you build a journalist, I guess, I don't know.

**Anna Miars, Producer, It's All Journalism**

That was very profound.

**Michael O'Connell, Producer, It's All Journalism**

Thank you.

**Megan Cloherty, Producer, It's All Journalism**

Tell us about The Post internship. I imagine, especially in this market, when you have that internship behind you and you know what you're getting into and you know the people, that has to be incredibly helpful.

**Margaret Ely, Web Producer, The Washington Post**

It was the only internship I wanted. It was the only place I wanted to be here and to work at The Post. Those were my goals post-graduation. It is an internship program that is very, you almost have to be a self-starter. No one holds your hand. They help you out and you do have a level of, if you're an intern, you're not held as accountable, I think, you would be if you were a full-time staff member. I think kind of expect you to make some mistakes. Not that you want to go in thinking I'm going to make a mistake. I mean I always tried to strive to do as best as I could. I think you go and you're expected to be a full-time, I mean they almost treat you as if you're hired.

**Michael O'Connell, Producer, It's All Journalism**

As if you're a professional ...

**Margaret Ely, Web Producer, The Washington Post**

Yes, you are a professional. And a majority of the interns that I was with in my pool of interns as well as the interns that just got here this past week, I looked

at a lot of their bios and a they're like all graduate students. They're all three or four years older than me. They've accomplished so much and I think they're at a point where they're ready to be in the field not still in school and not still trying to figure out what they want to do. So, you're kind of, 'Come on in and work. We need your help. We want you to do the best you can do. We expect that you already know what you're doing.'

And they do in fact hire interns. I'm very fortunate that I was hired. Two other, my roommate, actually, has a contract she works as a designer, and another one of my friends is an overnight producer. He was an intern. They sometimes have interns come back once or twice and then they get hired if they really like that person. One more summer, you've got one more year of school then come back and work. It is a lot of fun to intern there. It's also a lot of work. It almost became, all summer it was my life, all I wanted to do was be at work.

### **Megan Cloherty, Producer, It's All Journalism**

So, it prepared you for the job you have now? Tell us what you do now for The Post.

### **Margaret Ely, Web Producer, The Washington Post**

It's interesting, you can be a full-time reporter. You can be a copy editor. You can be what I am, which is a Web producer. I'd almost say it's, you kind of have to be able to do a little bit of everything to be a producer. I do report and get to write stories for our community news section as well as Local Living. I'm the person that kind of helps make things on our website look the way they do. I build photo galleries. We're experimenting with different templates.

Everyone kind of knows, have you seen Snowfall for the New York Times, how to build pages that look like that. I'm working on a video series with our gardening columnist. I'm probably going to shoot the videos. I don't know if they'll let me necessarily produce them or edit them, but I'm going to go shoot the raw footage. And that all is encompassed as a Web producer.

If you work for different desks ... when I was working as a web producing intern, I was helping run The Post Local's Twitter account. That kind of falls under that as well. So, social media, video, almost everything. The only I don't really do is edit. I'm not reading anybody else's copy. I do read proofs of pages, because I do stuff that does go on print. My job used to be an aid position for Local Living, so I do also answer phones. I check the mail. I curate. We have a Local Living drop box. So if you send us a press release I'm the one who gets all of them and send them out to the right people. My day has daily tasks as well as projects of my own that I'm working on, like the video series is something I want to do.

**Megan Cloherty, Producer, It's All Journalism**

And, House Calls? Tell us about House Calls.

**Margaret Ely, Web Producer, The Washington Post**

[House Calls](#) is really a lot of fun. It sounds really silly. It's almost one of my favorite things to do, which some people would think is funny. It is a weekly series every Thursday when Local Living comes out. We have a designer paired with a homeowner who wants a different room in their house redone. The designer does it for free. There's no obligation to pay the designer. We don't pay the designer. They work with me and the homeowner to come up with a budget, and the different furniture and we have different requirements. You have to pick out for a splurge and a save. So let's say the homeowner wants a new couch. You have to find one that's really expensive and then one that's more within their budget that are kind of similar. We feature that. We have an illustrator who illustrates what it's going to end up looking like, which is really cool. Julius [Goyanko] is great. His illustrations are beautiful. I believe they're watercolor.

I'm the kind of person that runs the train. I have to 'OK, would you like' ... I might get a request for a room. I really need my living room to look different. And then I'll find a designer that will pair with the homeowner and I'll put all of it together. We'll send out a photographer to take photos.

I think what it has taught me is you look at it and it doesn't seem that complicated. But let's say, we get three different living rooms and each living room ends up having the designer pick blue walls. I can't write every single week, 'paint the walls blue.' Every single week, I have to come up with a different way of making ... of writing about how the designer wants the room to look. So all the little blurbs and stuff come from me.

When you do something routine, it really strengthens your writing because you can't be boring every single week. You can't say paint the walls blue. It has to be why did you pick this color and how do I convey that to the readers.

People are so devoted to House Calls. People love it, it's one of their favorite things. If you're a suburban mom in this area, you probably like to look at House Calls. It's really fun. I don't get as many requests as I would like for rooms. I think maybe people think we're not going to answer their emails, but if people want to email me about any kind of room design we're looking for it. It's really fun.

**Michael O'Connell, Producer, It's All Journalism**

It's a very TLC type of activity.

**Margaret Ely, Web Producer, The Washington Post**

It really is.

**Michael O'Connell, Producer, It's All Journalism**

What I like about it is the way it's presented. It's not just a text story or a few pictures. You break it up and it's really very accessible. It takes advantage of some of the strengths of the Web. It's not heavy, it's very light. It's very readable, interesting and entertaining.

**Megan Cloherty, Producer, It's All Journalism**

But the art is incredibly important it. It's a huge part of it, right? How important is it to keep that visual aspect of reporting in what you do?

**Margaret Ely, Web Producer, The Washington Post**

Julius, our illustrator, as well as our photographer ... home and garden is very visually appealing. We can talk about how to design a kitchen or what items to use, but if you don't have photos to go along it means nothing.

One of my goals right now is, you know I've been kind of getting into the swing of things since I just started a few months ago, and now what I want to do is make it more accessible on the Web. As a Web producer that's kind of my primary goal. I have fantastic editors, I love my supervisor. They're very focused on our print product, which makes a lot of sense. And I think they had me come in to say 'OK, I have these skills and I know how to use our website and content management system and I want to find a way to make it more presentable online. Things are just changing ... big photos ... people love website now ... Pinterest, people love it, our readers love Pinterest. It's just visual, there's not a lot of text. It's the beautiful photos that we have.

**Megan Cloherty, Producer, It's All Journalism**

You mean from a design perspective you wanted to change it?

**Margaret Ely, Web Producer, The Washington Post**

A little bit. I think if you find House Calls in print, it's beautifully laid out, it looks really nice. It doesn't translate as well right now on our website. I'm trying to figure out, OK, how can we use the system that we have to make it just look ... the fundamentals of it won't change ... I think the photos need to be bigger. And this is all based on the system that we have at The Post and how we can present stuff. We've been working with WordPress. We have our own content management system. Because things are moving so quickly right now with the Web, we have these new tools and different ways of presenting things.

I don't know if anyone has seen, we just came out with our spring dining guide. It's this beautiful package. If you want to look at food, it's beautiful.

**Michael O'Connell, Producer, It's All Journalism**

Food porn.

**Margaret Ely, Web Producer, The Washington Post**

Exactly. I kind of want to be able to do that with House Calls every week. If you look at the [Dining Guide](#), that was a labor of love. It was a big project and I don't have the time or the resources to do something like that every week. So you have to find a baby version of that and I'm getting there. I'm excited about it.

**Michael O'Connell, Producer, It's All Journalism**

Are these types of feature stories really kind of helped to fill in important areas in journalism. Sometimes we get caught up in 'We've gotta cover the big news story,' but you know people come to newspapers and news sites for different things. And quite a lot of people come for the features and pretty pictures and things to look at. So there's a whole strategy and approach to how you do it. Who do you envision as your reader when you're putting this stuff together?

**Margaret Ely, Web Producer, The Washington Post**

I envision my mom. It's an audience that wants this content and they are out there. A majority of people that come to our website are people that work for the government. It's actually our number one readership, I think. They login, they get free access. We have a pay wall coming and they're not going to have to pay for it because they are our target audience.

**Megan Cloherty, Producer, It's All Journalism**

I may have made a face.

**Michael O'Connell, Producer, It's All Journalism**

You may have.

**Megan Cloherty, Producer, It's All Journalism**

I may have made a face.

**Margaret Ely, Web Producer, The Washington Post**

It's quite all right. It's tough.

**Megan Cloherty, Producer, It's All Journalism**

Remembering who your reader is and pulling them in and connecting with them, that's part of ... we say features and they're light, but that's a huge part of

getting your readers to come visit you everyday and getting your clicks.

### **Margaret Ely, Web Producer, The Washington Post**

Yes. We have a lot more, and this is from someone who is new in the industry, we do have a lot of people who, I don't think even look at House Calls online. They really do love when Local Living comes out on Thursday. It was the same at the student newspaper at Indiana. It had a weekend section come out on Thursdays. Same situation. That was thing people at school really wanted to pick up and look at. And I know a lot of people in this area really want to pick up Local Living on Thursdays. I'm told all the time that House Calls is their favorite thing to look at.

### **Michael O'Connell, Producer, It's All Journalism**

So you're kind of at the crux, the heart of what, what The Post is dealing with this at this point. The point where the Web and print are intersecting and trying to figure out that formula. How much effort do we put into our Web content as opposed to how much do we put into print content. Trying to deal with a local audience that only consumes the local paper, but an international audience, which consumes the politics and the other stuff and could care less about somebody decorating their house in Adams Morgan.

### **Margaret Ely, Web Producer, The Washington Post**

It's very true, very true. I think it's a, just from working in the Metro Section and now for Local Living, I have really been only on the local side. And the one thing that I stress, at least when I talk to people about it, is that we don't really print outside of this area. The Post, you can't buy The Washington Post in New York City. Our local audience, you know if I want to know what restaurant to eat at, I'm not going to check The New York Times, I'm going to check The Washington Post, because we're here. Also I sit right next to the desk where everyone is picking all the good restaurants, so that's me. We can't forget to serve those people.

When I was an intern and I was helping run the regional home page, we were really trying to make sure that if a local reader was coming in and wanted ... the number one thing people always click on is a headline with the word snow in it. People want to know the weather in this area. I mean, snow really gets people going. Snow and food and, I've really learned how to see what people in our area wanted to look at. As opposed to people wanting to come in just and read about politics. And that's another area we serve really, really well. It is hard when you don't have the resources or have less resources than we used to try to cover both well.

### **Megan Cloherty, Producer, It's All Journalism**

Just to take a step back here, when Margaret first came in, we were talking about your young, you're just getting into the business. And she was like, 'You know, I don't really know what I want to do.'

**Margaret Ely, Web Producer, The Washington Post**

This is true.

**Megan Cloherty, Producer, It's All Journalism**

Which is OK, because you are young. But, pulling back from where you are right now because I know you just started this job and it's kind of crazy, are you learning more about what your preferences are? In the day-to-day about where you want to be? I mean the grind gets to you.

**Margaret Ely, Web Producer, The Washington Post**

You know I'm lucky because ... the grind did get to me for a little while. When you come in and you have to learn, I want to be good at the tasks I was told I would have to do every single week. House Calls is something I do every single week. And so my goal is to always make deadline, to always make sure it's the best it can be.

But then, what I've learned over the years and learned just from talking to other people and having other internships is that, if you do the day-to-day stuff you can really bored and complacent. You have to set these other goals for yourself, other projects. Like the video project, that's one of them. I don't know if I necessarily know what I want to do coverage-wise. Whether I'd like to do international reporting or whether I'd like to do politics, but I know I want to stay in journalism. I'll read a really, really good story written in any magazine, the New Yorker, GQ, I just read a really good story in GQ. I read this story and it hooks me and it's so good. I'm like I have to do this. I'm renewed and know I really need to report. I do get to report for the Community News Section, so I'm still writing, which is so fun.

**Megan Cloherty, Producer, It's All Journalism**

What's interesting about you're doing I think is you're not starting with being proficient specifically in one medium.

**Margaret Ely, Web Producer, The Washington Post**

Yes.

**Megan Cloherty, Producer, It's All Journalism**

You're starting doing six different things at once. So, you could go off on any of those or you could be an expert in all of those things at once. It's kind of a cool place to be in.

**Margaret Ely, Web Producer, The Washington Post**

It is. The opportunities have being a Web producer are really fun. The Post, and I think a lot of newspapers are probably like this, I'm still in touch with everyone on the Metro Section, I've talked the editor if I have a story I want to pitch to them. If you're a reporter you're offered, I believe, it's six weeks, that seems like a lot, but I think it's six weeks reporting stints aboard if you want to go. You could be an education reporter and you want to take six weeks and go somewhere and report, they'll help you do that. When you work at an organization like The Post, or a bigger organization, you have the opportunity to jump around and do what you want. I sincerely doubt they'd give me a camera and let me shoot. We're not at that point yet. They do have a standard for their photography. But what's so beautiful about the Web too, you know, is if I want to shoot a video column with our gardening columnist they're going to let me do that. I'm so lucky. It's so fun.

**Michael O'Connell, Producer, It's All Journalism**

Can you envision yourself going into a job in the future where you're just in print?

**Megan Cloherty, Producer, It's All Journalism**

Are there are jobs anymore where you're just in print, Michael?

**Margaret Ely, Web Producer, The Washington Post**

I doubt it. I foresee a digital-only future.

**Michael O'Connell, Producer, It's All Journalism**

You do?

**Margaret Ely, Web Producer, The Washington Post**

My favorite piece of electronics that I own is a iPad, I love my iPad. I read more now that I own an iPad, more than I ever read before. It's not that I don't like books. You know some people who love hardcover or softcover books, love holding the book. I don't mind it. You can have so much material on an iPad to be able to look at. If it's presented beautifully and easy to read, you can just consume so much. I love reading and I read a lot and I don't foresee print newspaper ... that doesn't mean that the written word is going away. To me that's where the balance is. How do you transition to this digital-only future where you're also able to make money to pay the journalists to produce this work.

**Michael O'Connell, Producer, It's All Journalism**

People still want to read.

**Margaret Ely, Web Producer, The Washington Post**

People want to read, yeah. I want to read. I love reading, but does that mean we'll be able to produce a physical newspaper every single day? I doubt it. I sincerely doubt 10–20 years from now.

**Michael O'Connell, Producer, It's All Journalism**

It's something that we've talked to a couple of people about that, what the future of that will be, trying to figure out how that will occur. Eventually there will be people who will only have read news on an their iPad or iPhone or whatever. They're not going to miss the paper. We'll get to that point at some point.

**Anna Miars, Producer, It's All Journalism**

I saw this week on Twitter, I'm not sure who it was, but their son asked them about a browser. What's a browser. Because he'd always just used the Internet, so the idea of FireFox and Internet Explorer. But it's the Internet, what is a browser? It's getting to that point where kids aren't even going to realize what was, some of this terminology, mediums, because they're so entrenched in it. They don't even realize that there's this proliferation and that there only used to be one, like it always used to be AOL and dial up.

**Margaret Ely, Web Producer, The Washington Post**

And that's it.

**Anna Miars, Producer, It's All Journalism**

And now there are choices. They don't even realize there are choices ...

**Megan Cloherty, Producer, It's All Journalism**

Because that's just how it's always been.

**Michael O'Connell, Producer, It's All Journalism**

Let's take a moment and imagine that future, where we don't have to have these arguments about print and the death of newspapers.

**Anna Miars, Producer, It's All Journalism**

And, if you think about it. Paper, trees, eventually that as physical resource. It's not going to make sense for us.

**Michael O'Connell, Producer, It's All Journalism**

Or just the whole distribution network is insane.

**Margaret Ely, Web Producer, The Washington Post**

That's what it is, really.

**Michael O'Connell, Producer, It's All Journalism**

The cost of it all. As it shrinks and creates higher prices for newsprint, the higher costs of distribution are just going to price it out. I think, we had [Tiffany Shackelford](#) of the Association of Alternative News Media, and one of the things she was talking about is that smaller newspapers are still thriving. At the street level there are still people that want sort of stuff. That want to be able get a paper that's dedicated to nightlife and local bands and things. I personally don't think that there's going to a blanket ... someone is going to go around and arrest all the printers and stop printing. I think there will be a form of print, but it's not going to be our primary form of getting news.

**Megan Cloherty, Producer, It's All Journalism**

It's interesting too, how they're starting to change curriculums, they've been changing them for a long time. But basically phasing that out so that everyone's digital. You had that IU, right? Was digital part of your education that you knew you needed to be proficient in?

**Michael O'Connell, Producer, It's All Journalism**

Let me rephrase that for you. You went into a newspaper track. When they were saying you're in a newspaper track, were they also saying that also means Web? That it's also this and that?

**Margaret Ely, Web Producer, The Washington Post**

I don't know who told me or how I figured it out, but I realized probably junior year of college that as much as I loved newspapers and I loved reporting and I love writing. I realized that I needed to build a set of skills that were Web based. I need to learn what SEO [search engine optimization] means, I need to learn how to code. I need to do Web design. Not to replace my newspaper training, but to supplement. I think if anyone wants to succeed in this industry right now and wants to get a job, they need have those things. You need to have a website, you need to know how to code, just basic code. It depends on what you want to do, I think. That was something I kind of figured out on my own independently. I think journalism schools need to be better about integrating with informatics and integrating with Web design. I have friends who are fantastic photographers and fantastic print designers, but they don't really know how to design a Web page. And if we're on a digital-only track, which I think we are, moving into, phasing out print paper, how are those people going to translate that to a new job?

**Michael O'Connell, Producer, It's All Journalism**

And when people are only hiring those people?

**Margaret Ely, Web Producer, The Washington Post**

Exactly.

**Megan Cloherty, Producer, It's All Journalism**

When you were looking for jobs, how important was that, that you had those skills?

**Margaret Ely, Web Producer, The Washington Post**

Very. It's silly because I was really only looking for a job at The Post. But I think, I knew that even when I was applying for their internship program, you can apply to be a reporting intern, you can apply to be a Web producing intern, you can apply to be a copy editor and I chose Web producer, because I knew I kind of had the skills and also that that is more of a growing field as opposed to reporting, straight reporting.

Like I said, what I love about my job is that I can also report. It's that it's necessarily on the side, it's part of my entire job. I also get to report. I'm so lucky that I figured out, at least I have a position that I'm able to do that. Some people are like 'I'm going to do newspapers and I only want to be a reporter.' I don't really understand the Web, I don't want a Twitter. I'm like you have to have those things at this point. You have to.

**Michael O'Connell, Producer, It's All Journalism**

I think the time of being one thing is sort of passed. And we're talking in the week where, and I don't want to go into this whole discussion, but the Chicago newspaper laid off its entire photo staff. Which to anybody who is a journalist, that's shocking.

**Megan Cloherty, Producer, It's All Journalism**

It makes you take pause.

**Michael O'Connell, Producer, It's All Journalism**

And my sympathies are with them and with photojournalists in general. They need to do what reporters and other people in media are doing, which is 'How can I take the skills that I have and translate that into the online environment?'

**Margaret Ely, Web Producer, The Washington Post**

This might sound crazy, but having been out school for a year, but there are so many advance, things move so quick that I might need to go back. Not back to school, but I always feel like I need to constantly be learning. You cannot become complacent. I do see people at The Post that have been in the industry for a while and they don't have a Twitter or they don't understand what

WordPress is, and that's OK, but for someone or for me, I've always been on the cusp of technology and I want to keep up. That's the only way that I'm going to be successful. I want to go back and freshen up my coding skills. I know how to edit video and audio, but I bet the software has changed since I took a class in school. I probably need to get back in there and learn the whole new ... I mean Photoshop and Adobe releases stuff every single year. It is a little daunting, but it's something that I think is important for my career and something I need to do.

**Michael O'Connell, Producer, It's All Journalism**

That's just wise. When I was working at The Connection Newspapers, when I first got there, they were laying out papers on boards with wax. Cutting up text and putting it on layouts. Then they moved to strictly building pages on the computer. And there were people who were in our shop who, the only skills they had were cutting and pasting. It's a very tragic example to give, the industry changes under you. It behooves you to get on top of that and change with it.

**Margaret Ely, Web Producer, The Washington Post**

My friends say I don't slow down. But I don't know how else you keep up in this industry.

**Michael O'Connell, Producer, It's All Journalism**

It's good that you're young because you have that energy.

**Margaret Ely, Web Producer, The Washington Post**

I'm trying.

**Megan Cloherty, Producer, It's All Journalism**

When you said you were seeking out independently where to educate yourself on certain things, did you have a place that you went specifically? Or did you just pick brains?

**Margaret Ely, Web Producer, The Washington Post**

Sort of. PBS Interactive where I had an internship my junior year was not in any way, and I have to explain this to people sometimes because it gets a little confusing, I'll say I interned at PBS and you know you automatically think the News Hour. But I was PBS headquarters and they're a broadcast network. I was working with their SEO expert, learning how and helping to build these Web pages and helping to maximize Web traffic. None of that was, there was no hard news. I was at my desk from 9 to 5. It was a very normal ... but it was a way to kind of understand the Internet and get myself out of journalism for a little while and do that and build those skills, which I think helps to supplement

what I do now. A lot of that was learning how to code, I did some of that in a class and also on my own online. [Codecademy](#), [W3School](#), I've poked around that website all the time. I still feel like I only know the bare bones and that there's more that I could learn.

### **Megan Cloherty, Producer, It's All Journalism**

I think a lot of people want to brush up on those skills, but they don't want to go back to grad school or go to grad school. I think there's a way you can, you know, do little pickings if you will, like [Lynda.com](#), something like that.

### **Michael O'Connell, Producer, It's All Journalism**

Also, some people have that fear of "Oh my God, I've got to learn to code, I've got learn all these programs," but that's not it all. There are some very basic skills that if you just have those. I think about what I use, how much HTML I use everyday. That's not backbreaking work, but you have to learn it and understand the logic behind it, which is real thing. You've got to work on the thinking with these new skills so that you can apply them and use them to tell stories.

### **Margaret Ely, Web Producer, The Washington Post**

I'm fascinated by [MOOCs](#), the big open massive online courses. I'm intrigued by them because I think that could be a really good place to learn those skills. But I think a lot of people have a hard time with accountability and not having ... I'm one of those people that likes deadlines and needs deadlines, so I think at least for myself and anyone going forward that really wants to learn how to code, it might almost behoove you to find a course where you're paying. Or you have someone saying you have to finish this stuff by a certain time. That's me personally, I know other people operate in different ways. I know going forward if I'm going to brush up on some skills, I need to do something where I have, or I'm graded or have deadlines. That will help me a lot.

### **Michael O'Connell, Producer, It's All Journalism**

So, where do you see yourself going at this point? Five or 10 years from now?

### **Margaret Ely, Web Producer, The Washington Post**

The big question.

### **Michael O'Connell, Producer, It's All Journalism**

Sounds like we're hiring you. So, where do you see yourself in the short term?

### **Margaret Ely, Web Producer, The Washington Post**

I definitely want to do some more reporting. I do love what I do, but, you know, there's nothing like just going and talking to people. Then sitting down in front

of a computer and being like 'I don't know how to write this first sentence.' Oh it's the worst. That nut graph or your lede. But once you figure it out, it feels so good. And I love that feeling. Definitely getting to a point where I'm doing that full-time. I think you want to do that full-time, but also continue to do some of the stuff I'm doing now, where I'm shooting video or I'm contributing in some other way as opposed to just reporting. I think a big organization like The Post can let you do that, but I don't know if I'll be at The Post 10 to 15 years from now.

I really, really love Twitter also. It's kind of random. If I'm working for Twitter or working for an organization as a social media editor. I think could be really fun. But that's all changing as well. Who knows, everyone thought Facebook ... Facebook I think personally isn't as big of a thing as I think it used to be five to 10 years from now. So who knows what Twitter will be five to 10 years from now. We'll just have to see.

**Michael O'Connell, Producer, It's All Journalism**

What is it you like about Twitter?

**Margaret Ely, Web Producer, The Washington Post**

You can really just connect with people. Anybody.

**Michael O'Connell, Producer, It's All Journalism**

Like you and me. We connected that way.

**Margaret Ely, Web Producer, The Washington Post**

It's true. And on top of that, it is a very, very dangerous, but also very good with breaking news. You can get things wrong and you can just delete a tweet if it's incorrect. I think that it lingers, you know. People can make mistakes. When things happen, breaking news, the first place I look is Twitter. You just can get so much information. As a reporter or as a journalist, I like things in small doses. I don't need to read a big long paragraph. This is what's going on. It's very quick and easy. I have reliable sources that I follow that I get a lot of fun information from, breaking news from. It's a great place, to not only, promote your own work, but also your organization's work. Everything about it.

**Michael O'Connell, Producer, It's All Journalism**

How do you do that? How do you promote your work? Do you have a strategy, going in, about how you use Twitter?

**Megan Cloherty, Producer, It's All Journalism**

Because you can't do that all the time. I think some people only use Twitter to promote their work. Can you talk about that a little bit.

**Margaret Ely, Web Producer, The Washington Post**

I like to put, I'll put a call out 'I wrote this article,' 'my friend wrote this article.' I think you can only have so much impact in 140 characters and also not all of your followers are going to see that. I do know, this is just random Twitter knowledge, but traffic is up in the morning and not as much at night. So you want to time it with that. People use Twitter depending on not only what they're doing, but who they're working for. I have friends that love Twitter, but they're not working for a news organization, so they're not tweeting about news, they're just tweeting about a funny article they wrote or they take a picture of what their food. And then I have friends, other friends who are working in the media, who are tweeting breaking news. They're either in charge of an account or I have a friend that helps run The Post's sports account. Figuring out, 'OK, we've got all these different columnists who have written different things, we have to tag them in all of these different tweets.'

**Michael O'Connell, Producer, It's All Journalism**

All the work of Twitter.

**Margaret Ely, Web Producer, The Washington Post**

Yeah, it's work, but it's also fun work. I just enjoy it. I loved, when the derecho happened, we got hit by a big storm back last June. It was about a year ago.

**Michael O'Connell, Producer, It's All Journalism**

Washington, D.C., can't just have rain, we have to have a derecho.

**Margaret Ely, Web Producer, The Washington Post**

They had to have a derecho, which I'd never heard of until ... I remember coming into The Post that Saturday after it happened and the newsroom was just a buzz. And the one thing I asked was, can I help out with Twitter. It's just one thing, if you can provide your readers with good content during a time like that, when people might not have power, but they have their cell phones. You can say this and this, you'll build a loyal following. I helped out with it. I had only been at The Post for two or three weeks. At that point they didn't trust me with anything super important. They didn't and that's fine. It was two or three weeks. I don't know where I am.

**Michael O'Connell, Producer, It's All Journalism**

Don't touch anything.

**Margaret Ely, Web Producer, The Washington Post**

Don't touch anything. But I was allowed to help out with the Twitter account. That's when I learned that this can be really helpful and a really good resource

for people at time like this.

### **Michael O'Connell, Producer, It's All Journalism**

One of the things I've found recently, you know I come in and out of Twitter. I had a really great experience last week. If you follow a bunch of reporters, and they promote their work and they share stories and they talk about breaking news. But if you follow them through the week, you know there are times when they're not on the job and they post there really interesting kinds of things, experiences that they have.

There was this discussion going on last week, it was all based on this video that was on the Wall Street Journal's website. The biking. They had an editor from the Wall Street Journal, and it was sort of presented as this innocuous interview. But this woman who was the editor talked about how the bike share program in New York was all part of some totalitarian strategy of the local administration. And so, all of these journalists are going back and forth about this.

Then a few days later when this whole big PRISM thing broke. All the journalists were panicking about 'Oh my God, we're being spied on by the government,' somebody posted 'The government spying on us is one thing, but people are riding bikes in New York.' Just sort of this rolling dialogue that goes on. Not just not part of promoting stories, but also just promoting just people sharing context. It's fun.

### **Margaret Ely, Web Producer, The Washington Post**

For a little while I changed my strategy, not only how I tweet, not only am I with an organization that is news organization, and it's my personal belief, but if you affiliate yourself with an organization you walk a fine line of what you can say on Twitter and what you can't. I think if you're just a robot, it's no fun. You don't want to get on Twitter, and be like 'It's raining right now, here's the forecast.' That's what I love about Twitter too is that you really can kind of connect with people on Twitter. Let's say you're a reporter at The Post, let's say you're out in Idaho and you tweet at someone, you can...

### **Michael O'Connell, Producer, It's All Journalism**

Here's picture of a flower or...

### **Margaret Ely, Web Producer, The Washington Post**

You know if you get a dialogue going it can be fun and it can humanize people while still remaining professional. I love it for that reason.

### **Michael O'Connell, Producer, It's All Journalism**

We wrap up these things, we try to ask people what they think, where they think

journalism is heading. What the big question is. Where do you think journalism is heading? What is your kind of hopes and thoughts about things moving forward?

**Margaret Ely, Web Producer, The Washington Post**

I know I had mentioned we're on a digital-only track, but that people still want to read. I think people still want to consume news and they want reliable news. What I am seeing is a lot of organizations and a lot of different places that are providing you with content, there's so many that I foresee some of them caving. Not only some of the more traditional news organizations, but just in general. And maybe this is maybe from being on Twitter so much, there are just so many places that are like 'We bring you the news for this, whatever.'

I foresee the ones that really capture people in a good way winning out and being here 10 years from now. The others kind of saying 'We tried this. This was something fun, it was cool, but we can sustain this.'

But I do foresee print newspapers, the actual physical print being gone. And I know that's why they're experimenting paywalls, and iPad apps, and with mobile. Mobile, 90 percent of people have cell phones in the United States now? I mean everyone is going to have a cell phone. Ninety actually seems pretty good.

**Michael O'Connell, Producer, It's All Journalism**

Ninety sounds pretty good...

**Margaret Ely, Web Producer, The Washington Post**

It's actually sounds a little low ...

**Michael O'Connell, Producer, It's All Journalism**

These kindergartners with cell phones...

**Margaret Ely, Web Producer, The Washington Post**

Yeah, and also video. Video right now is growing so rapidly. We've had YouTube since I was a kid. YouTube's fun. But The Post is now investing a 24-hour video channel. And that's because video is growing. I definitely see that being a very important part of news. Online video.

**Megan Cloherty, Producer, It's All Journalism**

All right. Margaret, thank you very much for joining us and coming in. Tell us where our listeners can find your work and find you online.

**Margaret Ely, Web Producer, The Washington Post**

Yes, well The Washington Post, you can just search for [my name](#). Or you can follow me on Twitter, I do love Twitter. My handle is [@Mcely](#).

**Michael O'Connell, Producer, It's All Journalism**

Well, thank you for coming in, this has been great.

**Margaret Ely, Web Producer, The Washington Post**

Thanks guys.