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First Digital Journalism and Design graduate already putting new skills to work

Posted September 18, 2013 at 4:25 pm by [Tom Scherberger](#)



Adam Eisenberg, the first graduate of the Digital Journalism and Design Program, at work at the South Florida Sun-Sentinel.

Adam Eisenberg was an online producer working at the [South Florida Sun-Sentinel](#) when he decided to pursue a master's degree in journalism.

He went looking for a program grounded in the digital age that would take his skills to a new level.

“A lot of the programs I looked at were very theory-based and I wanted something really practical that focused on digital journalism, something that until now didn’t exist,” Eisenberg says.

He found what he was looking for at the USF St. Petersburg [Digital Journalism and Design Program](#). So a year ago he left his job and joined the program’s founding class.

Last month he became the program’s first graduate and is back at the *Sun-Sentinel* applying what he learned.

Because the program is fully online, Eisenberg was able to take classes at his home in Pompano Beach on Florida’s East Coast without ever stepping foot on the USFSP campus.

“It really hits that sweet spot in terms of practicality,” Eisenberg says. “It was something I was really looking for: The skills that are really required of journalists today. And the fact that it was online made it the perfect match.”

The program, launched in fall 2012 under the leadership of Associate Professor of Journalism Mark Walters, has attracted a mix of students, from recent undergraduates to mid-career journalists looking to enhance their knowledge and skills.

“You’re interacting with a really wide range of interesting people in these courses,” says Eisenberg.

The program uses technology to great effect to increase interaction among students and professors, he says, including video conferencing and course message boards. “I really feel like I know these people so well even though we haven’t met face to face,” he says.

Each of the program’s 12 courses addresses a different aspect of digital journalism, providing a solid foundation of skills and knowledge needed to thrive in the fast-paced world of online journalism. The topics include multimedia reporting, digital media technology, photojournalism, digital video and audio production, visual communication and entrepreneurial journalism.

Eisenberg says he is putting all the knowledge and skills he acquired in the past year to good use every day and has recommended the program to others.

“As we enter the second year of this program, we have been very pleased at the response we are getting from our students,” said Walters.

Vivian Fueyo, interim regional vice chancellor for academic affairs, said Eisenberg’s success is heartening and reflects the hard work of Walters and the rest of the digital journalism faculty. “This program is an example of the kind of innovative academic programs USF St. Petersburg

offers to meet the needs of students, regardless of where they live, and to prepare them for today's workforce," she said.

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