

# HIGH-FLYING JOURNALISM

We won't drone on and on  
about why this new technology is featured.  
Read this to get the whole story.

STORY BY **MOLLY SPINNING** // PHOTO BY **BRITTANY COGGINS**

It's neither bird, nor plane, nor Superman. It's a journalistic drone. But what this mini-aircraft lacks in size, it makes up for in cutting-edge technology.

The word "drone," taken out of context, scares most Americans. But not Mike Wiseman. The video production specialist for journalism and electronic media joins the University of Missouri and the University of Nebraska-Lincoln in tackling drone journalism. Like most new tech gadgets though, the drones face controversy.

The Federal Aviation Administration grounded Missouri and Nebraska's lofty ambition to fly the drones outside, but Wiseman hopes the FAA will see the benefits of journalism drones.

"It really opens up a whole new way of looking at the news," Wiseman says. "Instead of relying on a helicopter, journalists can just go out to the side of the road and throw up a drone and have video in minutes."

The device looks like a toy helicopter but has a computer, GPS system and camera attachment. In competent hands, it can travel distances up to 1.5 miles and fly as high as a couple thousand feet, with the help of a remote control. However, because of the University of Tennessee's proximity to the Knoxville airport, it falls under a strict no-fly zone, which means little air time for Wiseman's drone. Before the FAA ruled journalistic drones to be in compliance with Unmanned Aerial Vehicle guidelines, Wiseman clocked 250 hours of flying time. Now, the quad copter sits on his desk until further notice.

"I think people need to move away from negative connotations and realize it's just like any other tool. There are responsibilities and good things and bad things that go with any new technology," Wiseman says.

Speaking of new technology, Wiseman also has his hands on a portable broadcasting machine called the TriCaster 8000. It works like a TV studio in a box, with audio recording, graphic effects and editing capabilities. Wiseman says the TriCaster is the future of journalism.

With the TriCaster, Wiseman and student journalists can stream sporting events, dramatic performances and any other student activities directly to the Internet. But, that's not all. Wiseman and The Volunteer Channel plan to use the TriCaster almost exclusively to broadcast UT Today, a student produced news segment.

Wiseman's journalism gadgets don't stop there. "Would you like to see a new toy I just got in?" he asks. The "toy" is a Sony Journalist Backpack. With the backpack, students can shoot and edit stories on a laptop or tablet, which also serves as a teleprompter or monitor that can broadcast video worldwide.

"I don't want to train [students] on old technology. I want them to have the stuff that's being used now, so they have relevant skill sets when they leave UT," Wiseman says. "UT is proactively preparing students to not just report, but write, shoot [and] edit."

New developments in journalism should lead to competition among journalism schools, but Wiseman believes it actually levels the playing field since universities have to work together to figure out how to properly use the technology.

With so many portable journalistic devices in circulation in the JEM school, the future looks bright.

"I think the freshman and sophomores coming into the JEM program came at the right time," Wiseman says. "They are going to get a lot of hands-on experience with today's technology that their predecessors never had ... and I'm excited to bring that change to JEM."

