

A Diverse Community of Faith

By Patrick Taffe

"If Aristotle had lived among us, I suppose he would have been an Episcopalian, or maybe a Presbyterian—some faith that lies midway between zealotry and atheism." This line from Jay Heinrichs' book *Thank You for Arguing* (2013, p.187) humorously summarizes the Episcopal way: finding the middle between extremes. Through its website, <http://trinityic.org>, Trinity Episcopal Church defines its public image as a legitimate religious community accepting of new members, active in the community, and as taking the middle path in choosing how Trinity worships.



Trinity's homepage, showing navigation to sections of the Parish Life tab

Upon entering the Trinity website, the reader is immediately welcomed in both English in Spanish. After clicking on this greeting, the site gives a brief bilingual invitation. "**ALL ARE WELCOME** at Trinity Episcopal Church. We are an exciting and diverse community of faith where people come to worship, share fellowship, and serve our community and our world." By appealing to English and Spanish speakers in their native languages, Trinity builds ethos with readers by showing that they can accommodate and accept people of different backgrounds and help them worship in their own language. Finally, Trinity is expressing disinterest, i.e., a lack of bias (Heinrichs, 2013, p. 57) with this greeting. Trinity isn't trying to get people to step up how much they put in the collection plate, its just describing itself as a means by which people can worship to better themselves or work to better the community and world.



Lauren Lyon, Trinity's new reverend, pictured in the Staff and Vestry section found under "Parish Life"

Next, under “Parish Life” the reader can view the Mission and History tab. This summarizes Trinity Parish's 151 year history in Iowa City and mentions that Trinity was added the National Register of Historic Places in 1974. Through this, Trinity is showing off the positive role it played in shaping Iowa City, and also the legitimacy it has through so many years of tradition, thereby building ethos. Next, the site continues to the Staff and Vestry. There, portraits of Trinity’s smiling clergy are shown. Their holy vestments remind readers of the traditional authority given to Episcopal clergypersons, but their smiles also instill a pathetic reaction in the reader, reminding them that they are welcome. In their short autobiographies, they list where they are from (often Iowa and the midwest, which builds Ethos to some Iowa natives), and where they got their secular and religious education. For example, by saying that Reverend Lauren Lyon went to Yale Divinity School, Trinity is showing readers that she knows her craft (Heinrichs, 2013, p. 69) as a spiritual leader, which also builds ethos. Moreover, mention of children, spouses, pets, and hobbies can make the reader sympathetic to the clergy as human beings. By seeking to evoke an emotional response, Trinity is using pathos to show the compassionate side of its public image.



The Beliefs section outlines Trinity's ideology and means of worship, i.e. The Book of Common Prayer

Moving on in the Parish Life section, the reader comes to the Beliefs tab. Here, Trinity's explicit goal is to, as Heinrichs said of Aristotle's views on rhetoric, walk the middle path. The site states "Walking a middle way between Roman Catholicism and Protestant traditions, we are a sacramental and worship-oriented church that promotes thoughtful debate about what God is calling us to do and be, as followers of Christ." As a follower of Aristotle, Jay Heinrichs reiterates Aristotle's advice in *Thank You For Arguing* "It helps to make the audience think your adversary's position is an extreme one" (2013, p. 71). Trinity doesn't make Catholicism, Protestantism, or Secularism out to be extreme, it does imply that Trinity has co-opted all the advantages of those lines of thought to make a more balanced religion. For example, Trinity depicts itself as in-touch with some Catholic traditions but also open to the questions posed by the Protestant Reformation. By stating that Episcopalians also celebrate Mass, Trinity is building ethos with Catholic readers. However, many Episcopal beliefs are based on logos. One of the Episcopal (then Anglican) Church's reason for splitting from Catholicism was the right for Christians to read scripture and worship God in their own language. The fact that communication, be it secular or spiritual, is easier done through a person's native language is indisputable. Trinity, in another multicultural gesture, assures readers that the Episcopal Book of Common Prayer is available translated into different languages. Finally, the website states that Episcopalians' interpretation of scripture is based on contemporary conditions and reason, again, this is an appeal to logos. Trinity wishes to show readers that it is a rational, progressive church that can adapt to the modern world.



Communal quilting at Trinity

To show readers ways that Trinity is active in the community and lives up to the public image described in the website's welcoming statement, Trinity lists the local causes it supports under the Serving Others and Stewardship tabs. Heinrichs warns against bragging (2013, p. 64), and Trinity avoids using bragging language. "Outreach at Trinity is how we live out God's call to us to serve the needs of others in this city, the nation and the world. As a parish, Trinity actively supports Shelter House, the Crisis Center, and many other social service agencies in the area." By using the collective we and by mentioning service to others and God, Trinity reassures the reader that these efforts were done collectively for the greater good, not to glorify Trinity or its leadership. As a part of Trinity's goal to serve both the community and world, Trinity honors the companionship between the Iowa Episcopal Diocese and Anglican dioceses in Scotland, the Sudan, and Swaziland. Trinity sends help to Swaziland in the form of relief and development projects designed to alleviate poverty there, which has been exacerbated by drought in the last decade. Next, Trinity lists the times for Alcoholics Anonymous and Overeaters Anonymous, groups that meet at the church during the week. Continuing to the Stewardship tab, the site defines Stewardship as "using the gifts that God has given us to do the things that God calls us to do." In the Serving Others tab, the site simply listed the organizations that Trinity supports, whereas Stewardship shows the more direct ways Trinity works towards the common good, such as Stewardship of Creation, in which members of Trinity help out with local environmental projects like prairie restoration, but also create awareness for global initiatives for justice and peace.

In the footsteps of Aristotle, Trinity uses its website to foster a public image as a friendly, progressive church taking the philosophical middle ground between the traditions and authority of the Roman Catholic Church and the fact-finding, authority questioning ways of Protestantism, and to a further extent, secular atheism. Finally, Trinity demonstrates the extra mile they go in playing an active role improving the community and world. Regardless of the reader's religious beliefs and reactions to Trinity's middle of the road approach to religion, Trinity's compassionate approach to *people* is bound to leave a good impression on any reader, regardless of their background.

Reference List

Heinrichs, J. (2013). *Thank you for arguing: What Aristotle, Lincoln, and Homer Simpson can teach us about the art of persuasion*. New York: Three Rivers Press.

(2012). *Trinity episcopal church*. Retrieved from <http://trinityic.org/>

Eyeing the *DI*

By Chris Higgins

~Background~

The Subject and the Public Image

Any high school student enrolled in Journalism 1 can spit out a predictable string of words — objective, credible, accurate, truthful, etc. — they copied down from the first chapter of their outdated textbook. The chapter describes the field of journalism and the role of news media in society to the budding young journalists with these words, perhaps with a quixotic wink. Everyone, including the high school students, knows that not all sources of information are objective, credible, accurate, or truthful. Some even manage to be not credible to an incredible degree.

However, all sources will want to *present* themselves in a light similar to the textbook ideal. For example, amid regular accusations of bias, CNN and Fox News advertise themselves as "The Most Trusted Name in News" and "Fair and Balanced," respectively. Whether those are "correct" statements is irrelevant. No one will tune into a source they perceive to be anything but trustworthy, fair and balanced. Viewers need to *feel* as though they are receiving untainted material.



Above four, one - The Daily Iowan is the newspaper of the University of Iowa, but it is independent of the university.

Readers of The Daily Iowan have the same desire. The DI is the largely student-run newspaper of the University of Iowa. The publication is part of a non-profit organization that is independent of the university. It is shifting its primary revenue source from advertising to alumni donations.

The DI strives for a public image matching the textbook description, regardless of how trustworthy it actually is. To do this, it will rely heavily on ethos to establish itself to its readers as a publication of character: one that is reliable and credible.

The Text

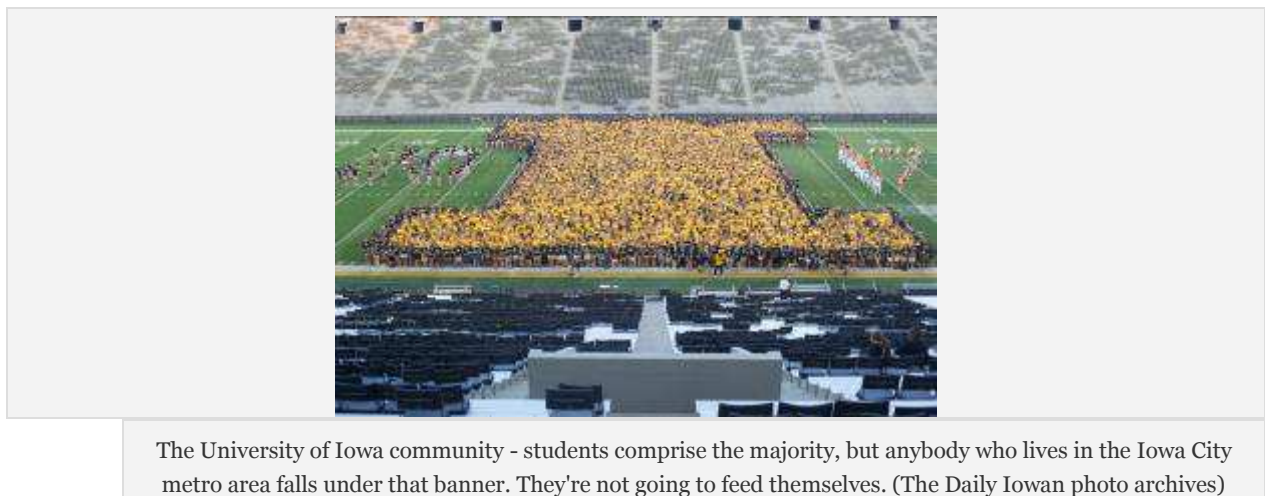
The design and textual elements of a .pdf of the 2/03/14 Daily Iowan's metro section, which contains articles, graphics, and photos about current events in and around Iowa City.



The Audience

The flag says the paper is "for the University of Iowa community," the majority of which comprises UI students: a diverse group of fresh-faced young people like me. By the students, for the students.

Students need others to teach them and to structure their university, so the community also includes TAs/lecturers/professors, university administrators and the like. However, as the university towers over the Iowa City (in a non-scary way), the section will ultimately want to appeal to anyone who resides within the IC metro area.



I was once joyed to see a copy of The DI on my friend's desk in her dorm room, and I suspect the same issue ended up on President Sally Mason's at some point during that week.

~Analysis~

Corrections

In the preceding Friday paper, a reporter quoted a source under the wrong name. A correction of the error was published in this issue.

CORRECTION

In the Jan. 31 article "Gubernatorial candidate visits UI with proposal to lower college costs," *The Daily Iowan* incorrectly quoted Timothy Schultz, the Branstad-Reynolds campaign communications director, under the name Terry Schultz. *The DI* regrets the error.

Don't lose the faith (?) The governor's communications director does not, in fact, share a name with the governor. His feelings on this are currently unknown.

The correction makes use of tactical flaw and intends to make the DI come across as *more* reliable and credible.

- Reliable - A space has been specifically carved out on the page for the correction. The space does not appear to be in danger of disappearing in the future. The correction has its own special and consistent design. Whenever there is a correction to be made, it will be made in the same way each time.
- Credible - It is placed in a visible location: right in the middle of page 2 and above the popular police blotter. The confession is not hidden or downplayed. "*The Daily Iowan* incorrectly quoted..." is direct language that fully affirms what happened.

By transparently admitting to an error, the text plays to ethos by portraying itself as something that stands for the capital-t Truth: the epitome of character, even when it is not preferable.

The correction also appeals to pathos at the end when it says "The *DI* regrets the error." Regret inspires sympathy, and the apologetic burst further presents factual mistakes as something to be avoided and ashamed of. The DI was wrong, and it'll do its best to make sure it never happens again — it swears.

The flag

University students don't tend to trust authority figures. Hop on any freshman's Facebook feed and you'll find posts distrustful of the police, the government, and, of course, university officials, who are also members of a major influential institution.

Therefore, the paper needs to ensure that readers know the university is not towering over the publication (in a scary way). Students do not want to be spoon-fed PR from the university, and I imagine older readers of the Daily Iowan would agree.

To this end, we see the following bit of ethos on the paper's flag:

*"THE INDEPENDENT DAILY NEWSPAPER FOR THE UNIVERSITY OF IOWA COMMUNITY SINCE
1868"*



"INDEPENDENT" - Front and center, all caps and up in your face

- "INDEPENDENT" - A statement that Sally Mason had no say in determining the section's content. With this single adjective, the text sets the tone for its desired public image. It forms decorum with its audience, which longs for an objective source. The publication builds more credibility in the audience's eyes, as it distinguishes itself from PR machines and empty press releases which the audience does not view as objective.
- "DAILY" "SINCE 1868" - The paper already argues that it is a purveyor of truth. It now means assure the audience of its long-standing devotion to credibility. These two phrases highlight the goal's longevity and regularity, i.e. reliability. The DI draws attention to its nearly century and a half of experience, which is highly valuable when persuading an audience.

Also, the statement is in one of the most visible locations possible, pushing the intended public image of credibility and reliability right into readers' eyes.

Sources

Sources are the core of any journalistic piece; from them springs all relevant information for stories. The DI wants the audience to feel its sources — and thus its reporting — are credible and reliable. Otherwise, the audience cannot trust the publication as a whole.



I mean, it's possible that someone in the Comparative Literature or Political Science departments is deeply knowledgeable on the subject of Arabic language program expansion, but readers are more likely to trust
Director of World Languages Russell Ganim.

1. This isn't advertised, but the official Daily Iowan policy is that every story must have at least three different perspectives. Readers would view stories quoting only administration members or only students as incomplete and not credible. With numerous perspectives, The DI appears as though it is objectively sitting in the middle, reporting on all sides without taking one of its own.
2. The text records merely what people say (or believe or think and so on). The stories are not making a claim or stating a belief; the quoted sources are. This makes the metro section come off as impartial. It does not form its own opinions, but simply passes along the ones of others. A piece of information never goes unsourced, even when it is redundant (such as in the case of text graphics repeating facts already present in a story).
3. The DI would not enhance its reputation by using sources that are not credible. A glance through the stories will reveal lots of directors and experts and executives and officials — people an audience is likely to view as trustworthy. The three-source rule comes into play again to counter the prospect that the officials are shoveling garbage at reporters. Perhaps everyone is shoveling garbage at reporters. That's not the point. Including viewpoints from numerous "official-sounding" or "knowledgeable" people is an attempt to at least create the illusion of reputable information.

If readers don't perceive the sources, the heart of the metro section, as trustworthy, then they will not see the publication as one of character. The DI takes steps to ensure its sources are credible, at least in the mind of the audience. That's ethos.

~Conclusion~

If the public believes the Daily Iowan stands for the truth, then they also believe it is a publication of character. Credibility and reliability are rooted in the truth. Like any source of information, The DI wants a public perception of credibility and reliability. The metro section uses its correction, its flag, and its treatment of sources — all plays on ethos — as methods to attain it.

~Works Cited~

Heinrichs, J. (2013). *Thank you for arguing: What Aristotle, Lincoln, and Homer Simpson can teach us about the art of persuasion*. New York: Three Rivers Press.

The Daily Iowan [Iowa City, IA] 03 Feb. 2014, 145th ed., Metro sec.: 1-3. Print.