Abstract

Creative Project: The Only Alternative, 1968-71: An Underground Newspaper and Its Community

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This digital research module, The Only Alternative, 1968-71: An Underground Newspaper and Its Community, (http://rbfrick.iweb.bsu.edu/the_only_alternative) presents a study of The Only Alternative, an underground newspaper published by Ball State students from 1968 to 1971. This newspaper contains articles on various subjects including issues on the Ball State campus and the city of Muncie, Indiana, the Civil Rights Movement, politics, and the Vietnam War. The print collection resides in the Ball State University Libraries Archives and Special Collections. As part of this project, the complete run of the newspaper was digitized so that in-depth textual analysis was possible using Voyant-Tools. Other digital tools including Google N-Gram Viewer, Google Maps Engine Lite, TimeGlider, and Visual LightBox were also used in the project. This research suggests that, while much of the Ball State student body was ambivalent towards the Counterculture Movement, the Civil Rights Movement, and the anti-Vietnam protests, The Only Alternative stands as proof of the existence of a countercultural community in the Muncie area. The goal of the project is to add to the scholarship on Ball State University during the Sixties and to increase the accessibility and usability of The Only Alternative as a primary source for researchers by digitizing the newspaper providing descriptive
metadata, and examining the founding, impact and legacy of the newspaper via a scholarly digital research module.