

## LEVERAGING NEW TECHNOLOGIES TO ENRICH AND ENABLE MANAGEMENT RESEARCH: AMD's MEDIA STRATEGY

New technology is often an impetus for scientific progress. When the electron microscope was invented during the 1930s, magnification went from below 2,000 $\times$  (light diffraction microscopes) to about 10,000,000 $\times$ , which enabled scientists to see things that had never been seen before. Researchers made rapid progress in their study and understanding of microorganisms, cells, molecules, metals, crystals, and so forth.

Within the social sciences, the advent of the internet and associated technologies has not only changed our social life—it has been a boon for our ability to study and understand organizational behavior and activity. Management and organization scholars are seeing things that have never been seen before as the internet helps us to look anew. For example, when [Barley \(2015\)](#) conducted an ethnographic study of car dealerships, his observations and findings were disappointing until “researchers fortuitously documented several internet sales” (p. 13), which led to a new discovery about the experiential differences between face-to-face and online sales. Thus, the internet has changed how some people buy cars (i.e., organizational behavior) and it has changed how researchers may investigate such phenomena (i.e., organizational studies). The internet can be both an object of a researcher’s attention and a lens for looking into the subjects’ experiences. Moreover, the internet is improving our scholarly conversations, which have always been crucial to our craft: our ability to talk to each other, share phenomena and show discoveries, report findings and assert conclusions, and then engage and receive or reject what others are finding and saying.

As a digital publication available only through the internet, *Academy of Management Discoveries (AMD)* has both opportunities and challenges related to online technology. The inaugural editorial team deliberately developed a media strategy to make *AMD* distinct within the Academy of Management’s portfolio of journals. We wanted more than excellent articles with “pretty pictures”; we wanted to deliberately use media enhancements to improve our social science. Eventually, we identified three levels of intersection between research and media, moving from basic forms of engagement in scholarly conversation to more sophisticated forms of evidence and experience in scientific work (see Table 1).

At the *Engagement* level, all *AMD* publications include basic features that make articles more

interesting, accessible, and sharable: video abstracts, author’s voices, hyperlinks, commentaries, and social networking buttons. At the *Evidence* level, online technology may enable authors to make better arguments because they can share data and analyses that are either too big for print journals or they involve more than two dimensions (e.g., video recordings and dynamic models). At the *Experience* level, new forms of scholarship are possible, new ways of showing and knowing that are common in other fields but would be new to the field of management (e.g., documentaries and creative projects). Going forward, *AMD* will continue to incorporate new media enhancements on a paper-by-paper basis, always in the service of better social science.

A message is inseparable from its medium. On the one hand, the characteristics of our social science will shape our *AMD* publications. For example, [Lyneis and Sterman’s \(2016\)](#) article on the “capability trap” pushed *AMD* to enhance its media capabilities, which resulted in readers having greater access to an online simulation of nonlinear dynamics. Similarly, [Whiteman and Cooper’s \(2016\)](#) ethnography about “Decoupling Rape” was made more compelling—more deeply felt and thereby understood—with the news videos and photos about the alleged victims. Thus, the social science shaped our journal, not just the other way around: we developed new media enhancements for our online publication in order to accommodate the needs of a particular research project.

On the other hand, the characteristics of our online journal will shape our social science. For example, we expect to see an increase in the use of video-based evidence because the online affordances of *AMD* make such publications possible. The scholarly equivalent of multimedia is called multimodality: that is, within organizations people regularly engage through a variety of modes or semiotic systems altogether orchestrated: talk, text, pictures, drawings, gestures, facial expressions, embodied maneuvers, and so forth, are all co-occurring and inseparable. They are understood in and through their togetherness. Traditionally, audible (verbal) and visible (nonverbal) behavior have been parsed and analyzed in isolation, which the multimodal agenda calls into question. For example, [Fraher, Branicki, and Grint’s \(published ahead of print, 2016\)](#) study of “mindfulness in action” among U.S. Navy SEALS includes video analysis of both visible and audible behaviors.

**TABLE 1**  
**AMD's Media Strategy**

Level	Media enhancements	Scholarly purpose
Engagement (conversational)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Video abstracts tell the essence of an article and stoke a reader's interest</li> <li>• "Authors' voices" provide backstage information about the research project</li> <li>• Hyperlinks access external content that communicates and illustrates</li> <li>• Comments provide a forum for discussion</li> <li>• Social media buttons enable dissemination</li> </ul>	Use media to engage, communicate, and illustrate, going beyond what traditional print journals can do
Evidence (epistemological)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Online publications are not constrained by space (pages). Hyperlinks can access external databases, analyses, and so forth</li> <li>• Online publications are not limited to two-dimensional text. Articles can include and/or access all kinds of evidence, including audio and video recordings, dynamic models, live feeds, and so forth</li> </ul>	Use online technology to present empirical evidence and analysis of phenomena that are difficult to convey through words or text
Experience (phenomenological)	Multimedia opens the door to more ethnographic and phenomenological forms of research that enable "readers" to understand through firsthand experience. Scholarship may begin to resemble documentaries and creative projects that exploit multimedia technologies and move beyond the sensory deprivation of text publications	Use digital technology to provide visceral appreciation and/or tacit understanding through multimodal experiences that text cannot accomplish

Thus, the multimedia platform of *AMD* has already begun to change the shape of our field.

Academic scholarship is often likened to a cocktail party, where a variety of conversations are underway: participants enter, briefly engage, and then depart with the conversation ongoing. The inaugural editorial team of *AMD* has sought to improve the conversation within the field of management, partly through the affordances of online publication. We believe that our scholarship can be

more engaging and interesting; the evidence for our arguments could be stronger and more accessible; and we could expand the base of our experience to include new ways of knowing, as suggested in this video clip:

An Editor's Perspective: <http://aom.link/editorsperspective>

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