

University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill School of Journalism and Mass Communication

Online Masters of Arts in Technology and Communications Concept Study



Agenda

- > Who we are
- > How we conducted the study
- > What we discovered
- > Why these perceptions emerged
- > How to proceed

Consultant Team

- · Percept Research
 - Percept Research, based in Charlotte, NC, provides high quality research and consulting services for corporate and academic engagements. We offer a large variety of market research techniques, uniquely tailored to the needs of our clients. Our mission is to leverage research and higher education expertise to provide the best ROI, service and quality to our academic clients.
- Dr. Rodney Alsup, Senior Consultant
 - Dr. Alsup has significant academic experience as a faculty member, MBA program director, and college administrator. Rodney has more than 25 years of experience in management consulting and higher education program management and teaching. Rodney earned his bachelor's degree and MBA degree from Eastern Kentucky University, his Doctor of Business Administration degree from the University of Kentucky and also served as an enlisted and commissioned officer in the US Army and the Army National Guard.
- · Brian Mahoney, Managing Partner
 - Mr. Mahoney oversees consulting and account management as a founding partner. Brian has more than 12 years of experience in marketing research and management consulting. Brian earned his bachelor's degree from Duke University and also served as a commissioned officer in the US Navy. He currently serves on the Alumni Board and Foundation Board of the North Carolina School of Science and Mathematics.



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Objectives

The School of Journalism and Mass Communication engaged Percept Research to:

- 1. Measure perceived unmet post-baccalaureate education need
- 2. Build a decision case for starting a new online Masters of Arts in Technology in Communication (MATC) program
- 3. Make recommendations (program format, name, recruitment/enrollment plan, etc.)

Methodology

- · Questionnaire jointly developed by UNC-CH JOMC and Percept Research
- Web survey fielded from Oct 29 Nov 10, 2008 (13 days)

Population investigated

- JOMC provided the following segments
 - TCOM: Admitted Not Enrolled
 - TCOM: Admitted Taken Classes
 - TCOM: Certificate Grads
 - Distance Education Prospects
 - · Undergraduate JOMC Alumni
- Percept Research secured non-constituents sample
 - · Have at least a bachelor's degree
 - · Have at least 3 years of work experience in a communication-related field



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Respondents

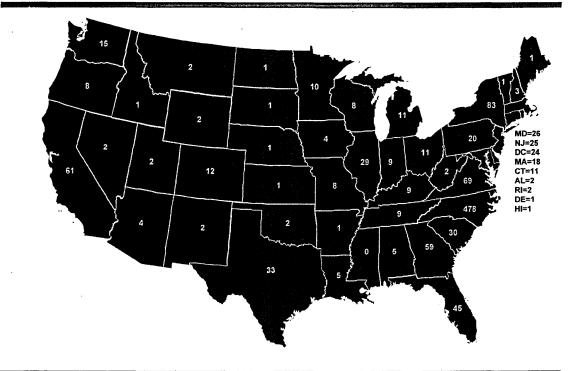
- Response rates met expectations given the type of research study and population base
- The higher percentage of female respondents mimics the population base
- Undergraduate JOMC alumni represent a large portion of the response as targeted
- A large percentage of the respondents reside outside of North Carolina (which supports the concept of an online program in later findings)

Respondents

	Completed Interviews	% of Respondents	Response Rate
TCOM: Admit Not Enrolled	13	1.1%	17.8%
TCOM: Admit Taken Classes	20	1.7%	21.1%
TCOM: Certificate Grads	6	0.5%	14.6%
Undergraduate Alumni	854	→ 71.9%	15.4%
Dist Ed Interest	79	6.6%	9.9%
Non-Constituents	216	18.2%	27.0%
Total	1188	100.0%	16.2%
Male	313	26,3%	
Female	869	73.1%	
Lives in North Carolina	478	40.2%	Alemann.
White or Caucasian	1047	88.1%	
 Black or African American 	77	6.5%	
Asian of Pacific Islander	22	1.9%	
American Indian	2	0.2%	
Multiracial	29	2.4%	
Hispanic	30	2.5%	
22-25 years old	192	16.2%	
26-30 years old	298	25.1%	
31-35 years old	175	14.7%	
36-40 years old	157	13.2%	
41-45 years old	144	12.1%	
46-50 years old	119	10.0%	
51 years or older	108	9.1%	
Bachelors Degree	748	63.0%	
Some Graduate Work	161	13.6%	
Masters Degree	235	19.8%	

Doctorate Degree 49

Completed Interviews by State



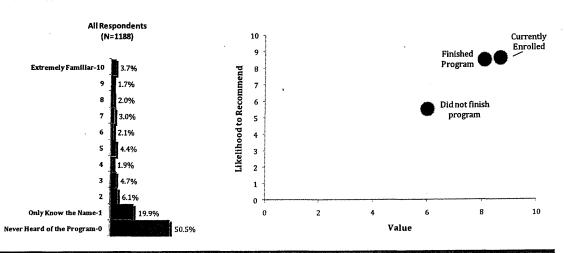
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Certificate in Technology and Communication

- \bullet It is difficult to draw strong conclusions about the TCOM due to the small number of responses to the majority of the questions
- 70% of all respondents have never heard of the program or only know the name
 Low awareness is driven by the undergraduate alumni and non-constituents (only 10% of these segments responded 5 or higher)
- Of those that are familiar with the program, the majority of respondents give high ratings in both value and recommendation



Description of Proposed Online MATC Program

Online Masters of Arts in Technology and Communication

The UNC-Chapel Hill School of Journalism and Mass Communication is considering offering an online Master of Arts degree in Technology and Communication (MATC). This program will focus on new media, the Internet, and digital economics, addressing issues that are re-shaping journalism and mass communication in the 21st century. The online MATC program will offer a full master's degree, enabling journalists and communication professionals to address changes posed by technology and to advance into leadership positions in their careers.

This program will be conducted primarily online (distance learning) using a system that fosters interaction while allowing students the flexibility to access course materials and discussion on their own schedules. It also will include several on-campus meetings to orient students to the program and build relationships among students as well as with instructors.

The entire degree as proposed will include 10-12 courses. Students in the *Certificate in Technology* and *Communication* program will be able to transfer credits to this master's degree program. The program will allow students to complete their studies on a part-time basis, taking two courses per semester. Students could complete the degree in two years. The MATC will be a new option, separate from the master's program currently offered on campus.

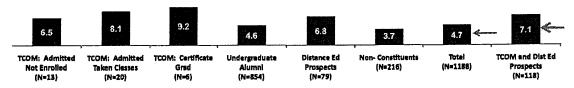


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Interest in the Online MATC Program

- There is a moderate level of interest in the Online MATC Program, mean = 4.7
- Factor out JOMC Undergrad Alumni and Non-Constituents, mean jumps to 7.1 (high interest)



* Interest scale: 0 (not at all interested) 5 (moderately interested) 10 (extremely interested)

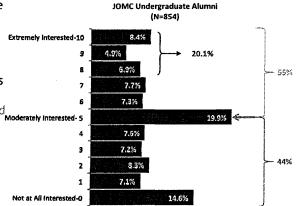
Undergrad Alumni Interest in the Online MATC Program

A further examination of the undergraduate JOMC alumni reveals:

- A significant percentage of alumni are highly interested = 20.1%
 - > This group represents early adopters
- 19.9% of alumni are moderately interested Moderately Interested
 - This indicates they do not have enough information to make a decision

Overall Undergraduate Alumni Interest

- 55% of alumni are at least moderately interested (score of 5 or above)
- Conversely, 44% do not demonstrate much interest
- These are relatively good ratings for an initial concept test with a large and diverse group

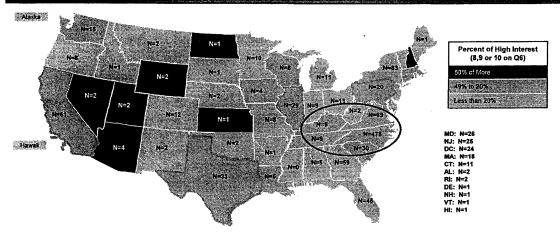


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Regional Interest in the Online MATC Program



- North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Kentucky and Virginia are areas of high priority
 - > moderate interest level, distance to Chapel Hill and concentration of Alumni
- Florida. California, Pennsylvania, Illinois and Texas are also areas to focus
 moderate level of interest and large populations



Perceived Concerns about the Online MATC Program

- Cost of the program is the largest obstacle to enrolling
- Overall Cost and Financial Return on Investment was selected as the SINGLE biggest concern 51% of the time
- Ability to make time to study is the second greatest concern
- Program format is another frequently mentioned concern
 - Quality of Instruction Compared with a Classroom Program
 - · Absence of In-person Interaction

> The impact of these factors can be controlled through messaging and educating the target audience

	ts a	Greatest
\ ,	Concern	Concern
3	(Q7a)	(Q7b)
Overall cost	62.6%	35.1%
Time needed for study	51.8%	21.7%
Financial return on investment	39.8%	15.8%
Absence of inperson interaction	23.2%	3.4%
Quality of instruction compared with a classroom program	20.2%	5.4%
Oncampus sessions	16.2%	5.9%
Other	15.1%	10.6%
Obtaining employer reimbursement	13.6%	0.8%
Caliber of professors	8.5%	0.8%
No concerns	8.0%	0.0%
Responsiveness of school to any concerns I may have	6.6%	0.4%
Caliber of classmates	4.3%	0.2%

Top Other Specify Mentions

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Theme	Responses
Applicability to career	18.7%
Lack of interest	17.4%
Travel requirements	10.3%
Quality of online education	5.8%
Pursuing another degree	5.8%



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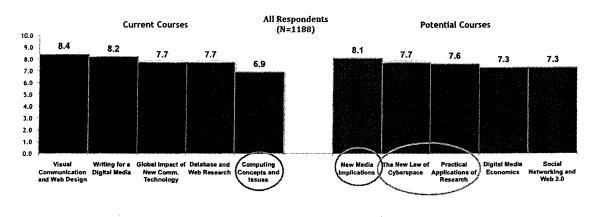
Perceived Advantages of the Online MATC Program

- The ability to be more successful in one's career is perceived as the main advantage perception:
 - Increase my knowledge of new media
 - Increase my competitiveness
 - Increase my earning power
 - Increase my overall job/career satisfaction
- The second theme is the advantages of the online structure:
 - Distance learning allows me the flexibility to work study and have a home life
 - Connect me with people and opportunities I wouldn't otherwise
 - Distance learning makes it physically/logistically possible for me to get a degree

	ls an	Greatest	
	Advantage /	Advantage :	
	Reward	Reward	
	(Q8a)	(QBb)	
Increase my knowledge of new media	76.8%	27.8%	
Increase my competitiveness	55.9%	17.0%	
Increase my earning power	51.6%	12.9%	
Distance learning allows me the flexibility to work study and have a home life	48.9%	7.1%	
Will make me a more effective communicator	38.8%	5.2%	
Increase my overall job/career satisfaction	38.0%	5.3%	
Connect me with people and opportunities I wouldnt otherwise	36.8%	4.5%	
Distance learning makes it physically/logistically possible for me to get a degree	36.5%	5.7%	
Obtain a degree from a nationally recognized university	27.6%	3.2%	
Improve my ability to teach at a community college or university	19.2%	4.7%	
Allow me to pursue additional educational opportunities	18.3%	3.6%	
Improve my ability to get the assignments I want	11.5%	1.1%	
No advantages	6.8%	0.0%	
Distance learning is less intimidating than traditional classroom study	5.4%	0.1%	
Other please specify	3.0%	1.9%	

Curriculum Evaluation

- Computing Concepts and Issues is the only current course that does not receive high ratings
- · New Media Implications for Strategic Communication should be added to the curriculum based on interest
- The New Law of Cyberspace and Practical Applications of Research should be added next, if space allows, with ratings similar to the current Global Impact and Database & Web Research



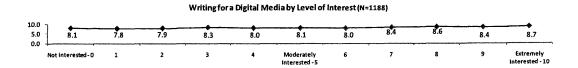


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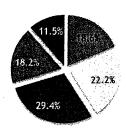
Curriculum Evaluation

- No single course appeared to be a strong driver of interest
- > Graph is an example of the gently upward sloping curve based on level of interest
- > This trend holds true for all course offerings

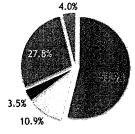


Program Format: Group & Residency Modules

Group Modules



- Strongly Prefer Online Only Prefer Online Only
- Could go Either Way
 Prefer One or Two Modules in Person
- Strongly Prefer One or Two Modules in Person



On-Campus Modules

- ₩ Weekend Modules Only Weeklong Modules Only ■Up to a two-week module
- ■I can't commit to any
- · Respondents are relatively evenly divided with group modules preference
 - •29% are neutral, 41% prefer online only and 30% in-person
- Respondents are more opinionated about on-campus modules
 - 54% prefer weekend modules only and 28% cannot commit to any
 - There is a strong correlation between respondents that prefer online group modules and those that cannot commit to any on-campus modules
 - · Preference for weekend modules becomes even stronger with respondents highly interested in the
 - The higher the interest, the more likely a potential student will commit to on-campus modules



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Cost Scenarios for the Online MATC Program

Random display of either Q14a or Q14b

Q14a INTRO. The proposed online MATC program will include 10 courses with a total of 30 credit hours. Total tuition is estimated to be \$12,500 for NC residents and \$25,000 for out-of-state residents.

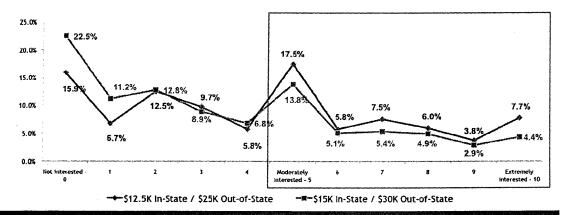
Q14b INTRO. The proposed online MATC program will include 12 courses with a total of 36 credit hours. Total tuition is estimated to be \$15,000 for NC residents and \$30,000 for out-of-state residents.

Evaluation of Cost of Online MATC Program

- Respondents indicate less interest when cost is added to the equation

 >The overall interest mean rating is 4.7 (out of 10) versus 4.2 for interest at the \$12,500/\$25,000 price point

 >The mean rating is 3.4 at the \$15,000/\$30,000 price point
- A large group of respondents are not interested or moderately interested and a core group are extremely interested
- Prospects that are highly interested will remain interested regardless of the cost
- The higher the cost, the less likely to convert the moderately interested into enrolled students
- Overall, these findings indicate a very amenable target market with approximately 40% of the respondents indicating at least moderate interest at both price points (red box)



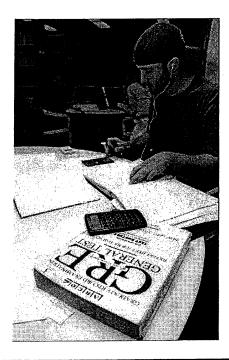


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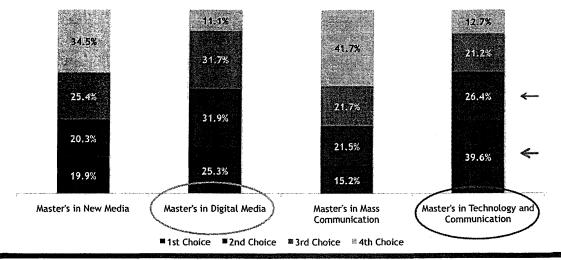
GRE Admission Requirement

- The impact of cost carries over to testing interest if the GRE is required to ensure quality students
- ➤ The overall mean rating is 4.7 (out of 10) versus 3.7 program interest if GRE is required
- > Several verbatim responses indicate negative feelings towards the GRE
- > Other verbatim responses requested a GRE waiver based on experience



Evaluating Name of Online MATC Program

- •This program should be named "Master's in Technology and Communication"
 - > 40% of respondents selected this as their first choice
 - > 26% selected this name as their second choice
 - > Highly interested participants select this option as their first choice at an even higher rate
- · "Master's in Digital Media" was a distant second choice
 - > Numerous verbatim comments indicate a core following for this program being focused on the digital media and the web



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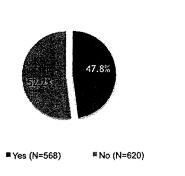
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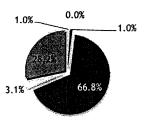
Prospective Pool for the Online MATC Program

Respondents were asked "Would you like to receive information about this new online Master of Arts degree in Technology and Communications (MATC) in the future?"

Receive Additional Information



Yes by Segment



- TCOM: Admitted Not Enrolled
- ■TCOM: Admitted Taken Classes ■TCOM: Certificate Grads
- Undergraduate Alumni Dist Ed Interest
- > This large response requesting more information is a key finding of interest in this type of program
- >These respondents represent immediate leads for the online MATC program
- >These respondents should be contacted within the next 60 days to further stoke interest
- > Key messages should include the findings from this study on the advantages and obstacles of this program

Consultant Recommendations

- Pandora's Box is now open
 - \succ This study has generated a great deal of interest about JOMC and the proposed online MATC program
 - > JOMC should engage the prospective pool generated by this study within 60 days (further testing of curriculum, announcing creation of the new program, etc.)
- The target audience in working professionals
 - > Have family
 - ➤ Have employer
 - > Have other obligations
- Curriculum should have an applied focus
- JOMC should develop a defined pathway from the Certificate program to the online MATC program
- JOMC recruitment and enrollment activities around this program should address perceived concerns and advantages highlighted by this study



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Thank You for your Feedback

