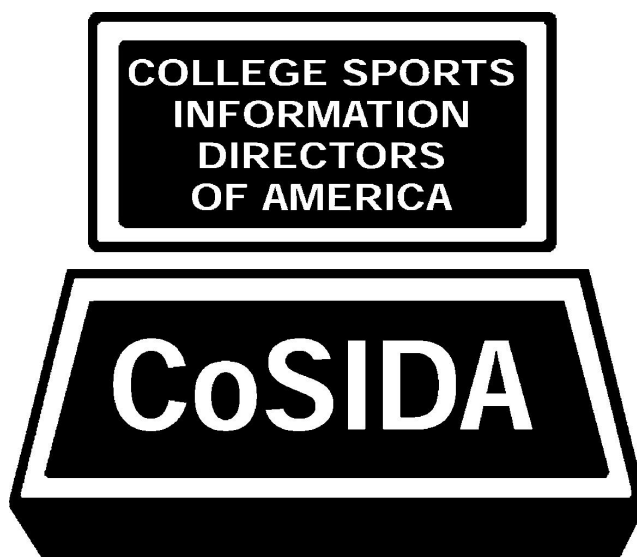


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SEPTEMBER 25, 2006

A banner for NexTag's mortgage rate comparison tool. It features a yellow background with green dollar bills falling. The text "COMPARE Mortgage Rates for September 25, 2006" is prominently displayed. Below this, there are three dropdown menus: "30 Year Fixed", "Choose State", and "Refinance". The NexTag logo is in the bottom right corner, with a small copyright notice "©2005-06 NexTag, Inc." below it.

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TIME

FROM THE MAGAZINE

Sunday, Sep. 24, 2006

Do Newspapers Have a Future?

Quarreling about staff cuts, the old medium is missing the bigger questions

By MICHAEL KINSLEY

It seems hopeless. How can the newspaper industry survive the Internet? On the one hand, newspapers are expected to supply their content free on the Web. On the other hand, their most profitable advertising--classifieds--is being lost to sites like Craigslist. And display advertising is close behind. Meanwhile, there is the blog terror: people are getting their understanding of the world from random lunatics riffing in their underwear, rather than professional journalists with standards and passports.

Ten years ago, it was a challenge for websites to get people to spend time for pleasure in front of a computer screen. "Your problem will be solved actuarially," a computer-sciences professor assured a group of Web pioneers, and sure enough, it was. Now the problem is to get people under 50 or so to pick up a newspaper. Damp or encased in plastic bags, or both, and planted in the bushes outside where it's cold, full of news that is cold too because it has been sitting around for hours, the home-delivered newspaper is an archaic object. Who needs it? You can sit down at your laptop and enjoy that same newspaper or any other newspaper in the world. Or you can skip the newspapers and go to some site that makes the news more entertaining or politically simpatico. And where do these wannabes get most of their information? From newspapers, of course. But that is mere irony. It doesn't pay the cost of a Baghdad bureau.

Newspaper angst is now focused on the Los Angeles Times, where I was editorial and opinion editor in 2004 and '05. Long the industry's leading example of needless excellence, the Times has had bureaus around the world, a huge Washington staff and so on. Yet it had a near monopoly in its own town and made little attempt to compete elsewhere. So what was the point?

The Tribune Co. of Chicago, which bought the L.A. Times six years ago, has been asking that question and answering it with demands for cuts in budget and staff. One might ask what the point of the Tribune approach is as well. The Tribune paid a premium for a premium paper and seems intent on dragging it down into mediocrity. That may improve margins in the short run, but it does nothing to address the fundamental crisis of newspapers. Two weeks ago the Times's editor and publisher publicly refused to chop any further, which doesn't address the crisis either.

Some believe that the answer is to restore local ownership. Newspapers were born free, and yet everywhere they are in chains, like Gannett. Fueled by noblesse oblige and municipal pride, a wealthy local won't need to squeeze the last dollar out of the business. Just look at the Sulzbergers of the New York Times and the Grahams of the Washington Post. Ah, but there is a difference between folks who get rich owning a newspaper and folks who get rich and then buy a newspaper. As a rule, rich folks don't buy expensive toys for other people to play with.

So are we doomed to get our news from some acned 12-year-old in his parents' basement recycling rumors from the Internet echo chamber? Not necessarily. The fact that people won't pay for news on the Internet isn't as devastating for the old medium as it seems. People don't pay for their news in traditional newspapers: they pay for the paper, which typically costs the company more than it charges for the finished product. So in theory, giving away the news without the paper looks like a good deal for newspapers, if they can keep the advertising.

Once you've rented an apartment online, you know that traditional newspaper classifieds, with their tiny type, have no future. But only slow-footedness has kept newspapers from dominating online classifieds. Technology can be bought, but the brand value of a local newspaper cannot (unless you buy the paper). Maybe it's too late, but if newspapers have missed this boat, it's their own fault.

Newspapers are not missing the blog boat. They are running for it like the last train out of Paris. They hold their breath and look the other way as their most precious rules and standards get trampled in the rush, and figure they'll worry about that later.

And later? The "me to you" model of news gathering--a professional reporter, attuned to the fine distinctions between "off the record" and "deep background," prizing factual accuracy in the narrowest sense--may well give way to some kind of "us to us" communitarian arrangement of the sort that thrives on the Internet. But there is room between the New York Times and myleftarmpit.com for new forms that liberate journalism from its encrusted conceits while preserving its standards, like accuracy.

I'm not sure what that new form will look like. But it might resemble the better British papers today (such as the one I work for, the Guardian). The Brits have never bought into the American separation of reporting and opinion. They assume that an intelligent person, paid to learn about some subject, will naturally develop views about it. And they consider it more truthful to express those views than to suppress them in the name of objectivity.

Newspapers on paper are on the way out. Whether newspaper companies are on the way out too depends. Some of them are going to find the answers. And some are going to fritter away the years quarreling about staff cuts.

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Media Interviews

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Michael Rogers: 'Technology Is Now an Important Part of Media'

The New York Times Co.'s new futurist-in-residence predicts that a new generation of newspaper readers will soon be accustomed to reading news on a screen and won't possess an "emotional attachment" to paper.

By Patrick Phillips
 I Want Media, 09/25/06

The New York Times Co. last week [announced](#) the appointment of Michael Rogers as "futurist-in-residence," a first for the newspaper industry. The Times describes the new position as a one-year consultant appointment to work with the company's research and development unit.

Rogers, a former Washington Post Co. new-media exec and Newsweek.com general manager, will work with the Times's R&D group to develop new strategies for online and other innovations among the company's products.

Most recently, Rogers has been running [Practical Futurist](#), a consulting firm he founded in 2004, where he works with startups and major media companies. He also writes the "[Practical Futurist](#)" column for MSNBC.



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I Want Media: Why would the New York Times Co. -- or any traditional media company -- need a futurist?

Michael Rogers: More important than the "futurist" title, I think, is that I'm part of the research and development group run by Michael Zimbalist.

While R&D is a pretty standard function in a technology company, it's not so common in the traditional media industry. The management of the Times Co. understands that technology is now an important part of media and, like a technology company, you need a small team that's looking over the horizon.

That's not to say that people at [NYTimes.com](#) and [About.com](#) aren't also thinking about the future -- they certainly are. But most of them also have operational roles that absorb much of their time. R&D sets out a technology roadmap that both inspires new products and provides a context and support for the new ideas that come from the business units.

IWM: What will you be doing for the Times Co.?

Rogers: My role in R&D is in part market research seasoned with speculation: What are consumers doing today and what might they want to do tomorrow? What kind of

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technologies will be available and how likely is it that they will serve a wide audience?

I've also spent 20 years building and operating new media products, working across editorial, technology and business lines, so I hope to help shape product ideas to serve well in all three spheres.

Another part will be helping the R&D team communicate our work back to the business units. We're all intensely aware that even the smartest R&D is pointless if it fails to engage with the people who actually run the businesses.

IWM: In one of your recent MSNBC columns, [you mused](#): "The way to become a futurist is simply to call yourself one." What do futurists really know?

Rogers: I backed into the futurist word six years ago when I named my Newsweek column Practical Futurist. But then I began to realize that I really had spent a lot of my career thinking about future products. And before that I'd written quite a bit of science fiction.

One VC I know once said, "You should watch what Michael's excited about, wait five years, and then invest in it." If you want an operational job, that's not exactly a glowing recommendation. But it seemed like a pretty good job description for a futurist.

Two other thoughts: First, I think that being a futurist is in a way the last refuge of the generalist. You need to pull together all kinds of sociological, economic, technologic, anthropologic information into some kind of coherent whole. And finally, I'm not sure that the real value of a futurist is to predict the future -- the future is always going to surprise us in one way or another -- but rather to get others thinking about it in a creative and flexible way.

IWM: Who are some of the clients of your consulting firm?

Rogers: I've worked with cable networks, telecom companies, publishers, Internet portals and startups. Ironically, I tend to emphasize the "practical" in Practical Futurist.

I've been doing this stuff long enough that I have some credibility when I say, "You don't really need to do that yet." Even quite sophisticated companies can be daunted by the deluge of third-party companies and consultants who are pushing new technologies that in fact may not be ready for prime-time.

I like to say that in many cases there's no rush: there's still plenty of money left to be lost on the Internet.

IWM: The Times describes this new consultant role as a rotating position, to change annually. It may seem early to ask, but who do you see as an ideal candidate to succeed you?

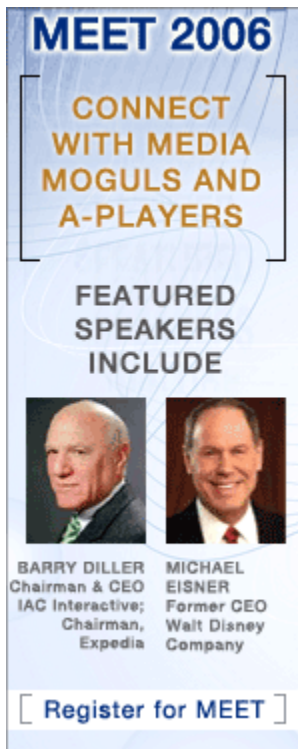
Rogers: I'd love to see a job-sharing arrangement between Buckminster Fuller and Marshall McLuhan. Unfortunately, neither is currently available.

IWM: What lessons did you learn from your experiences with Newsweek.com and the new-media division of the Washington Post Co.?

Rogers: It's trite but true: The fundamentals still apply. It all begins with writers, reporters and editors who can recognize and tell a good story. If you don't have those folks on your side, it doesn't make any difference how good the widgets are. That's a big part of what attracted me to the Times.

IWM: The Practical Futurist originated with a column and a blog for Newsweek. What do you see as the future of blogs produced by magazines or newspapers?





Rogers: The "blog" has become intertwined with the notion of self-publishing, but I think it's important to see the blog itself as one of the first truly original forms of Internet journalism. The blog energized static text with two unique Web elements -- outbound linking and close audience interaction, creating a form that by its nature can't be duplicated in print.

The blog and its successors will continue to be useful journalistic forms on the Web, whether self- or professionally published. Print can't do blogs, but they will become staples on print properties' Web sites in years to come.

If there's a problem with blogs, it's that done right they're a great deal of work; it's a daily column on steroids, and it takes a lot of energy and endurance to keep one going.

IWM: You helped co-found Outside magazine in 1977. If you were launching a magazine today, what would you do different?

Rogers: Even if my primary goal was a print magazine, I'd build it from the ground up as a Web site first. I've done it both ways, and it's far easier to turn a digital property into a magazine or book than vice versa.

IWM: Time magazine managing editor Richard Stengel [recently told](#) I Want Media that if Time co-founders Henry Luce and Briton Hadden were creating a newsmagazine today, "it would probably be electronic only." As a former general manager of Newsweek.com, would you agree?

Rogers: My previous answer holds -- I'd start with the electronic version. But at least for the rest of this decade I'd seriously think about also producing a version on paper.

It wouldn't be in the current mold of the newsmagazine, but I think if you have the cash -- which means a lot of cash -- a smartly-done print version can still give you extra reach and legitimacy that's worthwhile for a startup.

IWM: Are newsweekly magazines on paper still relevant?

Rogers: Absolutely -- and I'd say the same for newspapers. Now and for years to come, a broad part of the audience sees paper as a medium that has comfort, convenience and an emotional resonance that they'll never find on a screen. They also like the sense of a contained volume of content, with a fixed frequency and a beginning, middle and end.

But I think newsweeklies will inevitably have to become more like newspapers in their attention to daily publishing on the Web, and then once a week collect and edit what they've done and publish the highly-profitable and very popular "best-of-the-week" paper edition.

IWM: People keep saying the newspaper industry is in bad shape. What do you say?

Rogers: Many businesses would kill to have the margins that the newspaper industry still pulls in. And, especially in the media space, I think people tend to underestimate how powerful the home court advantage really is.

That said, the industry needs to make some major shifts in business model over the next decade, and some companies are doing a smart job of that while others seem to be adopting a strategy of throwing the crew overboard to stay afloat. I count the Times among those companies that are thinking very creatively about the future while still nurturing the core product.

IWM: CNBC's Jim Cramer [claims](#) that social-networking sites like MySpace are now "worth more than the New York Times." Your thoughts?

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Rogers: As many of us in the Internet business learned during the first bubble, any company is worth exactly what you can talk somebody else into paying for it, which number may have very little to do with long-term intrinsic value.

We're a long, long way from truly understanding the business value of either social networking or user-generated-content. I'm quite certain, however, that variations of both concepts will find a place in online media properties. Blogs -- user-generated-content, especially around disaster reporting -- have already become standard operating procedure for some sites.

IWM: Should newspapers charge for their online content, or is free the best way to go?

Rogers: There is a kind of commodity news that I think we'll never be able to charge money for. There are moments when I wish we could roll back the clock to 1994 and rethink that initial price-point. It's easy to lower prices, hard to raise them and harder yet when you start out at free.

But I do think with the [WSJ.com](#) and [TimesSelect](#) we're seeing the first potential for some real circulation revenue. Even in print, newspapers are beginning to offer both free and for-pay editions and as we go along I think audiences will accept fees for very high-quality content online.

Another interesting opportunity is the new generation of mobile devices we'll see over the next five years. For-pay content models are much more common on these devices and I think we'll be able to build very rich, customized news products, delivered right to the handheld, that will seem worthy of subscription fees.

IWM: Will newspapers -- with their new capacity to post video ads on their Web sites -- start to compete with TV stations for commercials?

Rogers: Without a doubt. For starters, news sites already own the "new primetime" -- the business day -- and it's an opportunity to reach an audience when they're really, really concentrating on the content. Because their only other alternative is doing their jobs.

IWM: Will newspapers on paper disappear eventually?

Rogers: Not for a very long time. Paper is a high-resolution, high-contrast, unbreakable and extremely inexpensive display device. As the years go on, though, I think we may see more newspaper content delivered electronically and printed locally. However, we're within a few years of seeing some very effective electronic reading devices that finally do begin to challenge paper.

The new [Times Reader](#), on a tablet PC, is already a pretty good experience. Spin that forward five years and you're starting to have a compelling alternative. Finally, in another decade, a substantial part of our audience will have grown up already doing much more of their reading on screen, and they're not likely to have the same emotional attachment to paper as does much of the current readership.

IWM: What do you see as the biggest challenge facing traditional media companies going forward?

Rogers: It's unquestionably the business model: how to generate revenues online that are comparable to what our traditional businesses yield. We have lots of ideas about how to tell stories online, and we're beginning to accumulate substantial and devoted audiences. The next step is making sure that the new digital realm generates the dollars it will take to support quality journalism in the years to come.

washingtonpost.com

Colleges Look to Handle Their Scandal

Saturday, September 23, 2006; E12

With the first hint of scandal, rumors multiply on message boards, media descends upon campus and administrations attempt to minimize damage by shifting into crisis management mode. Three recent scandals illustrated unique strategies used by high-profile institutions.

Southern California officials have refrained from commenting on allegations surrounding former star Reggie Bush, citing a pending investigation. Ohio State long ago distanced itself from the troubles of former standout Maurice Clarett. And Oklahoma took swift action by dismissing its starting quarterback, Rhett Bomar, once it uncovered potential NCAA violations.

While there is more than one way to handle a crisis, there are fundamental keys that schools should follow to reinforce a university's integrity, said Levi Rabinowitz, president of Baltimore's Redzone News Management, a crisis management firm that offers this advice to universities: "One messenger, one message, one team."

"What we often see is that they try to deal with speculation or rumors, and it's like putting socks on an octopus. You can't win," said Rabinowitz, whose company worked with Morgan State men's basketball coach Todd Bozeman on his return to coaching after an eight-year NCAA ban for violating rules at Cal. "Know the facts before you make statements, and be careful to distinguish your position from the position of others."

Rabinowitz urges universities to express a clear message through the media and explain how the school will work to solve the problem. But that message, at times, can be clouded by accounts from others offering salacious details that find their way into newspaper headlines.

For example, Alabama's recent scandal is remembered most for then-coach Mike Price's alleged interaction with a strip club dancer. And Florida State's illicit activity of the early 1990s is remembered for Steve Spurrier's comment anointing FSU "Free Shoes University." In both cases, memories of the step-by-step administration responses have long faded.

"A lot of crisis managers mislead their clients in trying to set up a war-room mentality . . .," Rabinowitz said. "Don't go into a bunker mentality, you're not at war. Don't use words like, 'We're at war with the press.' The media is your best opportunity to tell your story."

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Posted on Sun, Sep. 24, 2006

Manage busy boss before job's a total loss

Be creative in communicating with superior; your survival may depend on it

JOANN S. LUBLIN
Wall Street Journal

Beware the busy boss.

Citing other commitments, a vice president of a consumer-products maker often canceled or cut short sessions sought by lieutenants such as Jim McNerney. The purchasing agent became so frustrated by his scant face time that he began talking and walking fast alongside the caffeine-addicted VP as he strode swiftly to the coffee room.

In late July, McNerney and five colleagues lost their jobs. He partly blames their elusive supervisor. "He never wanted to be personally engaged. Everybody was expendable in his mind," contends McNerney, a resident of Arcadia.

It's hard to shine when you have trouble reaching your boss -- whether that's due to the executive's hectic work schedule, heavy travel or poor interpersonal skills. A lack of visibility "is a huge red flag" that makes you vulnerable during an economic slowdown, warns Donna Schwarz, a New York career coach. Any time her clients complain about an inaccessible superior, she inquires, "How much savings do you have?"

The best remedy: Learn to manage your manager. "You have to be inventive to create that access," proposes Doug Hearn, a senior vice president at Williams, Roberts, Young, a human-resource consultancy in Winston-Salem.

Being inventive requires adapting to your supervisor's preferred forms of communication -- and schedule. Some bosses hate to hear from the office during their commutes. Others resent repeated requests for one-minute get-togethers that instead last 40 minutes.

Face-to-face encounters make the most sense for dealing with complicated workplace issues, of course. But they may not suit your manager's quirky habits.

At a prior consulting job, Hearn felt stalled because meetings and trips constantly distracted his boss. "A two-minute session was about the longest conversation I ever had," he says.

Hearn negotiated a successful alternative. He sent the managing partner an e-mail every Friday that described his achievements, planned actions and issues needing input.

Silicon Valley public-relations manager Brian Johnson recently reported to an executive vice president who traveled 80 percent of the time. The woman believed her 30 subordinates should work around her frequent absences. She typically returned their calls at odd hours. So, Johnson got in the habit of always carrying a 3x5-inch card or Palm Pilot that summarized his pending tasks and problems. He whipped out the card when his boss called -- during weekend religious services, nights out with his wife and romps in the park with his children.

Her inaccessibility "made my job more difficult to perform," Johnson concedes. He got laid off this past May. "She could have coached me better if she had been more available," he says.

It's a good idea to regularly update your supervisor's preferences for staying in touch. Once a year, you should ask, "What one thing would you change about how I'm communicating with you?" advises Michael Patrick, president of MOHR Access, a retail-training consultancy in Ridgewood, N.J.

You can also avoid feeling ignored by appealing to your manager's priorities. Perhaps a deadline looms for a project he cares deeply about. Tell him you could beat the deadline if he promptly responds to your e-mails during your weekend toil. Put the project's name, and a catchy phrase, in the e-mail subject line.

How effectively you connect with an overtaxed boss may depend on his executive assistant, who controls his calendar and forwards important e-mail.

Cultivate a good relationship with that assistant, suggests Scott Setterberg, human-resources director at law firm O'Melveny & Myers in Los Angeles. During a stint in the movie industry, he often helped counsel the boss's assistants, so he usually could win five minutes of the executive's overcrowded calendar from a grateful assistant.

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Brand missed opportunity to solve replay issue

Published: Monday, September 25, 2006 - 6:00 am

By Bart Wright
SPORTS EDITOR
rbwright@greenvillenews.com

NCAA president Myles Brand was a stealth guest of Clemson University for its game Saturday against North Carolina, spending most of the game in the box of school president James Barker.

Barker, a member of the NCAA board of directors, invited Brand to a game this summer at a meeting.

Brand took him up on the offer.

The titular head of the organization that recently allowed Clemson reserve Ray Ray McElrathbey to receive some measure of assistance in helping raise his younger brother, Brand gave no mass media interviews.

Advertisement Whatever the reason for the secrecy surrounding the visit, it was an opportunity lost for Brand because I happen to have the solution to instant replay problems the NCAA is experiencing with its new system for reviewing plays.

The solution requires no new equipment and no more money.

And it will, absolutely, solve the problem.

To review, the problem, as seen in a handful of games of the last couple of weekends, involves bad decisions by replay officials in the booths that are typically located in a walled-off cubicle in the press box.

The NCAA burrowed within its circle of friends to locate these review officials, many of them former officials. Most of them are at an age that is no longer compatible to full-time work on the field.

To be blunt about it, most of the instant replay folks are too old to be doing this kind of exacting work. They come from a black-and-white television era; they remember walking across the room and clicking a big knob on the set to change the channel.

They don't know what MTV is, much less Playstation.

The solution is to replace them all with 20-something computer and sports geeks, of which there are millions in this country. We're talking about young people who grew up with that innate sense of computer logic us old people never quite got.

They know the rules. They know computers. They could do that job in less than half time of the old codgers with better results.

The NCAA could design tests for these people, put the Help Wanted sign up and attract, oh, probably 5,000 more qualified replay review screeners than they really need.

The other part of the solution is to put these people in "the truck," which is located outside the stadium where all the directors and engineers and others sit to produce the game, surrounded by a dozen or so television screens.

They could attract these people from the very campuses over which the NCAA rules, which wouldn't hurt public relations for a structure so stiff and secretive it doesn't let people know when its president visit's a campus on game

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September 24, 2006

For N.F.L., Crowd Noise Is a Headache

By JOHN BRANCH

At most big ballgames, noise is good, and more noise is better.

Skin-baring cheerleaders, cartoonish mascots and maniacal M.C.'s take turns trying to whip fans into a frenzy. Scoreboard messages tease the crowd with fake decibel meters and implore fans to "Raise the Roof!"

Because vocal cords are not enough, fans sometimes receive noisemakers like inflatable bat-shaped balloons at the gate. They can create a cacophony of thump-thump-thumps meant to lift the home squad's spirits and deflate the visiting team. There can never be too much commotion.

Except in the N.F.L.

The league has long had an uneasy relationship with crowd noise, and may soon embark on its latest quest to overcome it — not by hushing fans, but by allowing visiting players the benefit of a helmet-to-helmet wireless communication system.

The noise issue came to the forefront as the [Giants](#) prepared for today's game against the [Seahawks](#) at Qwest Field, the notoriously loud stadium in Seattle. When the teams played there last November, the Giants were called for 11 false-start penalties, the kind often caused by a failure to communicate. The Giants had 16 penalties over all, the highest number for the franchise since 1949, and lost in overtime, 24-21.

Visiting teams have long struggled with noise. The former quarterback Ron Jaworski remembered a game at the Orange Bowl in Miami in 1981 that was so loud, he turned repeatedly to the referee for help.

"He finally said, 'Run the play, Ron, or we'll never get out of here,'" said Jaworski, who played 15 N.F.L. seasons, mostly with the [Philadelphia Eagles](#).

The N.F.L. is not antinoise, exactly. It just does not appreciate certain types at certain times. The N.F.L. rule book even has a 900-word section devoted to crowd noise; too much when the visiting offense is on the field can draw a penalty for the home team.

Teams also receive detailed, and restrictive, instructions from the league about ways to elicit reactions from their fans. Under the guidelines, some electronic messages — “Let’s go crazy” and “Pump it up” are among those listed — are not acceptable.

Other chants (“De-fense!”) are appropriate, at certain times. Encouraging the wave is not — ever.

But N.F.L. fans cannot help themselves. So they keep cheering, often disrupting the communications and hard-thought intentions of the visiting offense and becoming, in effect, what Seattle fans and others call the 12th man. Once the opponents are rattled, the crowd cheers even louder.

Fans may think that is good. Other leagues may think it is super. The N.F.L. is not so sure.

With no reasonable way to curb enthusiasm without appearing stodgy, Roger Goodell, the new N.F.L. commissioner, is floating another idea: placing microphones in quarterbacks’ helmets and speakers in the helmets of other offensive players, so that play calls and snap counts can be heard despite the din. Quarterbacks now have earpieces that allow them to hear coaches, but the transmission is cut with 15 seconds left on the play clock.

Goodell said he believed that noise should lift a defense, not interrupt an offense. He said he did not want to hush the crowd, just limit its impact.

“That’s what our game is about: our athletes and coaches playing at the highest possible level and being able to execute their game plans,” Goodell said Sept. 6, during his first news conference after succeeding [Paul Tagliabue](#).

“To some extent right now, I think we are hindering that a little bit, because they come into an opposing stadium and they are not able to put the full offense in, they are not able to run plays in, they are not able to change the plays at the line of scrimmage.”

Today at Qwest Field, an outdoor stadium with a roof that covers 70 percent of the 67,000 seats, league officials will be looking, and listening, for violations of the noise rules. Some have voiced concerns that the Seahawks and other teams pipe in artificial sounds to bolster the well-timed cheers of fans, which Seattle Coach Mike Holmgren has denied.

A recent analysis by The New York Times showed that penalties, particularly noise-related penalties like offensive holding and false starts, have been on the rise in recent years.

It found that more penalties, especially those for false starts, are called in domed stadiums, which tend to be louder.

Giants players say they can usually hear quarterback [Eli Manning](#) in the huddle during road games in noisy stadiums, though they sometimes resort to reading lips. As the noise invariably rises before the

snap of an important play, center Shaun O'Hara can hear Manning's cadence; the guards, to either side of O'Hara, often cannot.

The Giants use a silent count when Manning is in the shotgun formation, several steps behind the center. He signals to O'Hara that he is ready, usually with a raised leg, and the ball is snapped after a certain number of beats.

False-start penalties, particularly on the road, come when players try to anticipate the snap rather than see it.

For Manning, the biggest nuisance is struggling to shout instructions or bark warnings at the line of scrimmage. Changing a play is nearly impossible.

That is the type of situation that concerns Goodell. It is not, however, a new concern to the N.F.L.

It adopted a noise penalty in 1989, allowing the referee, at the quarterback's request, to warn the home team that the crowd is being disruptive. The referee, who stands behind the quarterback at the snap, can dock the home team a timeout, or even call a 5-yard penalty, if he decides that linemen cannot hear the snap count.

Mike Pereira, the N.F.L.'s vice president for officiating, has been in the league office for nine years. He said the rule had not been enforced in that time.

"Quite frankly, everybody is doing silent counts now," Pereira said.

Quarterbacks said that turning to ask a referee for help would only incite the crowd to make more noise.

"Every game I've talked to the ref, and they say, 'Hey, if you think it's too loud, you can look back,' " Manning said. " 'Most of the time we're going to tell you to snap the ball, though. But you can ask for it if you want.' "

Given all this, one might expect wireless communication to be a popular idea around the league. But that may not be so. Holmgren, whose team has reaped the benefits of noise, is understandably skeptical.

"We don't want 'Star Wars' and electronics taking over the game," he said during a midweek conference call in which the noise issue was raised.

"Every visiting team has to deal with that in one way or another, and I think most teams have done a nice job with silent counts and different things. Every week, there are 16 teams that have to deal with it. I would be against putting any sort of doodads in anybody's helmets from now on."

But several Giants, including Manning and some offensive linemen who struggled with the noise last year in Seattle, said they opposed the idea of adding the devices as well.

“That’s part of the battle of having home-field advantage, is having a loud crowd, doing those kinds of things so the other team is not able to hear the count, not be able to hear those things,” guard David Diehl said. “I don’t think I’d be for it.”

Diehl was called for three false-start penalties last year in Seattle. He knows that the crowd today will be loud, hoping to disrupt the Giants’ best-laid plans.

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Wave 'bye' to the bye week...

Recognizable, credible opponents wanted

by MATTHEW BORENSTEIN

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Danny Verdun Wheeler said he would play games twice a week if that were what the schedule called for.

All the Georgia starting linebacker wants to do is play football games. The more, he said, the better.

Count Verdun Wheeler and several other Georgia players as supporters of the NCAA's April 2005 decision to add a 12th game to the Division I-A football regular season.

"I'm all for it," cornerback Paul Oliver said. "More games are better than less games."

Oliver said that most players seem to agree with him.

"I really don't care," safety Tra Battle said. "As long as I can play, I don't have a problem with it."

Don't include Georgia head coach Mark Richt on the list of whole-hearted backers of the 12th game.

"I'm sure within a year or so, we're not even going to be talking about it. It's just gonna be the way it is and there won't be much said of it," he said. "I think it's here to stay and there's not much we can do about it."

With Georgia's SEC schedule and Thanksgiving weekend non-conference game with Georgia Tech set every year, the Bulldogs previously had four weekends to play two other non-conference games and two bye weekends. The extra game forces Georgia to add a fourth non-conference game, such as Saturday's against Colorado, to its schedule.

Usually, those games were against noticeably weaker opponents (including Division I-AA teams).

Since 2000, Georgia has twice played New Mexico State, Georgia Southern and Alabama-Birmingham. Other schools to make trips to Athens include Louisiana-Monroe, Middle Tennessee State, Arkansas State, Houston and Marshall.

Georgia toughened its schedule with games against Clemson, an ACC opponent, in 2002 and 2003. Boise State visited Georgia last season ranked No. 18.

Soon after the 12th game was added, Georgia announced the home-and-home series with Colorado (Georgia travels to Boulder, Colo., in 2010), a Big XII team. Georgia already easily defeated UAB and Western Kentucky this season.

"We are trying to get BCS schools, and we're basically looking for one of those per year," Richt said. "Then possibly a I-AA opponent."

Georgia's cupcake games are set for 2007 (Western Carolina and Troy), but the Bulldogs haven't found a team for its Sept. 1 opener.

Beyond '07, Georgia's schedule is set with home-and-home series with BCS conference

teams: Arizona State (Pac-10, '08 and '09), Louisville (Big East, '11 and '12), Clemson (ACC, '13 and '14) and Oregon (Pac-10 '15 and '16).

Associate athletic director Arthur Johnson, the administrator charged with setting Georgia's schedule, said he isn't looking to schedule games beyond 2016 right now.

Scheduling these games isn't easy, he said.

"Everybody's trying to schedule a quality opponent," he said, adding he must find a team that wants to play Georgia and one with an open date that matches a weekend Georgia has free.

Georgia's eight-game conference schedule and game against Georgia Tech are set before the talks begin with other schools.

"The stars have to align," he said.

Georgia and Colorado began discussing a series when it appeared the NCAA would approve the 12th game. Colorado sports information director David Plati, who is in charge of setting the Buffaloes' schedule, said he contacted Georgia and discussion progressed quickly.

The two schools, which have never played, announced the match-up soon after the NCAA's announcement.

The series, like Georgia's other non-conference games, fits at least one of the criteria Richt was looking for. He said with these games, he is always looking to leave the Southeast.

Administrators making schedules must consider what coaches % From Page 1B

want (games they can win), playing teams fans want to see and from cities fans want to visit and games national TV wants to broadcast, said Robert Zullo, a sports administration professor at Mississippi State who wrote about football scheduling for Athletic Management, an industry publication.

Georgia also wants to play as many games as possible at home.

Georgia's four non-conference games are in Athens this season and the Western Carolina and Troy games next year are home.

In addition to playing in front of a sold-out Sanford Stadium, the Athletic Association makes about \$1.6 million per home date, according to the association.

Zullo, who earned his doctorate at Georgia and worked in the Athletic Association, helped Athletic Director Damon Evans set the schedule before Johnson was hired. He praised Georgia's scheduling philosophy as "effective" and creative."

Zullo noted Georgia's games are against schools a step below teams like Southern California, Michigan and Notre Dame.

"You want to get credible opponents," he said, "but have a better chance to win. You're always trying to balance."

Richt said he knows he doesn't want to play a top-tier team like USC.

"If Southern Cal came up, you know I'd probably be like, 'Well, I'm not sure I want to do that,' and Southern Cal might be saying 'I'm not sure we want to do that,'" he said.

Georgia's trips are to parts of the country the team rarely visits and areas attractive for fans to travel to, a good thing, Zullo said.

"You want to try to schedule an opponent that is name recognizable and has credibility," Zullo

said.

Richt added that Georgia hasn't turned down many schools looking to play his team.

Players said they enjoy playing the extra game, but money is the driving force behind the decision to add an extra game, said Zullo and David Ridpath, executive director of The Drake Group, an organization whose stated mission is "defending academic integrity in the face of commercialized college sport."

Administrators wanted the extra game as an additional revenue source, Zullo said, while coaches fought the idea. An extra game is another one a coach could lose.

"Coaches want to err on the safe side," Zullo said.

Ridpath, a sports administration professor at Ohio University, called the move nothing more than a "money grab" and said, if backed into a corner, an athletic director would admit that.

"There's been a lot of political spin saying it was not for the money," he said. "It was done for the money."

The NCAA's statement when the 12th game was announced said the organization's board of directors considered several issues and concluded players want to play a 12th game, fans want to watch it and it won't harm academics.

"Financial issues were also discussed, but as one of many factors, including the fact that adding a 12th game does not lengthen the season," said Robert Hemenway, chancellor of University of Kansas and chair of the NCAA Board of Directors in the statement announcing the addition of the 12th game.

Even with this discussion that likely won't end, the 12th game is being played and coaches must prepare their team for the extra game. Richt, whose team plays 11 consecutive Saturdays before its only bye, said he is conscious of that when he plans practice.

"We have been thinking about it a good bit," he said.

When a little rain fell a week and a half ago, Richt moved practice indoors to the Ramsey Center even though he said the conditions allowed for the team to practice outside.

"I told the staff, 'Even if the sun's shining, we're going inside to that gym and we're gonna walk through in the AC because I don't want them running hard,' " he said. "I want them out of the elements, and I just want a good mental workout and don't want a physical workout."

"We may have to do that more often. We may not go inside to do it. We may do some walkthroughs outside just to temper the amount of reps that some of these guys are getting."

The players, though, don't see their coach taking it easy on them.

"No," said Battle, a senior, who seemed surprised when asked if he felt practices were easier this year. "He's not taking it easy on us at all. It's pretty much the same atmosphere as my freshman year."

Oliver said he wouldn't mind an easy day mixed in throughout the season.

"I wouldn't be mad at him for it," he said. "I'd agree with him."