

# AEJMC Digital Curriculum Survey and Mass Communication Position Analysis

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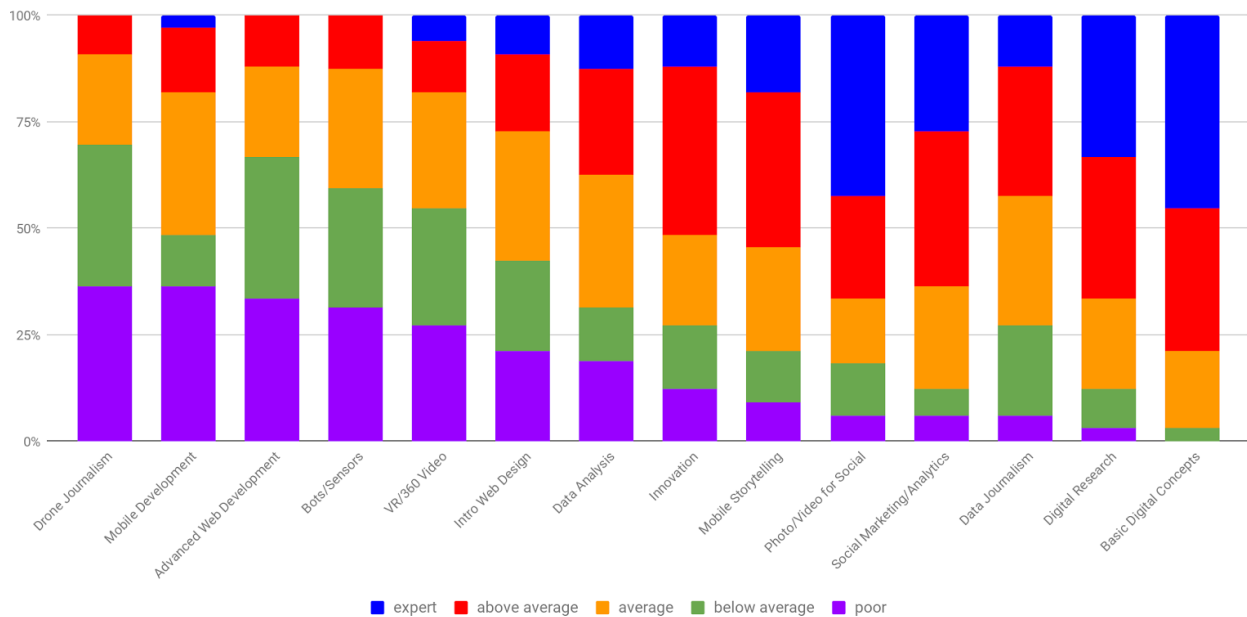
Texas State University

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At AEJMC, I distributed an online survey to doctoral students and recent graduates to assess their ability to teach certain digital topics and the level to which they felt their programs prepared them to teach digital topics. A total of 33 respondents met the criteria of being a current doctoral student or having recently graduated from a doctoral program (since 2012).

## Self-Assessed Ability to Teach Digital Topics

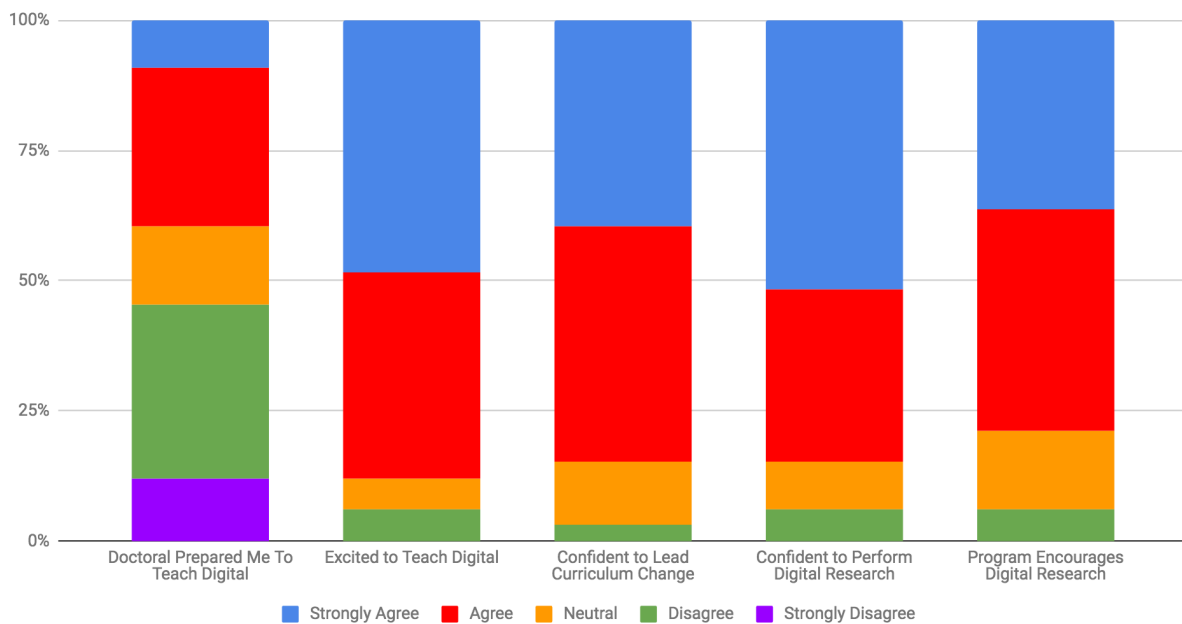
The first chart shows a range of different digital topics that should be present in a modern curriculum. The results show that there are many topics in which the respondents felt they had a weak ability to teach. They were least prepared to teach Advanced Web Development, Drone Journalism, Mobile Development, Bots/ Sensor and VR/360 Video topics. They were most prepared to teach Basic Digital Concepts, Digital Research, Photos/Video for Social Media and Social Marketing/Analytics.



## Attitudes Toward Digital Preparation, Teaching and Research

A second series of statements assessed the level to which respondents agreed that their doctoral program prepared them to teach digital concepts, their enthusiasm for the topics, their ability to lead curriculum change in the future and the role and confidence of performing digital research.

The results showed a clear disconnect in how well respondents felt their doctoral programs had prepared them and their enthusiasm to teach digital concepts. 45.5% disagreed or strongly disagree with the statement “My doctoral program prepared me to teach digital topics.” Another 15% felt neutral about the statement. But 88% indicated that they were enthusiastic to teach these topics. Other responses are indicated in the chart below.



I also held a pre-conference at AEJMC on Bringing Digital Into the Curriculum. There was a good deal of discussion around the challenges of finding faculty to move into innovative areas. I provided the attached Digital Curriculum Inventory, and many felt that their programs were deficient in most of these areas. I hope this tool will help drive discussions with administration in programs throughout the country.

## AEJMC Job Hub Position Descriptions

I analyzed the current positions on the AEJMC Job Hub (<http://www.aejmc.org/jobads/>) They date from June 21- Aug. 25, 2017. This includes 57 positions for roles in Journalism, Mass Communication, Communication and other departments. I identified mentions of both digital concepts and skills, as well as mentions of health and science communication from the job descriptions, qualifications and requirements. I did not include the paragraphs where schools described their existing competencies or the general university descriptions.

Of the positions that indicate a PhD as required or preferred, 77.8% mention a digital skills or concept. Even three of the director/chair/dean positions specifically mentioned digital skills or concepts.

Nine descriptions mentioned health or science communication. Of those nine, six also mention digital skills or concepts.

	<b>% mentioning digital</b>
57 total positions	71.9% (41 mentioned digital)
48 for teaching positions (assistant, associate, full, lecturer - removes positions descriptions for deans, directors and chairs)	79.2% (38 mentioned digital)
45 required/preferred phd (all 3 that did not require phd mentioned digital)	77.8% (35 mentioned digital)
9 for chairs, directors, deans	33.3% (3 mentioned digital)
9 mentioned health or science comm	66.6% (6 mentioned digital)

## Key Phrases Used in Job Ads Associated with Digital

The following are examples of phrases used in AEJMC position descriptions associated with digital. They range from phrases associated with multimedia editing and social media to game studies, virtual reality, analytics and entrepreneurship. Several were specific about the candidate's ability to lead students in new concepts and drive change in the curriculum.

- "audience analysis and emerging technologies"
- "background and experience with social media"
- "courses could include multimedia reporting for journalism, multimedia investigative journalism, multimedia journalism for social change"
- "data/analytics"
- "cross-platform journalism"
- "digital journalism"
- "digital marketing communication, digital strategy"
- "digital/social media, digital media theories in diverse cultures"
- "emerging media"
- "entrepreneurial sense, new forms of storytelling to engage audiences, digital-savvy health and medical journalist, interactive, immersive and multi-platform media formats"
- "ideal candidates will have expertise in digital"
- "in game studies and related issues for digital media and society, Related developments in mobile applications, virtual reality, and augmented reality"
- "multimedia journalism, data journalism, or emerging technologies"
- "new and emerging media, media entrepreneurship"
- "online and social media storytelling"
- "social media analytics"
- "social media have transformed communication, Social media analysts and digital strategists use data to track issues, gain consumer insights, social media strategy, data analytics"
- "steering our students across the frontier of our digital future, with respect to the changes and uncertainties digital media present for the news industry"
- "teaching social media, large-scale data analytics"
- "ideal candidate is one who can inspire a new generation of storytellers in our classrooms, and has the skills to prepare them for a shifting media and cultural landscape"
- "fluency in HTML5, CSS3, JavaScript, version control tools"
- "experience working with common frameworks and libraries for user interaction, web design and development, data visualization and cartography"

The trends identified here clearly highlight a need for increased and improved exposure in doctoral programs to a range of digital concepts and topics. Doctoral students are indicating that they are not receiving training in this area and a majority of job descriptions are emphasizing digital skills and concepts.

A doctoral program that emphasizes digital skills and concepts across traditional communication disciplines (journalism, advertising and public relations), as well as emerging roles in technology fields will be in high demand. There is an opportunity to re-envision doctoral education to prepare the hybrid, digital scholar/educator of the future, to prepare one to stay on the cutting edge of communication technology, incorporate into a meaningful research agenda and to enhance curriculum to reflect the dynamic environment.

(<http://www.niemanlab.org/2016/12/preparing-the-digital-educator-scholar-hybrid/>).

We have received approval and funding in the amount of \$75,000 in the Media Innovation Lab to host the first Ph.Digital Bootcamp in Spring 2018. This program will allow us to train future faculty and to assess new curriculum strategies around preparing them for the rapidly changing requirements of the field. This will establish Texas State as a leader and innovator in curriculum and doctoral preparation.