57
THE POWER OF FRAMING: NEW CHALLENGES FOR RESEARCHING THE STRUCTURE OF MEANING IN NEWS

Brian Baresch, Shih-Hsien Hsu and Stephen D. Reese

Starting in late 2010 and through the first several months of 2011, a series of protests in Tunisia, Egypt and other nations in the Middle East toppled authoritarian governments and put pressure on others. The wave of action eventually came to be widely known in English-language media as the Arab Spring – a perspective which, by evoking both the season of rebirth and the Prague Spring of 1968, places the protests in a frame of beneficence and hope. By this reckoning, the actions reflect popular striving for self-determination in the face of oppression, a social value of Western culture. The "Arab Spring" frame thus places these events in a favorable, democratic light.

That is the sort of thing news frames do: They highlight some aspects of the events behind a story and downplay others, often with the effect of supporting a certain way of looking at the world. This is accomplished by word choice (e.g. using language of "awakening" rather than "chaos" to describe the Middle East uprisings) and by source selection (e.g. quoting more democracy activists than state security officers).

In another example, social "progress" has been a popular news frame in nuclear energy policy since the 1940s and was dominant in the 1960s (Gamson & Modigliani, 1989). On the surface, this frame presents nuclear power as the most effective way to solve the energy crisis, making its "powerful" and "efficient" aspects salient while omitting other options and negative consequences. Moreover, the "progress" frame

aligns with the deeply rooted social value that technology and talented experts are capable of solving social problems.

Occasionally a journalist or news organization deliberately adopts a specific ideology, but often their work routines and source availability lie behind these choices. In any case, news frames lay the foundation on which we citizens build our collective understanding of our world.

Thus, news and journalism researchers have often used the concept of framing since Goffman (1974) introduced the approach. Goffman described a frame as a "schema of interpretation" that allows people to "locate, perceive, identify, and label a seemingly infinite number of concrete occurrences defined in its limits" (p. 21). Derived from social psychology, the core of framing research has aimed to understand "how people reply on expectations to make sense of their everyday social experience" (Reese, 2001, p. 7). These expectations about daily life – that is, the frames in one's head – are constructed socially, a dynamic process involving the social contexts and the actors who generate the frame. The means to develop and transmit the frames, and the individual cognitive mechanism to perceive and assess them, must be considered. This dynamic interaction between social contexts and individuals attracts scholars from sociology, psychology, communication, political science, and journalism studies.

News media are no doubt the most important actors in the framing process: They are frame generators, organizers, and transmitters, linking social structure and the individual. News content is not mere combinations of words; it carries embedded social meaning and reflects the prevalent organizing principles in society through journalists' selection of words, news sources, and metaphors. This process sets the boundary of an issue, reduces a complex situation to a simple theme, and shapes people's interpretations by making some elements salient while ignoring others. In the "Arab Spring" and nuclear "progress" frames, news content is not unproblematic but contains social values and conveys ideologies, thus wielding significant social power.

In analyzing this power of news framing, researchers often emphasize one or the other side of the process, focusing on how news media frame an issue or how audiences perceive it. These two approaches, using both qualitative and quantitative methods, map the traditional research territory. New media, meanwhile, have challenged framing research in terms of how we reconcile and adjust these approaches to "shaping" and "effects" in the provider-receiver relationship. In the new media environment, a networked, multidirectional relationship has replaced the traditional linear and unidirectional relationship between media and audience, and the term *actor*, which represents the active role of participants and a blurred boundary between producer and users, has replaced *audience*, which connotes a passive receiver. As a result, researchers have more difficulty identifying the source of any given news frame as it steers public discourse. The traditional mass media environment offers each perspective a spot to rest on and a place to simplify many complex relationships and effects. However, the rich but fragmented information environment and interlocking networks make the influence of social structures and networked society, which until recently were latent and easily ignored by much framing research, more and more influential and important. In this chapter, we examine the challenges that

the changing media environment brings to news-framing research, and re-evaluate the theoretical "framework" in order to capture the ongoing movement of the framing research project.

Framing

News-framing research territory

Framing scholars have their own interests in analyzing different levels in the framing process, resulting in multiple definitions and research perspectives. To map the territory, scholars have categorized framing research in terms of the focus and level of analysis (i.e. the social structure that generates a frame or the effect a frame has on individuals). D'Angelo (2002) categorizes framing research into cognitive, critical, and constructionist paradigms, and the images best describing these paradigms are respectively negotiation, domination, and co-optation.

- Cognitive framing research is interested in the process of interaction and negotiation between the media frame and the individual's existing schemas and knowledge. In short, it primarily focuses on framing effects (e.g. Price, Tewksbury, & Powers, 1997; Iyengar & Kinder, 1987; Cappella & Jamieson, 1997).
- The critical paradigm regards news frames as the outcomes of both journalistic routines and the values of the elites who oversee the news-reporting structures that in turn sway the audience (e.g. Entman & Rojecki, 1993; Gitlin, 1980; Martin & Oshagen, 1997; Reese & Buckalew, 1995).
- The constructionist perspective treats frames as "interpretive packages" and "tool kits," collections of rhetorical devices that sponsors and journalists use to understand the social world; its sociological focus is the interaction among media packages, public opinion, and the socialization process (e.g. Gamson & Modigliani, 1989; Pan & Kosicki, 1993).

The critical and constructionist perspectives each emphasize the cultural and political context of frames and the shared social meanings.

Reese (2010) maps the news framing territory with two perspectives, the "what" and the "how," which are roughly aligned with qualitative and quantitative orientations. The "what" perspective centers on the frame-building process, while the "how" focuses on the individual's cognitive process. The "what" orientation examines latent framing devices in texts to capture the embedded meaning and tie them to the cultural and social structures where ideological and power practices are carried out. Therefore, identifying the reasoning devices (e.g. Gamson & Modigliani, 1989) and the cluster of concepts (Cappella & Jamieson, 1997) in the narratives matters to the "what" framing study – for example, the problem-definition and moral-evaluation functions that a frame plays in public discourse (Entman, 1993).

The "how" orientation takes explicit frames as the starting point and, in emphasizing the social-psychological perspective, addresses how individuals adopt frames and

process information received from media; however, its focus on regarding the frame as an outcome of various predetermined actors (e.g. elites competing over health-care policy; see Pan & Kosicki, 1993) often takes for granted the existing power and cultural structure where a frame is embedded. In a world where everyone is highly connected and is part of the social meaning creating and enhancing process, the tendency of the "how" perspective to limit the news frame to a term or slogan created by a political actor is reductive and misses the macro influence that cultural and structural factors play. For example, in the United States the "War on Terror" frame was built on a term used by the George W. Bush administration for describing its foreign policy, but it was reified through various social actors through various means (media routines, political parties, surveys of public opinion) and has become a naturalized common sense, an ideology, and a "way of life" to see the world (see Reese, 2010). Fixing the frame and examining "how" it yields effects on receivers misses the broader cultural dynamic.

Framing definition and the bridging model

Many scholars have sought a unified model of news framing research, but consensus in reconciling the disparate elements in the framing "project" has remained elusive. Framing research is attractive because it crosses various paradigms and perspectives, but that makes any unified model impossible. Yet without striving to conduct research within a unified model that covers the whole framing process, or without missing the values other approaches possess, news framing researchers can provide insights by carefully identifying their research positions and concerns in the broader field and joining the conversation with other perspectives. Instead of pinning it down to a single function (e.g. the effect of a salient frame) or seeking a mended paradigm (e.g. Entman, 1993), we see framing as a multiparadigmatic research field (following D'Angelo, 2002) and a model that bridges various interlocking approaches: quantitative and qualitative, empirical and interpretive, psychological and sociological, and academic and professional. This bridging function is like the nature of the framing concept itself, connecting various aspects in the social world and providing identifiable patterns to see the world we live in.

Many scholars have defined framing, and a noted definition is Entman's:

> To frame is to select some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a communicating text, in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation.
>
> (Enthman, 1993: p. 52)

This points out the functions of framing for a certain issue, but how it is done, and what determines "in such a way," are also of interest. Reese's definition emphasizes the underlying organizing principle that determines "in such a way," and captures the theoretical diversity and the bridging nature of framing:

> Frames are *organizing principles* that are socially *shared* and *persistent* over time, that work *symbolically* to meaningfully *structure* the social world.
>
> (Reese, 2001: p.11, emphasis in the original)

This captures framing as a dynamic and evolving process, not simply fixing on an individual frame sponsor, topic, or issue stance. A frame is instead a macro way of thinking. Framing's organizing function goes beyond the immediate information and spreads across discourses in a broader cultural realm. For instance, the perspective "War on Terror" did not stay limited to policy debates, or remain used by only the US administration, but crossed the political realm and became a predominant part of American culture. The information this frame organized has seemed unproblematic and natural because people have been used to seeing the world without knowing the frame existed. Reese's definition suggests that framing research not only examine the manifest or most salient content but also strive to catch the structure and pattern hidden in the media texts, and search for what makes people take this latent structure and a way of thinking for granted – that is, the naturalization and routinization process in which an organizing principle emerged.

Thus, to map the news-framing research territory, Reese proposes a question model:

> What power relationships and institutional arrangements support certain routine and persistent ways of making sense of the social world, as found through specific and significant frames, influential information organizing principles that are manifested in identifiable moments of structured meaning and become especially important to the extent they find their way into media discourse, and are thus available to guide public life.
>
> (Reese, 2001: p.19)

This approach seems to better fit the new media environment in which news frames circulate, to which we now turn.

Reese (2001, 2007, 2010) has articulated the news-framing concept and how to apply his definition of framing to reality, examining the dominant organizing principle and its naturalized features. It takes time and a wide range of observations for researchers to dig into news discourse until an organizing principle emerges, a challenge made more difficult by the fragmented media ecosystem. News text is not a neutral sphere that only contains competing issue stances, and this type of framing research involves moving beyond taking text at face value, listing topics and citations, and seeing certain individuals as the sole sources of the discourse. It is a dynamic process and a web of culture that involves various social actors and publics. It is like a network in which all aspects are interlocking, and it is hard to examine the structure of the network by reducing it to a unidirectional media-effects relationship or limiting it to the competition of issue stances (Reese, 2007). New media have changed the way people communicate and build discourse, and society has become more highly connected and networked. Traditional news media have lost much of their hegemonic status in producing and transmitting news text. Online space provides means for

individuals to voice opinions and interact with one another, and abundant information for them to actively select and engage with.

The challenges of the new media landscape, in which the source and direction of effects is less clear, provide news-framing research with an opportunity, to take the networked structure and relationships into consideration and move toward untangling the complex reality to reveal the embedded organizing principles.

New media and framing challenges

The complex news environment

American framing research was simpler in its early decades, from Goffman (1974) until the beginnings of the digital era in the mid-1990s: The news consumer was limited to a much smaller set of media – a local newspaper, a small group of national newspapers (e.g. the *New York Times*, *The Wall Street Journal*), local TV news broadcasts, a few network news shows, and a couple of news magazines. Whether taking a critical approach or a more constructionist one, the framing researcher had a limited number of sources and story forms to deal with. These US news outlets had comparable corporate structures and processes, the newsgathering routines of their reporters and editors were in large part the same, as was the balance of reportorial autonomy and institutional imperatives. The framing researcher, whether examining content or the forces behind it, thus had a finite, manageable number of points of entry.

But with the arrival of the digital revolution, news content and influence have diffused across a range of new media. Blogs, social network sites, Twitter, podcasts, and video sharing have complicated both the forms of content and the structures of authority. At the same time, especially since the mid-2000s, most news organizations have streamlined (shortened) their editorial processes, so reporters' copy gets fewer interventions from newsroom managers before it is released to the public. Many people outside the legacy news organizations engage in journalistic activity and must not be ignored. The "article" or "story" as the unit of analysis is no longer the default choice. Framing researchers must attend to new story forms and new conditions of creation.

Thus, analyzing texts also has become more problematic now that there are exponentially more texts, and more kinds of texts, and they are more scattered. A frame researcher must decide whether to account for institutional blogs (the *New York Times*, for example, has dozens of them) and Twitter feeds as part of the news product. Including these media makes analysis more complicated: Unlike news articles, which researchers have generally treated as standalone products, blog posts and especially tweets often refer, explicitly or implicitly, to previous posts, or to other blogs. A sample of media content must account for not only that diversity but also the way the components relate to each other. (This is especially true of tweets; the 140-character limit forces an economy of expression in which many of these relations are implied but not stated, and the researcher must account for these devices.) A series of tweets may be taken individually or as a collective opus. Also, the retweet – passing along another's

tweet, often without comment – often implies support for the retweeted sentiment, but not always. This also complicates the landscape for the careful scholar.

Researchers also must deal with new habits of audience interaction. In 2008, the *New York Times* (Stelter, 2008) quoted a college student in a study who said he or she can stay abreast of the news without looking for it: "If the news is that important, it will find me" (para. 7). Stelter called this strategy the "social filter" (para. 6) and contrasted it with the better-known "professional filter" (para. 4) that characterized the traditional relationship of news providers to their audiences. With many news users now monitoring media less and social networks more, information is taking a variety of paths from source to destination in a variety of forms – becoming, in effect, a new type of news medium, paid attention to in various ways, and the framing scholar must account for it. Certainly, the search for news frames should not be limited to traditional texts.

Meanwhile, engagement with "the people formerly known as the audience" (Rosen, 2006) becomes another previously unaccounted influence; frames don't originate solely in the newsroom or among elites, and this is more true than ever. News organizations have also been creating internal structures devoted specifically to engaging the public through social media (Garber, 2010). And many American journalists do not work for large news organizations on a regular basis. The journalist Christopher Allbritton (2003), without an employer or sponsor, raised money from readers to pay his reporting expenses at the beginning of the Iraq War. Reporters and columnists maintain blogs and engage readers in the comments sections. Journalists who use Twitter not only promote their work there but also test out ideas, solicit feedback and search for sources. Beginning in early 2011, Andy Carvin at NPR essentially created a new model of the journalist with his intensive aggregation and reporting on Middle East and North Africa protests on Twitter.

Thus, one could once count institutional controls and professional norms as significant influences on the US news product (and they still are, of course); but with the fragmentation of institutional oversight as reporters gain autonomy in various new media, journalists find themselves in new situations where new practices and sets of norms are taking shape. Reporters like Allbritton can function outside any journalistic organization; Carvin had support from his employer, but an enterprising freelancer may be able to support a similar endeavor with donations direct from the public. Many part-time bloggers become part of the news ecosystem with no budget or boss at all (see for example Buttry, 2010). Thus, a researcher who hunts for frames only in "mainstream" publications risks missing larger news territories.

Challenges to news-framing research

Institutional authority also has become fragmented and its oversight weakened. Individual journalists now often maintain blogs and micro-blogging Twitter accounts, and engage readers in comments sections attached to their product. Different publications exert control over their blogs and tweets to varying degrees; blog entries may get some editing, or they may go straight to the web; journalists' tweets are rarely

scrutinized before being posted. The relationship between reporters' social media presence and the parent news organization may also be uneasy or ill-defined. For example, on the night of May 1, 2011, the earliest notice by the *New York Times* of Osama bin Laden's apparent death (and, for many readers, the first time they heard the news) was a tweet at 10:25 p.m. Eastern time by reporter Brian Stelter, who followed up with two more tweets in the next eight minutes. Yet in a later recounting of the night's reporting, the Times wrote that its first publication was a news alert posted at nytimes.com at 10:40 (Salmon, 2011). This omission of Stelter's work indicates a complicated and possibly contradictory vision by Times managers of its various news products, and of the lines of authority connecting them.

We are accustomed to regarding news articles as produced with an institutional voice established through both socialization of the reporter into newsroom practices, and a collaborative editing process; in other words, we once could infer much about frame construction from this context. Blogs and tweets, however, lend themselves to individualization, and bloggers may be encouraged to develop a particular "voice" distinct from the institutional tenor. And even as visual framing remains under-researched, developing digital journalistic forms such as interactive graphics and other data visualizations add to the challenges for the researcher analyzing selection and omission of data sets and samples, and the choice of display and analysis tools.

The new media also make identifying frame sponsors more challenging. Straightforward long-form news articles generally name the sponsors, often government officials such as the US president. A 15-word tweet, however, poses a greater challenge of interpretation: Is the reporter transmitting a source's frame, or the news institution's, or constructing her own? Again, clues may come from examining the interrelations among texts.

When facing this sort of interpretive challenge, the framing researcher may have to deal with notions of agency and autonomy. That is, where certain elites (government officials, business leaders, newspaper executives) once had a great deal of control over news frames (which is not to say they were always in consensus), now many journalists have more leeway in story selection and production than the more tradi-tional reporter.[1] A critical frame analysis of a new-media text must take into account the agency and nature of frame creators, and as the news production environment evolves, the power relationships become more and more tangled.

New directions and theoretical framework

In a networked and fragmented ecosystem, we ask whether framing power is more concentrated across these platforms or more fragmented itself. In this environment, the "organizing principle" approach to framing becomes much more important. With the content so scattered, the relationships among individual texts and the persistence of concepts across texts help to reveal the underlying intellectual and ideological framework, which "do[es]n't stop with organizing one story, but invite[s] us to marshal a cultural understanding and keep on doing so beyond the immediate information" (Reese, 2001, p. 13). Such an underlying principle, if it is widely recognized in a given

audience, may be evoked with only a brief mention or even implicitly, by allusion. Similarly, situational irony employed to reinforce a frame may be transparent to a text producer's regular audience but more opaque to the researcher dropping in to gather a sampling of texts. These devices will be difficult to spot, but the researcher must account for them.

Returning to a recent example of an organizing principle, consider the "War on Terror" frame. Immediately after hijacked jetliners crashed into the World Trade Center and the Pentagon in September 2001, US President George Bush described the attacks as a heinous crime. Shortly, though, he changed his approach and framed the events as an act of war (Lakoff, 2004). This shift had lasting consequences for the nation and the world, as it provided a rhetorical basis for subsequent invasions of Afghanistan and later Iraq (Reese and Lewis, 2009). For years after the attacks, US news media adopted the "War on Terror" frame as their own. (Bush's successor Barack Obama's movement away from the phrase signaled his emphasis on a more multilateral and less "us versus them" approach to foreign policy.)

Reese and Lewis (2009) investigated the "War on Terror" framing by searching news texts for key words and then carefully reading the relevant texts for context and meaning. This reading was possible in large part because the texts themselves – newspaper articles, editorials, columns, and letters – were long enough to support such analysis, and the key words and phrases could be counted on to appear in articles that involved this frame. Many blog posts are long enough to be treated similarly. But individual tweets, and blog posts as brief as tweets, do not submit as readily to such analysis; the "story" cuts across these smaller units of text. At this early stage in new media scholarship, the enterprising frame researcher must innovate methods for identifying, sampling, and analyzing data sets that will yield meaningful results.

The proliferation of news products also creates challenges for frame-effects researchers: How much effect does an outlet or a story or a blog post have in the end? Who reads a given blog or Twitter stream, and what influence does it carry? The classic agenda-setting study involves comparing public opinion about priorities with the news media's story mix. Similar studies in the framing tradition analyze the transmission of news frames, often by showing texts to research subjects. But with so many more news pathways, determining the news mix and then gauging outlets' relative influence has become more difficult. Divided attention means divided effects.

Conclusion

The continuing transformation of journalism and the roles of journalists and the "people formerly known as the audience" is also transforming journalism studies and especially framing research. New actors have joined old ones, new forms of news have established their beachheads, and new theories are beginning to emerge. In this environment framing research can exert a centripetal force to pull together the expanding universe of texts and analyses.

Content analyses will be needed to survey this sprawling new landscape and produce the beginnings of maps of the territory. But frame research must take yet

more ambitious approaches. The growing network of news contains many actors and complicated patterns of texts, and researchers must do it justice. The organizing principles that drive our understanding of the world are scattered, dispersed through an expanding web of articles, images, videos, radio shows, podcasts, infographics, and visualizations. Some of these texts are produced by established news organizations; many are not. This complicates the questions of frame sponsorship and journalistic agency. Scholars must work hard to pull it all together and make sense of the underlying narratives.

Framing operates through news, but our definition of "news" must be fluid: It is no longer enough to say that news is current information selected, collected, assembled and transmitted by professional news organizations. Today's news diet includes, for example, science blogs supplementing science news, church blogs interpreting political news, one-writer blogs reporting on local issues, and other grassroots intermediaries. The average American doesn't draw a bright line between news and not-news, and we hamstring our own efforts if we make such artificial distinctions without clear justification.

Thus, to gather in content-based studies the texts that spring from the framing's organizing principles, we must gather all sources, follow all links, search all engines, examine tweets, and network socially. We can map networks and identify influencers to guide us to the most relevant texts, burrow down to the sources to hunt the genesis of the frames, and surf to the far reaches of information's spread.

One source of organizing frames, often overlooked but ripe for research, is news-talk radio. Especially for those commonly described as political conservatives, talk radio transmits and reifies frames and schemas relating to political ideologies frequently not represented in "mainstream" media, but journalists and scholars rarely plumb these depths, so this source of organizing principles is poorly understood. Yet these frames serve to organize the social understanding of life and politics for millions of Americans and, to some extent, for the elected officials they support. Researchers who examine a polarized political ecosystem must reach out to the actors whose schemas incorporate the views largely hidden from the mainstream.

As the number of influential texts increases along with their interconnectedness online and the roster of actors grows longer, frame research becomes ever more important to assessing the news and information ecosystem from which we build our pictures of our world. Framing researchers uncover the structure and patterns connecting the diffuse yet interlocking texts that we use to make sense of the world. To fully understand our world we must first discover and understand its organization in the media and the mind.

Note

1 "Here on the Forbes blogs, we decide what to write about, for the most part. We function relatively autonomously" (Breslin, 2011).

References

Allbritton, C. (2003). Blogging from Iraq. Retrieved from http://www.nieman.harvard.edu/reports/article/101075/Blogging-From-Iraq.aspx.

Breslin, S. (2011, April 20). How your journalism sausage gets made, part one. [Web log post]. Retrieved from http://blogs.forbes.com/susannahbreslin/2011/04/20/how-your-journalism-sausage-gets-made-part-one/.

Buttry, S. (2010, January 16). Pew doesn't understand news ecosystem well enough to study it. [Web log post]. Retrieved from http://stevebuttry.wordpress.com/2010/01/16/pew-doesnt-understand-news-ecosystem-well-enough-to-study-it/.

Cappella, J.N. and Jamieson, K.H. (1997). *The spiral of cynicism: The press and the public good.* New York: Oxford University Press.

D'Angelo, P. (2002). News framing as a multiparadigmatic research program: A response to Entman. *Journal of Communication,* 52, 870–88.

Entman, R.M. (1993). Framing: Toward a clarification of a fractured paradigm. *Journal of Communication,* 10, 231–42.

Entman, R.M. and Rojecki, A. (1993). Freezing out the public: Elite and media framing of the U.S. anti-nuclear movement. *Political Communication,* 10, 155–73.

Gamson, W.A., and Modigliani, A. (1989). Media discourse and public opinion on nuclear power: A constructionist approach. *American Journal of Sociology,* 95, 1–37.

Garber, M. (2010). What Voice of San Diego wants in an "engagement editor." Retrieved from http://www.niemanlab.org/2010/03/what-voice-of-san-diego-wants-in-an-engagement-editor/.

Gitlin, T. (1980). *The whole world is watching: Mass media in the making and unmaking of the New Left.* Berkeley: University of California Press.

Goffman, E. (1974). *Framing analysis: An essay on the organization of experience.* Boston: Northeastern University Press.

Iyengar, S. and Kinder, D.R. (1987). *News that matters: Television and American opinion.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Martin, C.R. and Oshagen, H. (1997). Disciplining the workforce: The news media frame a General Motors plant closing. *Communication Research,* 24, 669–97.

Pan, Z. and Kosicki, G.M. (1993). Framing analysis: An approach to news discourse. *Political Communication,* 10, 55–76.

Price, V., Tewksbury, D. and Powers, E. (1997). Switching trains of thought: The impact of news frames on readers' cognitive responses. *Communication Research,* 24, 481–506.

Reese, S.D. (2001). Prologue – Framing public life: A bridging model for media research. In S.D. Reese, O.H. Gandy and A.E. Grant (eds.), *Framing public life: Perspectives on media and our understanding of the social world* (pp. 7–31). Mahwah, New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Reese, S.D. (2007). The framing project: A bridging model for media research revisited. *Journal of Communication,* 57, 148–154.

Reese, S.D. and Buckalew, B. (1994). The militarism of local television: The routine framing of the Persian Gulf War. *Critical Studies in Mass Communication, 12*(1), 40–59.

Reese, S.D. and Lewis, S.C. (2009). Framing the War on Terror : The internalization of policy in the US press. *Journalism,* 10, 777–97.

Reese, S.D. (2010). Finding frames in a web of culture: The case of the War on Terror. In P. D'Angelo & J. A. Kuypers (eds.), *Doing news framing analysis: Empirical and theoretical perspectives* (pp. 17–42). New York: Routledge.

Rosen, J. (2006, June 27). The people formerly known as the audience. [Web log post]. Retrieved from http://archive.pressthink.org/2006/06/27/ppl_frmr.html

Salmon, F. (2011, May 8). The hermetic and arrogant New York Times. [Web log post]. Retrieved from http://blogs.reuters.com/felix-salmon/2011/05/08/the-hermetic-and-arrogant-new-york-times/.

Shoemaker, P.J. and Reese, S.D. (1996). *Mediating the message: Theories of influences on mass media content* (2nd ed.). New York: Longman.

Stelter, B. (2008, March 27). Finding Political News Online, the Young Pass It On. The *New York Times,* from http://www.nytimes.com/2008/03/27/us/politics/27voters.html.

'NO LONGER CHASING YESTERDAY'S STORY': NEW ROLES FOR NEWSMAGAZINES IN THE 21ST CENTURY

Heidi Mau and Carolyn Kitch

'We've all heard the argument that a weekly newsmagazine has no role in today's relentless, 24/7 news culture, in which digital blizzards of information come at us at blinding speed. … What a magazine can offer readers is a path to understanding, a filter to sift out what's important, a pause to learn things that the Web has no time to explain, a tool to go back over the things we think we know but can't make sense of.'

(Brown, 2011: 5)

Observers have been declaring the impending death of the newsmagazine medium since at least the 1980s (Burton, 2007; Clurman, 1992). Recent years have seemed especially grim, with one of the three major American newsmagazines ceasing print publication and another, burdened with more than $50 million of debt, sold for a dollar ('An Audio', 2010). Yet the category's two most prominent titles, *Time* and *Newsweek*, have survived into the second decade of the 21st century, as have other weekly magazines that provide news, such as *The Economist*. And the success of a recent entry into the field, *The Week*, suggests that the concept of the newsweekly may indeed have a future.

When Tina Brown became the newest editor of *Newsweek* in early 2011, industry buzz predicted major change. A staffer declared, 'It's slick, contemporary and feels like something out of the new millennium – sort of *New York* mag meets *GQ* …' (quoted in Pompeo, 2011). Commentators veered between hope that just such 'slick' modernization could save the newsweekly genre and hand-wringing over the celebrification of news, especially considering Brown's celebrity-journalism background as

a former editor of the British *Tatler* and the American *Vanity Fair*. Others predicted a new editorial style because, given her most recent job as editor of the website *The Daily Beast*, she was coming to the position from the world of online journalism. Her first issue made clear another point that had received less attention: under the skyline '150 Women Who Shake the World' stood Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, with a coverline reading, 'How she's shattering glass ceilings everywhere'. Brown unveiled this cover, one day before its news-stand debut, on the ABC News program *This Week with Christiane Amanpour*, as part of a segment on the role of women in Middle East political revolutions. Here was a reminder that, for the first time in its long history, a woman finally had shattered the glass ceiling of the American newsmagazine industry (Just, 2011).

Nevertheless, Brown's 'editor's letter' inside her first issue (quoted above) made a more general case for the need for newsmagazines – and it was remarkably consistent with the rationale offered by Henry Luce and Briton Hadden nearly 90 years earlier when *Time* debuted. The current era is not the first time that newsmagazine editors have proclaimed the special value of their work in an age of information overload and competition from new media. This chapter assesses the current state of newsmagazines as well as their longer-term survival, focusing primarily, though not solely, on the American sector of this genre.

'All the news of the world' once a week: foundings, dominance, and prominence

When they founded *Time* in 1923, Luce and Hadden, lamenting the little 'time which busy men are able to spend on simply keeping informed,' promised to 'organize the world's news and give it to readers in short, easily digestible doses' (*Time* prospectus quoted in Tebbel & Zuckerman, 1991: 160). Yet they also promised to do something more: to provide explanation, interpretation and opinion, to 'sift through the clutter, synthesize what was important and preach their cheeky prejudices', as *Time* managing editor Walter Isaacson recalled on the magazine's seventy-fifth anniversary (1998: 96). By the 1930s, Luce[1] had broadened his reach through new media – a newsreel series and a radio program, both called *The March of Time* – but had maintained his mission. The radio show promised listeners, 'you can depend on one magazine to summarize for you at the end of the week all the news of the world' (quoted in Brinkley, 2010: 181).

Launched in 1933, *Newsweek* (then *News-week*) similarly defined its work as a process of 'sifting, selecting, and clarifying the significant news of the week. … [It] does not take the place of a newspaper … it is an indispensable complement to newspaper reading, because it explains, expounds, clarifies' (Untitled advertisement, 1933: n.p.; 'A Letter', 1933: 33). A third title became a serious competitor in 1948, when conservative political columnist David Lawrence merged two publications he had founded in the 1930 – a weekly newspaper, *U.S. News*, and a weekly magazine, *World Report*.

These three magazines dominated the American newsweekly market for the following six decades.[2] Their editorial voices were authoritative, evaluative, and

national, making sweeping editorial gestures on behalf of history and on behalf of the country.

Time began its annual tradition of naming a 'Man of the Year' in 1927, just four years after the magazine's founding. In 1941, Henry Luce made his famous declaration that the 20th century was 'the American Century' and offered a proposal not only for US entry into World War II but also for the nation's place in the world afterwards.[3] In 1950, *Time* named a 'Man of the Half-Century' (Winston Churchill[4]), and it began to make broader cultural statements with its 'Man of the Year' feature – choosing, for instance, 'The American Fighting Man' for 1950 and 'The Middle Americans' for 1970. *U.S. News & World Report* did not engage in summary journalism until the 1980s, though in 1983 it inaugurated an evaluative practice that would later become its editorial bread-and-butter, its annual ranking of colleges and universities. In that same year, *Newsweek* marked its fiftieth anniversary by publishing 'The American Dream,' a gold-covered special issue that told 'the true story of America' through the lens of 'five heartland families' living in the representative town of Springfield, Ohio. It also was *Newsweek* that made what may have been the most memorable editorial gesture of any journalistic medium just after September 11, 2001: its cover featuring three firemen raising the American flag on the site of the World Trade Center, an image that conjured popular memory of the famous World War II photograph of Allied soldiers raising the flag on Iwo Jima.

Indeed, newsmagazines' finest moments may come after extraordinary events, whether they are shocking disasters (such as an act of terrorism or a devastating flood) or a cultural or historic milestone (such as the death of a beloved celebrity or the election of the first African-American US President). On such occasions, these publications often do some of their best journalism, offering explanation – what James Carey (1987) famously called the 'how' and 'why' of journalism that are too often missing from breaking news coverage – for a national audience that seems to be at least temporarily unified. These issues also tend to produce the magazines' highest news-stand sales, thanks to the continuing phenomenon that readers still want tangible evidence of major events.[5]

Coverage of such events has been one common focus of academic examinations of this medium, and the extent of continuing scholarship on newsmagazines suggests that researchers still presume their journalistic importance and national prominence. Most recently, quite a few studies have used the newsmagazines as a lens through which to understand news coverage of the events of September 11 (e.g., Clark & Hoynes, 2003; Deveau & Fouts, 2005; Fried, 2005; Hutcheson et al., 2004; Kitch & Hume, 2008). Other research has considered who and what have appeared on the magazines' covers over the years (e.g., Cardoso, 2010; Christ & Johnson, 1985), their coverage of wars (e.g., Landers, 2004; Nikolaev, 2009; Patterson, 1984), and their articulation of American attitudes on various social issues (e.g., Ashley & Olson, 1998; Gilens, 1996; Kitch, 2005; Lentz, 1990; Covert & Washburn, 2007). Most book-length studies of the newsmagazine medium have been historical profiles of the institutions themselves and of their famous editors (e.g., Baughman, 2001; Brinkley, 2010; Elson, 1973; Herzstein, 1994; Swanberg, 1972; Walker, 2006).

Some of these studies have confirmed that the newsmagazines' ambitious missions and authoritative status have remained intact even decades after their founding. In making this point, some scholars have used the same kind of grand language as the magazines themselves. For instance, in his examination of the three major newsweeklies' coverage of the Vietnam War, James Landers concluded: 'The editors and correspondents of the newsmagazines were journalists, but they regarded themselves as observers whose job was to provide insight and perspective on the war, not to merely report what happened. The psychological ebb and flow of the American experience in Vietnam, from confidence to wariness to despair, appeared in the pages of *Newsweek*, *Time*, and *U.S. News & World Report*' (2004: 5).

The 'young tiger' and an 'aggregator with an attitude': recent challenges

During the middle decades of the 20th century, the newsweeklies competed, in function if not form, with other kinds of successful weekly magazines that covered many of the same subjects they did. Chief among those weekly competitors were two corporate siblings of *Time*, first the photojournalism magazine *Life*, beginning in 1936, and then America's first major celebrity magazine, *People*, beginning in 1974 (two years after *Life* had succumbed to the competitive pressures of television). During the 1960s and 1970s, *Time* and *Newsweek* expanded their definitions of 'news' from the acts of political figures to a broader array of individuals and events representing trends in popular culture as well as politics.

Historian James Baughman contends that the latter editorial shift signaled the newsweeklies' departure from 'opinion leadership' and thus the beginning of their demise (1998: 125). James R. Gaines, editor of *People* during the late 1980s and of *Time* during the early 1990s, makes this point in somewhat different language, calling *People* 'the young tiger that … over time subtly changed the sense of what news is' (2010: 64). Former *Time* staffer Richard Clurman (1992) dates the newsweeklies' editorial decline to the 1990 corporate merger between Time Inc. and Warner Communications that resituated the genre's leading publication within an entertainment company.

In 2001, US newsmagazines gained a new competitor in *The Week*, a British import published by Felix Dennis, that uses a different editorial formula: not original reporting, but rather a digest of brief reports based on other news sources, delivered in a self-described 'fresh' style. (Ironically, notes Gaines, this was the original mission of *Time*, which vowed to report news in a modernly no-nonsense way amid the information overload of the 1920s; it was meant to be 'an aggregator with an attitude' [2010: 64].) *The Economist*, another British weekly with significant US readership, similarly runs short and often unbylined news summaries.

As these imports gained ground in the US market during the first decade of the 21st century, the fortunes of the more established magazines were declining. Editorially the major titles still had national prominence, and as recently as 2006, *Time* won the National Magazine Award for General Excellence, the industry's highest honor, for its coverage of Hurricane Katrina during the previous year (Seelye, 2006). Yet both

Time and *Newsweek* made deep cuts to their editorial staffs and closed many of their international as well as domestic bureaus.

The financial picture was worse. In less than a decade, the leading two magazines' advertising pages decreased by more than half, falling as much as 25 percent in a single year (as was the case for *Newsweek* in 2009) (Moses, 2010c). In 2007, *Time* cut its rate base (the number of copies a magazine guarantees to its advertisers that it will sell with every issue) from 4 million to 3.25 million while raising its news-stand copy price by $1, to $4.95 – a high price for a magazine that was sometimes less than 50 pages long. This strategy was defended (to advertisers) on the grounds that *Time*'s readers were of better 'quality' than those of other news publications, a claim also made about the magazine's online edition, which its editor at the time called '24-hour news for smart people' (John Tyrangiel, quoted in Smolkin, 2007: 20; also see Fiore, 2006). *Newsweek* followed suit, cutting its own rate base, and the combination of this move with additional losses in paid readership resulted in a 2010 circulation of 1.5 million, half of what it had been just two years earlier. Meanwhile, the US circulations of the other weeklies that provide news – *The Economist*, *The New Yorker*, and *The Week* – continued their gradual growth, although none of them exceeds one million (Matsa, Rosenstiel & Moore, 2011).

The most dramatic change of 2010 was the decision of *U.S. News & World Report* to abandon newsmagazine journalism in print. It had switched from weekly to semi-monthly and then to monthly during 2008, and in the following year it had begun publishing a digital version of its newsmagazine, which it emailed to subscribers in PDF format ('*U.S. News* Launches', 2009). Today its only print publications are its well-known 'special' issues ranking various kinds of institutions, especially in the fields of health care and education. A *New York Times* report on this change quoted from a memo sent to the staff by the magazine's management: 'Our emphasis on rankings and research content is the right path, making us an essential information source' ('*U.S. News &*', 2010: B3).

'Extending the brand': The move toward new editorial products

While it always emphasized what it called 'news you can use,' *U.S. News & World Report* is now quite firmly in the business of selling 'essential information' – defined not as news, but as data on which people base buying decisions. The company's rankings, which are available online, in print, and as videos, now assess not only schools and hospitals, but also travel, mutual funds, law firms, cars, and insurance companies, as well as questions such as 'best places to live' and 'best affordable places to retire.' *US News & World Report* has taken what used to be a 'bonus' aspect of the publication's work and made it central to its identity (and its income) in the 21st century. *Newsweek* and *Time* also have created new kinds of editorial products that offer readers – or entirely new audiences – something more.

Partnering with test-preparation company Kaplan, *Newsweek*, too, has entered the college-rankings business. It also publishes books, some unrelated to its news operations (with titles like *100 Places to Remember Before they Disappear*), but most written

by its high-profile columnists and editors. When political reporter Evan Thomas penned a post-mortem assessment of campaign strategy in the 2008 Presidential election, the book carried *Newsweek*'s logo, and its jacket touted the magazine's 'remarkable access to the candidates … The result is a story that reads like no other coming off the campaign trail' (2009). Even before the election's conclusion, *Newsweek* had drawn from its own reporting to create book-length profiles of the Democratic and Republican candidates and their running mates, selling them for $9.99 apiece as e-books via Amazon.com. 'Turning this kind of collection into books is an old idea,' the magazine's then-editor Jon Meacham told the *New York Times*. 'This is competing in the digital space with our traditional strengths, and that's been hard to do' (2008: 6).

As Meacham noted, repackaging newsmagazine content is not a new strategy, and no company has done more of it than Time Inc.[6] The practice of 'extending the brand' through 'ancillary media products' – seemingly new buzzwords in the journalism business – began for *Time* in 1931 with its 'March of Time' radio show; the Time-Life Books Division, which long has repackaged the contents of corporate-sibling magazines *Time* and *Life*, was formed in 1961 (Elson, 1973: 480). Throughout the 20th century, *Time* and *Life* issued not just year-end and decade-end summaries, but also book sets telling history for a popular audience, and their favorite theme was World War II. Correspondingly, it was that 'Good War' and the 'Greatest Generation' who fought it that sparked *Time*'s serious and regular enterprise of 'magabook'[7] publishing beginning in the early 1990s, when the magazines published 'keepsake' issues that coincided with the fiftieth anniversaries of that war's milestones. By then, the company was equally as interested in constructing social memory for the Baby Boomers, creating magabooks on anniversaries of events of the 1960s, ranging from the Kennedy assassination to the 'Summer of Love'. This theme remains a popular seller: as recently as 2010, *Time* issued a new magabook titled *Visions of the 1960s: The Images that Define the Decade* (and the present tense of the verb is a hint that, in commemorative media products, the 1960s live on).

During the late 1990s, *Time* published a series of magabooks summing up the 20th century, beginning with *Time's Great Events of the 20th Century* (1997) and culminating in a six-part series on the century's 100 most important people, arranged into six categories. The latter project was eventually published in partnership with CBS News, whose then-anchor, Dan Rather, wrote the book's Foreword. Rather declared that 'these stories and images should serve as a reminder of where we have been, and where we can go. The rough draft of history now has a smoother, more definitive shape' (1999: 19).

Despite that declaration, *Time* has continued to offer *new* 'definitive' definitions of history in coffee-table-book format with grand titles such as *America: An Illustrated History* (2007) and *History's Greatest Events: 100 Turning Points that Changed the World: An Illustrated Journey* (2010). Also published in 2010 was perhaps the most telling artifact of the magazine's self-presentation in a new-media world, a history of *Time* itself. Weighing in at six pounds, this 431-page, $50 hardcover book, which is on sale nationally in bookstores, is boldly titled *Time: The Illustrated History of the World's Most*

Influential Magazine (Angeletti & Oliva, 2010). Its sections recount episodes of the magazine's past in terms of their historical backdrops (e.g., 'From Civil Rights to the Space Race' [122]), and the magazine's launch is recalled in a chapter titled 'Writing History Every Seven Days' (16). Such pomposity earned the sarcasm of a *Wall Street Journal* reviewer who described the book's voice as 'the tone of a man at a bar, or perhaps on his deathbed, insisting that he once steered the planet through the stars', adding, in a parting shot, 'this book does have the size and heft of a small tombstone' (Shiflett, 2010).

Surfing, feeding, trending and tweeting: negotiating the internet and social media

While it continues to publish material products meant as history books, *Time* insists that it has found a new editorial and corporate life on the internet. The company reports having more than 3 million users of its mobile app as well as 2.6 million followers on social media sites (in 2010, *Time* was the second-most-followed magazine on Twitter, behind *People*). Combined with a total of 22 million[8] people reading the print magazine, 'the magazine's reach [is] at an all-time high' claims a 2010 report on the state of the industry (Matsa, Rosenstiel, & Moore, 2011). Monthly web traffic is at 4.9 million for *Time* and at 3.7 million for *Newsweek*. While those numbers are considerably higher than their print circulations even before the readership cuts of the past decade, they pale in comparison to the 40 million monthly visitors to the aggregator Yahoo! News (news.yahoo.com) (Matsa, Rosenstiel, & Moore, 2011).

Critics say that newsmagazines' traditional format is their greatest challenge on a new-media landscape. *Adweek* columnist Bob Greenberg (2007) declares, 'The editorial role of magazines in curating the best content on a particular subject and distilling it down to what fits into the weekly or monthly print run is being replaced by machines (e.g., search, personalization) and social networks (e.g., sites where users tell other users what's good, useful or popular).' This problem is partly a matter of space (what will fit inside a magazine) and partly a matter of the greatly increased availability of 'curation'.

Since the internet began to make inroads on both fronts, offering not only aggregation of information but also many new analytical voices, newsmagazine editors have continued to insist that *their* choices and analysis are simply superior. 'I would argue that the information explosion now is so tumultuous and so varied, that people … need a trusted guide, someone to help sort out the wheat from the chaff,' *Time* editor Richard Stengel said in 2007, adding: 'It's not somebody … sucking their thumb or scratching their chin. It's someone who does a huge amount of reporting to come to a conclusion about something' (quoted in Smolkin, 2007: 18). Nonetheless, it is apparent that the newsweeklies must offer something new and different.

U.S. News & World Report has most clearly differentiated its web content by focusing on its rankings enterprises. As a result, by mid-2010, the company's two websites, USNews.com and rankingsandreviews.com, together had more than 10 million unique users, and some 60 percent of the company's revenue was coming

from digital content ('USNews.com', 2010; Moses, 2010a and 2010b). The others are becoming heavily involved in social media and other new technologies. By April 2011, *Time.com*, *Newsweek.com* and *TheWeek.com* were engaged in online news norms such as listing their most popular (or 'trending') stories, noting their most emailed stories, and encouraging the sharing of their online content through social media – ways in which these sites can spread their digital brand and attempt to build loyal readership. Each of these sites works differently to promote its authors as potential guides to content. *Time.com* prominently features bylines alongside the headlines for its news content and blog links. *Newsweek.com* features bylines and additionally offers an alphabetical listing of contributing-author names and a related search function. *TheWeek.com* offers, alongside its aggregated content, a boxed section of its own 'exclusive opinion makers'.

The newsmagazine websites feature multimedia material, mostly in the form of videos and photo slideshows. *Time.com* and *Newsweek.com* produce some of their own online short videos, also featured on their YouTube channels. *TheWeek.com* curates videos, hosted within its site. Whereas *TheWeek.com* also curates photo slideshows from other sources, *Time.com* and *Newsweek.com* feature material from their extensive print and online photo archives. *Time.com*, *Newsweek.com* and *TheWeek.com* each offer a free daily newsletter via email inclusive of links that lead readers back to online newsmagazine content.[9] Each site offers mobile apps that reformat its website for easier navigation on smartphones, most including customization options so users can configure their news according to interests. As of April 2011, most of these apps are available free of charge or at low cost and are particular to online content.[10]

The relationship between online content and print content varies per newsmagazine. *TheWeek.com* curates work from other sources both online and in print, but limits online access to its weekly newsmagazine to print subscribers only. *Time.com* partners with *CNN*, providing online content separate from its print material. In early 2011, *Time.com* visitors could still find about half of the content of *Time's* current print issue in the site's 'magazine' section and sometimes as online material under adapted headlines. Articles were unabridged but embedded with links to other *Time.com* material. At the same time, stories featured on the home page and section headers of *Newsweek.com* were often unabridged material from the magazine's current news-stand issue, and a majority of that issue was accessible online for free.

Whereas the amount of online access to print material varies per newsmagazine, all the websites continue to feature persistent and prominent ads for print subscription offers. Even with the various technologies available to connect with online news via social media, RSS tools, email and mobile apps, newsmagazines still hope to connect with readers through a magazine format – currently in print, but perhaps increasingly via digital platforms.

Back to the future: the digital newsmagazine experience

The newsmagazines continue adapting their print magazines for digital platforms, most notably electronic readers and tablet computers, each new platform bringing its

own set of challenges. Electronic book readers, or e-readers, initially came onto the market with books and newspapers in mind – a predominantly black-and-white world with few images. Early models and current lower-end models cannot easily navigate writing and images as experienced in a magazine layout. Newsmagazine issues for the e-reader platform often do not include the full content of their print counterparts, but they offer price value and newsmagazine content.[11] In early 2011, rates hovered around $2.99 per month for *Kindle* and *Nook* subscriptions to *Newsweek* and *Time* and for the *Kindle* edition subscription to *U.S. News Weekly*.[12] Some magazines are adapting their material for e-reader/tablet hybrids, which can better incorporate a magazine layout view.[13]

The tablet platform receiving most of the newsmagazine application development in 2010 was Apple's iPad, although Apple has frustrated magazine publishers (in all categories) with its difficulty in negotiating subscription rates. Initial single issues of *Time* for the iPad cost the same as the print issue, a cost highly criticized by consumers posting feedback in the Apple app store. Google mentioned interest in creating a digital news-stand that would give magazine publishers the option of selling subscriptions as well (Peters, 2011; Tsukayama, 2011). By late 2010, *Newsweek* was offering its iPad app, and introductory subscription rates of 12 weeks for $9.99 and 24 weeks for $14.99.[14] The consumer responses, in this instance, were overwhelmingly positive to this development. It is still unclear how subscriptions and advertising will work in the tablet platform, and when other tablet applications will be available (as of the end of March, 2011, *U.S. News Weekly* and *The Week* had yet to offer an iPad app).

Time has collaborated with a digital design company and a software developer to build an iPad app that resembles a print-magazine reading experience while incorporating the interactive and touchscreen technologies of the iPad tablet platform. The transition from print to tablet platform seems the closest translation of the print-magazine experience so far. The size of an iPad tablet is close to the size of most weekly newsmagazines. Tablets are relatively lightweight, portable and easy to carry around. Touchscreens often allow readers to scroll through pages with a finger-flip movement. Color resolution is good and continues to improve, as does battery life. Although still not the same sensory and tactile experience as holding and reading a print magazine, reading newsmagazines via the tablet platform may be the closest experience yet to being able to slow down, perhaps comfortably lounge on a couch, and engage in the more in-depth reading experience newsmagazines proclaim they want their readers to have.

'Stopping a frantic world': an old defence in new language

While they proudly forge a path into new media, newsmagazines simultaneously praise their form of journalism as an *antidote* to – as Tina Brown put it in her first issue of *Newsweek* – the 'digital blizzards of information that come at us at blinding speed' and the 'quick zap of news on the Web'. When reporters are 'no longer chasing yesterday's story,' she writes, they, and their readers, can 'pause to learn things that the Web has no time to explain' (Brown, 2011: 5). Brown's argument is a direct engagement with

the most common criticism of print media, the charge that they no longer can deliver news in a timely fashion. She is not alone in taking this tack, which is an attempt to redefine the terms of debate by redefining the meaning of time itself.

The new line of defense of the newsmagazine medium is that readers today wish for *slower* news, or at any rate, a less-frantic presentation of it. 'Counterintuitively, perhaps, the weekly cycle is a promising one in a world running at a digital pace,' wrote Brown's predecessor, Jon Meacham, in 2009 (9). This also was the premise of *Time*'s decade-in-review issue published at the end of 2010, which offered what it called 'TimeFrames'. The magazine, its editor explained, offered a 'longer view' of the passage of time in an age when news reports are too often 'casualties of hit-and-run journalism, measured in second-by-second spikes of traffic' and when 'information … is a commodity [and] understanding is scarce' (Stengel, 2010: 4). The introduction to this issue's set of cover stories explained:

> The first decade of the 21st century moved so fast that it was easy, as the poet said, to have the experience but miss the meaning. It's hard to find the truth about the age of truthiness …. So TimeFrames is our attempt to stop the clock, slow down, look back, see what comes into focus only from a distance. We know what happened in the past 10 years. But what really happened? …. how do we find the music or the meaning in the noise of the news?
>
> (Gibbs, 2010: 33)

Even as it discontinued its print newsmagazine, *U.S. News & World Report* used much the same language in explaining the value of its digital edition of the magazine, which is issued as a PDF file that readers can print and which employs the layout of a print publication ('designed horizontally, to be read easily on a computer screen' instead of 'the typical Web page filled with blinking images and endless headlines'). Then-editor Brian Kelly promised readers when the online version debuted: 'What's not so different is the journalism. We're still doing what a news weekly (*sic*) does best: stopping a frantic world for a moment to take stock of events and sift out the meaning from the meaningless' (Kelly, 2009: 6).

This newest rationale echoes the credo of the genre's inventors nearly a century ago. Without question, today's information landscape makes it a challenge for 'busy men' (and busy women) to 'simply keep informed', as Luce and Hadden wrote in 1923. Newsmagazines' survival in a new-media world will determine whether that mission is, as critics claim, obsolete – or, as editors proclaim, timeless.

Notes

1 Luce's partner, Briton Hadden, died in 1929. A new biography of Hadden contends that he was the true 'genius' behind the idea and style of *Time* and that Luce later unfairly took the lion's share of credit (Walker, 2006).

2 During this period, two of the magazines came under new ownership. *Newsweek* was an independent company until 1961, when it was bought by *The Washington Post*; it was sold again in 2010 to entrepreneur Sidney Harman. *U.S. News & World Report* was independent until 1984, when it was bought

by Mortimer Zuckerman. *Time* remains the flagship publication of Time Inc., which merged with Warner Communications in 1990; that combined company acquired the Turner Broadcasting System in 1996 and then was merged with America Online from 2000 to 2009. These ownership changes are documented in many sources, including Smolkin (2007).

3 This article actually appeared in *Life* magazine, by *Time*'s then corporate sibling (Luce, 1941).

4 The choice of Churchill was surely a snub to the recently deceased former US President Franklin Delano Roosevelt, of whom the conservative Luce long had been a political foe.

5 *Time*'s four best-selling issues to date are, in order, two of its special reports on September 11 and the commemorative issues it published after the deaths of John F. Kennedy, Jr. and Princess Diana (Angeletti & Oliva, 2010: 414–15).

6 For an overview of Time Inc.'s marketing of 'special' issues and other ancillary products across all of the company's magazine titles, see Kitch, 2006.

7 'Magabooks' or 'bookazines' are perfect-bound (glued, not stapled) softcover books that cost between $10 and $15 and remain on sale for extended periods.

8 This figure represents total readership, not paid circulation. Readership figures are based on data showing how many readers-per-copy (or 'pass-along rate') a magazine has.

9 *Newseek.com*'s daily newsletter link leads to *TheDailyBeast.com*, where readers can sign up for *TheDailyBeast*'s newsletter.

10 *Newsweek.com* charged $1.99 for its various mobile apps, while *Time.com* and *TheWeek.com* offered their mobile apps for free. *Newsweek.com* additionally promotes iPhone apps for ancillary products such as *Newsweek's 100 Places to Remember Before they Disappear* and *Flashback by Newsweek*, featuring an image archive of *Newsweek* magazine covers.

11 It is unclear whether the offering of partial content was due to limitations of technology, a platform/ tier pricing strategy, or other unknown reasons.

12 Prices as advertised on Amazon.com and BarnesandNoble.com, accessed online 4 April 2011.

13 Barnes and Noble debuted their 'NOOK Color,' an e-reader/tablet hybrid for the 2010 holiday season. Some magazines are set up to appear on a NOOK Color as they would in print, but since the size of the reader is so small (approximately 5" x 7"), it has to use a function that allows the reader to pop up the text in a separate window for easier reading. This reader was priced halfway between the base Kindle e-reader and the base iPad tablet (The-ebook-reader.com).

14 Prices as advertised in the Apple App Store, accessed through iTunes, 4 April 2011.

15 *Time* collaborated with The Wonderfactory of New York and WoodWing Software of the Netherlands in creating the debut '*Time* Magazine' iPad app. The overall design is intended to mimic the *Time* magazine print reading experience while incorporating optional multimedia such as slideshows, video clips, and links to online updates (Wonderfactory, 2010).

References

'A Letter to News-Minded People' [advertisement] (1933). *News-week*, 25 March: 33.

'An Audio Pioneer Buys Beleaguered *Newsweek*' (2010). *New York Times*, 3 August, p. B1.

Angeletti, N. and Oliva, A. (2010). *Time: The Illustrated History of the World's Most Influential Magazine*. New York: Rizzoli.

Ashley, L., and Olson, B. (1998). 'Constructing Reality: Print Media's Framing of the Women's Movement, 1966–1986.' *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly*, 75(8): 263–77.

Baughman, J.L. (1998). 'The Transformation of *Time* Magazine.' *Media Studies Journal*, 12(3): 120–7.

Baughman, J.L. (2001). *Henry R. Luce and the Rise of the American News Media*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.

Brinkley, A. (2010). *The Publisher: Henry Luce and His American Century*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf.

Brown, T. (2011). 'Notebook: A New *Newsweek*.' *Newsweek*, 14 March: 5.

Burton, L.W. (2007). 'Still Going.' *American Journalism Review*, April/May: 19.

Cardoso, C.R. (2010). 'The Future of Newsmagazines.' *Journalism Studies*, 11(4): 577–86.

Carey, J. (1987). 'Why and How?: The Dark Continent of American Journalism,' in R.K. Manoff and M. Schudson (eds), *Reading the News*. New York: Pantheon, 146–96.

Christ, W.G. and Johnson, S. (1985). 'Images through *Time*: Man of the Year Covers.' *Journalism Quarterly*, 62(4): 891–3.

Clark, C., and Hoynes, W. (2003). 'Images of Race and Nation after September 11.' *Peace Review*, 15(4): 443–50.

Clurman, R. (1992). *To the End of* Time*: The Seduction and Conquest of a Media Empire*. New York: Simon & Schuster.

Covert, T.J.A. and Washburn, P.C. (2007). 'Measuring Media Bias: A Content Analysis of *Time* and *Newsweek* Coverage of Domestic Social Issues, 1975–2000.' *Social Science Quarterly*, 88(3): 690–706.

Deveau, V.L. and Fouts, G.T. (2005). 'Revenge in U.S. and Canadian News Magazines Post-9/11.' *Canadian Journal of Communication*, 30(1): 99–109.

Elson, R.T. (1973). *Time Inc.: The Intimate History of a Publishing Enterprise, 1941–1960*, vol. 2. New York: Atheneum.

Fiore, M. (2006). '*Time* Magazine Slashes Rate Base, Raises Newsstand Price.' *www.foliomag.com*. Posted 10 November; accessed 2 April 2011.

Fried, A. (2005). 'Terrorism as a Context of Coverage before the Iraq War.' *The Harvard International Journal of Press/Politics*, 10(3): 125–32.

Gaines, J. (2010). 'Where the Newsweeklies Went Wrong.' *Folio: The Magazine for Magazine Management*, 39(6): 64.

Gibbs, N. (2010). 'TimeFrames.' *Time: Special Timeframes Issue: What Really Happened, 2000–2010*, 6 December: 33.

Gilens, M. (1996). 'Race and Poverty in America.' *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 60(4): 515–41.

Greenberg, B. (2007). 'The Digital Dialogue.' *Adweek.com*, 11 February; accessed 26 March 2011 via LexisNexis database.

Herzstein, R.E. (1994). *Henry R. Luce: A Political Portrait of the Man Who Created the American Century*. New York: Scribner's.

Hutcheson, J., Domke, D., Billeaudeaux, A. and Garland, P. (2004). 'U.S. National Identity, Political Elites, and a Patriotic Press Following September 11.' *Political Communication*, 21(1): 27–50.

Isaacson, W. (1998) 'Luce's Values – Then and Now.' *Time: 75th Anniversary Issue*, 9 March: 96–7.

Just, S. (2011). 'Tina Brown Reveals New *Newsweek* Magazine.' *ABC News* [online], accessed 6 March 2011, <http://abcnews.go.com/Politics/tina-brown-reveals-newsweek-magazine-hillary-clinton-abc/story?id=13068817>.

Kelly, B. (2009). 'The Weekly, and the Monthly.' *U.S. News & World Report*, March: 6.

Kitch, C. (2005). *Pages from the Past: History and Memory in American Magazines*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press.

Kitch, C. (2006). '"Useful Memory" in Time Inc. Magazines: Summary Journalism and the Popular Construction of History.' *Journalism Studies*, 7(1): 105–22.

Kitch, C. and Hume, J. (2008). *Journalism in a Culture of Grief*. New York and London: Routledge.

Landers, J. (2004). *The Weekly War: Newsmagazines and Vietnam*. Columbia: University of Missouri Press.

Lentz, R. (1990). *Symbols, the News Magazines, and Martin Luther King*. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press.

Luce, H.R. (1941). 'The American Century.' *Life*, 17 February: 61–65.

Matsa, K.-E., Rosenstiel, T. and Moore, P./Pew Project for Excellence in Journalism (2011). 'Magazines: A Shake-Out for News Weeklies.' *The State of the News Media 2011: An Annual Report on American Journalism*. Accessed 14 March 2011, <http://stateofthemedia.org/2011/magazines-essay/>.

Meacham, J. (2009). 'Top of the Week: A New Magazine for a Changing World.' *Newsweek*, 25 May: 9.

Moses, L. (2010a). 'Digital Blueprint: Is *U.S. News*' Web Success a Model for Newsweeklies?' *Media Week*, 20(19), 10 May: 26.

Moses, L. (2010b). 'Some Good News from *U.S. News*.' *Brandweek*, 51(19): 26.

Moses, L. (2010c). 'Surviving the Week: With Rival *Newsweek* in Peril, Can *Time* Be Saved?' *Media Week*, 17 May: 6.

Nikolaev, A.G. (2009). 'Images of War: Content Analysis of the Photo Coverage of the War in Kosovo.' *Critical Sociology*, 35(1): 105–30.

Patterson III, O. (1984). 'Television's Living Room War in Print: Vietnam in the News Magazines.' *Journalism Quarterly*, 61(1): 35–9, 136.

Perez-Pena, R. (2008). 'Campaign Articles from *Newsweek* Become E-Books for Amazon Kindle.' *New York Times*, 13 October: 6.

Peters, J.W. (2011). 'For Magazines, a Bitter Pill.' *New York Times*, 17 January, p. B1.

Pompeo, J. (2011). 'Redesigned *Newsweek* on Stands Monday'. *The Cutline* [blog]/*Yahoo! News* [online], Accessed 14 March 2011, <http://news.yahoo.com/s/yblog_thecutline/20110305/ts_yblog_thecutline/redesigned-newsweek-on-stands-monday>.

Rather, D. (1999). 'The Reporter's Century' [foreword]. In *Time*/CBS News, *People of the Century: 100 Men and Women Who Shaped the Last 100 Years*. New York: Simon & Schuster.

Seelye, K.Q. (2006). '*Time* Wins Top Award for Magazine Excellence.' *New York Times*, 10 May, p. C7.

Shiflett, D. (2010). 'The Glossies.' *The Wall Street Journal*, 22 May. Accessed 19 April 2011 via ProQuest database.

Smolkin, R. (2007). 'Finding a Niche.' *American Journalism Review*, April/May: 16–25.

Stengel, R. (2010). 'To Our Readers: The Long View.' *Time: Special Timeframes Issue: What Really Happened, 2000–2010*, 6 December: 4.

Swanberg, W.A. (1972). *Luce and His Empire*. New York: Scribner's.

Tebbel, J. and Zuckerman, M.E. (1991). *The Magazine in America, 1741–1990*. New York: Oxford University Press.

The-eBook-Reader.com. 'Nook Color Review' [weblog]. Accessed 8 April 2011, <http://www.the-ebook-reader.com/nook-color.html>.

Thomas, E., with reporting by the staff of *Newsweek* (2009). '*A Long Time Coming*': *The Inspiring, Combative 2008 Campaign and the Historic Election of Barack Obama*. New York: Public Affairs Press.

Time: America: An Illustrated History (2007). New York: Time Books.

Time: History's Greatest Events: 100 Turning Points that Changed the World: An Illustrated Journey (2010). New York: Time Books.

Time/CBS News (1999). *People of the Century: 100 Men and Women Who Shaped the Last 100 Years*. New York: Simon & Schuster.

Time's Great Events of the 20th Century (1997). New York: Time Inc. Home Entertainment.

Tsukayama, H. (2011). 'Faster Forward: Google May Launch Digital Newsstand for Android.' *Washingtonpost.com*, 3 January. Accessed 19 April 2011 via Business & Industry database.

Untitled advertisement (1933). *News-week*, 25 February 25: n.p.

'*U.S. News* Launches Weekly Online Pub' (2009). *B to B*, 94(2): 6.

'*U.S. News & World Report* to End Monthly Publication' (2010). *New York Times*, 6 November, p. B3.

'USNews.com Audience Reaches Record High in August 2010' (2010). *PR Newswire*, 9 September 9. Accessed 26 March 2011 via Proquest database.

Walker, I. (2006). *The Man Time Forgot: A Tale of Genius, Betrayal, and the Creation of* Time *Magazine*. New York: HarperCollins.

Wonderfactory (2010). 'Time Magazine iPad App Demo' [online video]. Uploaded 5 April 2010; accessed 15 April 2011, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=avM3Aor7Ptg>.

HEAR TODAY AND ON TOMORROW: THE FUTURE OF NEWS AND 'NEWS TALK' IN AN ERA OF DIGITAL RADIO

Guy Starkey and Andrew Crisell

In a volume which covers the general theory and practice of journalism, a chapter that focuses on its particular manifestations in radio might seem unnecessary. The key principles of journalism manifest themselves in any and every medium because they relate to a set of core issues around truths about the world we live in and the ways of selecting and presenting those truths. Because 'truth' is controversial, because facts and their meanings can be disputed, some of these core issues relate to a journalist's ability to verify them and the ethics of the way in which they are presented (Starkey 2007: 1–20).

Nevertheless, we would argue that an understanding of nothing more than these key principles would be an inadequate preparation for the practice of journalism in radio. The medium makes unique demands on the journalist, imposing practices which have been tried and tested over a long period of time. Yet the medium is changing: other practices are relatively new or still emerging, and one important catalyst for change has been the transition from analogue to digital technology. In this chapter we will examine the potential impact of digital technology on radio journalism, specifically news and news-related content, and venture some predictions which are at once conservative and optimistic.

Digital technology as a force for radical change

It will be helpful to begin with an outline of the ways in which digital technology has affected the medium itself. First, by reducing transmissions to a stream of data expressed as a series of zeroes and ones it enabled a much greater number of stations to share the available broadcasting spectrum: instead of one channel per frequency,

each frequency could accommodate several channels. Second, and even more significant, it made possible the internet and so created a new habitat for radio as for every other medium. Third, it was the precondition of mobile communications, most obviously in the form of the telephone and portable computer, which could create a valuable production tool in terms of the recording, editing and transmission of audio. Finally, digital technology resulted in an expansion in the modes of radio reception. In addition to dedicated receivers (known as DAB radios), it allowed listeners to consume radio on television sets, desktop and laptop computers and mobile communications – iPhones, iPods and the like.

The collective impact of these developments has been twofold. First, there has been a fall in the cost of broadcast transmission and thus a widening of access to it. Now almost anybody can start a radio station and reach a worldwide audience. Moreover, and particularly in respect of the news, there has been a potential increase in content: with mobile media almost anybody can be a news-gatherer, either by sending reports and sound actuality to the radio station or by broadcasting it directly. Second, and inevitably in view of the expansion in the modes of reception, there has been something of a convergence of radio with other media. Nearly every radio station has its own website, and many provide video clips containing material that is supplementary to the broadcasts or webcams that deliver to the listener's computer images of the broadcasters in the studio. For the time-shifted consumption of programmes there are also podcasts, special programmes which can be downloaded to iPods, and in the United Kingdom iPlayer, a device that allows the listener to hear BBC programmes on her computer – alongside much of the output of BBC television – for up to a week or so after they have been transmitted.

Some of this convergence is in a sense not new: in the guise of audio-cassette recording and replay, time-shifted consumption pre-dated the digital revolution by more than twenty years. The forms of convergence that digital technology has introduced have been between radio and *visual* media. In 2011 the UK radio industry launched something called Radioplayer, essentially an on-line platform which allows rapid access to the streamed output of every participating radio station in the country. But Radioplayer enables stations to add parallel visual content to the streamed audio, including exhortations to follow links to other online content which is not necessarily characteristic of radio. Even the conventional DAB receivers incorporate information – in the form of rolling text – that the listener can look at. But what will all these changes mean for radio in general and radio news in particular? We will offer two views of the future: a radical one in which new technology will transform and in effect reduce the medium; and our own more conservative and sceptical view, which sees the new technology as having an evolutionary rather than revolutionary impact.

From a radical perspective the proliferation of radio channels will mean an expansion of news sources – room for lots of different perspectives on the news and, indeed, for different understandings of what news is. In the past, nation-states subjected broadcasting to tight regulation primarily because they felt that it could wield considerable political influence, and, practically speaking, because they could do so very easily. The spectrum was limited and so broadcasting was a scarce commodity

and more easily policed than, for instance, scores of publishers and booksellers (Starkey 2007: 23–4). But in the form of the internet, digitisation has abolished scarcity. Stations can be easily started, they transcend national boundaries and, indeed, have worldwide reach: they can evade the political and legal controls of particular states. This new freedom from regulation could lead to forms of 'news' in which hard facts are mingled with propaganda, surmise, rumour and innuendo, with everything enhanced by those devices of the 'citizen journalist' that we have just described: mobile phones, laptops and so on. Once upon a time the 'grapevine' – the circulation of rumours and unofficial information – was one resource that the journalist could use in gathering news which would then be properly verified and combined with other information to make a balanced and coherent whole. In future, however, the grapevine itself could be what passes for news on many radio stations.

These developments could have major professional and institutional consequences. As we have just implied, the rise of the citizen journalist could threaten the livelihood of the professional by circumventing the latter's news-gathering and editorial skills. Journalism has never, of course, been wholly professionalised: news stories can originate from casual witnesses; articles, sometimes political, are written by individuals from other walks of life. But whereas until now the journalistic contribution of what we might call 'ordinary people' has always been controlled by a kind of priesthood of professionals, a revolution could occur. Owning, or with access to, their own web stations, operating their own equipment and gathering and reading their own news, many ordinary people could become radio journalists, and it may often be hard to distinguish them from those who have been professionally trained.

We might nevertheless feel that the traditional, publicly sanctioned broadcasting institutions would continue to guarantee the integrity of the news. In the United Kingdom, to take one example, a dual system of broadcasting persists. The licence-funded BBC, providing both network and local radio, is still the central feature of the landscape, but surrounded, so to speak, by a sprawling commercial sector (sometimes still known as '*Independent* Radio' (IR) in order to dissociate it from a BBC that is *dependent* on public money). IR operates at national, regional and local levels. However – and unlike newspapers – both kinds of broadcaster are required to be accurate and impartial in their reportage of the news. This is essentially a public service requirement, also dating from a time when broadcasting was both scarcer and arguably more influential than it is today. The BBC has always been bound by it and it is also imposed on IR by the independent regulator, Ofcom, the Office of Communications: 'News, in whatever form, must be reported with due accuracy and presented with due impartiality' (Ofcom Broadcasting Code, February 2011, Section 5.1).

Nevertheless, the global proliferation of radio stations, most of them also streaming on the web, could make considerable inroads into the audience for both BBC radio and IR – with financial and editorial consequences. Governments are unwilling to make the public pay for a broadcasting organisation which loses significant audience share, and private companies will not place advertising with stations that attract few listeners. It is perhaps unlikely that this will mean the end of the present system of sound broadcasting (adieu Auntie! au revoir IR!) but reduced income would surely

impact on the ability of both sectors to provide properly mediated and authoritative news. Even more insidious would be the development of a situation in which the majority of the public no longer turned to radio as one of its primary, trusted sources of news and information.

A radical view of radio's future would also posit a highly active audience, one which is not merely listening to live sound-only broadcasts on dedicated receivers, laptops, desktops, TV sets and mobile phones, but also to podcasts and webcasts. At the same time it will be scouring station websites and watching the video clips these carry, as well as peering via webcams at the radio broadcasters in their studios. There is something at once reassuring and disquieting about this prospect. Throughout its existence radio has always been very largely a 'secondary' medium, one which is listened to while the listener is doing something else such as driving or cleaning her car or lying in the bath. In other words, her primary activity would have nothing to do with the radio. However, it is likely that the primary activity of the newer, active listener will more often be radio-related, in that sense making her more attentive: if she is listening on her computer or mobile phone, she may be tempted, at least occasionally, to glance at the video or webcam images the station is offering or to scan the pages of its website.

Yet the prospect is also disquieting. It is true that the traditional listener was sometimes so absorbed in her primary occupation that she would be paying scant attention to what she heard, but there was nevertheless a certain self-sufficiency in radio's messages. Should she choose to, she could listen to messages that did not depend for part of their meaning on extraneous material but were complete in themselves. But if the primary occupation of the active listener is radio-related she may well, paradoxically, pay less attention to the medium itself, for the material she absorbs from the website and webcams is likely to dilute the impact of what she hears. Conscious of this fact, will sound broadcasters then be tempted to express some of the meaningful content of their programmes in printed words and images? When that happens radio will be on the point of extinction: it will be little more than a soundtrack, and we will be arguing shortly that this would be particularly unfortunate in respect of the news.

Digital technology as a force for gradual change

There is, however, a more sceptical view of radio's future which is also more sanguine. Stations may multiply but the global audience for radio will not. Hence the ability to fund them will not increase proportionately, and it is likely that many of them will be run by amateur broadcasters and be ephemeral and of unpredictable quality. For these reasons, they are unlikely to attract very large audiences. In search of reliably good programmes, most of us will prefer to remain with the traditional kinds of radio station staffed by trained professionals, and will thus ensure their continued funding. Among the professionals will be journalists – people who, amid all the hubbub of fact, rumour, allegation and sheer invention, will be able to mediate the news for us in a trustworthy way. It is therefore ironic that those 'gatekeepers' of the news (White, 1950; Carter, 1958) who were once regarded with scholarly suspicion could shortly be hailed as angels of mercy. Moreover in order to reach the largest audiences, even

citizen journalists will prefer to submit their stories and sound actuality to the traditional networks, something they already do.

In all this, branding is crucial: it is a way of confirming the veracity of the news. The BBC's brand is arguably one of the strongest in the world, and it is in large part the BBC's radio journalism that has made it so. Since the beginning of the Empire Service in 1932 it has reached millions of overseas listeners, many of them grateful for the relatively impartial account of the world that it offered. Its successor, the BBC World Service, found equal favour. A trusted brand is also one that domestic audiences turn to, especially in times of uncertainty, in order to make sense of events outside their personal experience. Naturally, most citizen journalists would prefer to contribute to a service with this kind of reputation than to shout into a void.

Even the idea of the highly active audience needs to be qualified, in respect of radio at least. It is true that a lot of listening is time-shifted, but as we have already observed, this activity was common well before the arrival of digital technology and probably focuses on other, less ephemeral and ubiquitous kinds of programming than news. It is true that digital technology makes time-shifting easier to set up: few radio cassette recorders allowed users to set recording start and end times in advance. The recordings made online or on personal video recorders (PVRs) today are also easier to navigate, as every second is time-coded and fast-forward and rewind actions can be performed almost instantly. But radio listening remains far more rooted in linear, real-time consumption than television, and because radio journalism is dynamic and able to be quickly updated, there seems little point in accessing outdated news bulletins when the latest, more up-to-date version is never far away. There are of course more durable forms of radio journalism, including the documentary and the specialist magazine programme focusing on a specific subject area such as medicine or economics. Nevertheless, to speak of a highly active listener is in essence to speak of multi-media consumption, and at this point it will be helpful to examine it more closely and draw some distinctions that are important in respect of radio.

First, we should remember that for many people the consumption of news has always been a multi-media activity. Typically we listen to the radio news when we awake, then, and in no particular order, turn to newspapers, television and online forms of news. In other words, radio has for most if not all of its existence been part of a broader news diet, though this is not to imply that in communicative terms it lacks self-sufficiency. What is new is the potential or actual *simultaneity* of consumption – that is to say, the phenomenon of the listener consuming radio news at the same time as scanning web pages, webcams, video clips, and so on. However, we would suggest that such behaviour is relatively unusual, that for the most part radio continues to be consumed in a singular and secondary way and that this is not simply a matter of convenience – of enabling us to access the news while we are lying in a bath or driving the car – but a recognition that the medium in general, and the news in particular, has no need of vision in order to convey its messages.

Though circumstantial, the evidence for this assertion is persuasive and is to be found in the listening figures for digital radio which are compiled at quarterly intervals by Radio Joint Audience Research (RAJAR). Despite the variety of means

by which one can listen to it – on television sets, on the internet via desktop or laptop computers or mobile media – dedicated radio receivers, DAB sets, continue to account for more than 60 per cent of all digital consumption. Indeed, between the third and fourth quarters of 2010 their share increased by 1.5 per cent (RAJAR, February 2011). Moreover, although radio is indeed changing in reaction to digital technology, analogue consumption still outstrips all digital forms of listening by a ratio of two to one. RAJAR has recorded record levels of *listening*, but found that listening through the internet accounts for only three per cent of the whole. Indeed, DAB has proved more popular in the UK than in most countries of the world: elsewhere listening to radio *broadcasts* remains stubbornly 'analogic' (Jauert et al., 2010). Hence the fact that large numbers of people are continuing to use receivers that are *incapable* of providing them with images of anything more than minimal text suggests that they like radio *because*, not in spite of, its lack of vision. Since the most popular radio content is acoustic – music – this is hardly surprising, but radio news and radio talk are sufficiently popular for us to seek other reasons for this acquiescence in the non-visual.

In fact, such an attitude is eminently reasonable. However vividly they may be shown on television, events are easily – and concisely – described on the radio. Moreover, 'events' of the finite, visible kind are only one element of the news: crucial to an understanding of them are the causal connections between them, the reactions to them, the context of them, all of which are essentially invisible. Moreover, their visible manifestations are, from a cognitive point of view, just so much distracting clutter: in a technical sense, 'noise'. Words are the main currency of understanding and the primary code of radio, even music radio (Crisell, 1994: 53–5). It is, indeed, arguable that they are the main currency of understanding in *any* medium, including television (Crisell, 2003: 7–9).

This need to 'intellectualise' the news – felt both by journalists, who often believe that they can report it only by locating it within the bigger picture, and by listeners, who need to better understand its causes and implications and may wish to voice their own views of it – has given rise in recent years to a supplementary radio genre of 'news talk' alongside the more conventional news coverage. Since news and news talk are carefully distinguished, they should not be confused with the conflation of news and hearsay that might develop in webcasting, nor should the need to intellectualise that the distinction expresses be perceived as exclusively highbrow: it is universal. Extended discussions of contemporary affairs can be encountered not only on BBC Radios 3 and 4 but on 5 Live and, chaired by Jeremy Vine, on Radio 2, not to mention the commercial station talkSPORT. This is good radio not simply because it allows the listener to perform some other activity while listening but because it enables her to contemplate ideas and issues without having to view imagery which is at once germane to them and a distraction from them.

Journalistic practice in the era of digital radio

With this essentially traditional concept of the medium in mind, what are the specific demands of radio journalism, and to what extent have they already changed in response

to the development of digital technology? They are inextricably linked to the nature of the medium and the manner of its consumption we have just begun to explore. Without the ability – or the inclination – to pause, rewind or replay the spoken word which makes up the bulk of its content, listeners have to assimilate in real time what is being said. Whereas written text can be consumed at the reader's own pace, re-read if necessary and dwelt on at leisure, the radio journalist probably has only one opportunity to convey the essence and the detail of a story in a way that will be heard and understood over the sights and other sounds which might be clamouring for the listener's attention (Starkey and Crisell, 2010). Utterances therefore tend to be short and pithy, avoiding the complication of parentheses. Because this journalism is conveyed verbally, some stations apply a fairly colloquial house style, including elided forms such as *he'll*, *there's* and *we're*. The journalist who writes the copy is often the same person who delivers it to the microphone, either live or as part of an item inserted into a longer news bulletin. Whatever the format, clarity of diction and an ability to colour a phrase through the appropriate use of 'light' and 'shade', rises and falls in intonation and even implied seriousness or lightheartedness are all essential to the creation of something not only which the audience can understand but which it will *wish to listen to*.

Depending on the radio station, its target audience and the prevailing sense of how much formality is required of it, radio journalism is also susceptible to tabloidization. The brevity that is associated with the tabloids is perhaps not surprising in a medium that exists in time rather than space, for time, as the saying goes, is precious. But the tabloid character may also extend to the prioritising of lighter stories from the worlds of entertainment and sport over potentially more challenging hard news, foreign affairs, politics, economics and regional or local administration. In its efforts to 'hook' the audience to a story, it may make that blatant appeal to their self interest which is also characteristic of the tabloids. An example might be copy which begins with the words: 'Your pay packet may feel lighter from today, with the raising of the income tax rate'. However, such tabloidization is less a direct consequence of digital technology than of the increasingly competitive market we have already identified.

Quite apart from the use of voice to convey paralinguistic meaning, one of the main illustrative resources on which radio journalism continues to draw is actuality. This may take the form of live or recorded *atmosphere* (the 'sound' of a place, an event or a process) or simply the additional use of the voices of protagonists in, or commentators on, a story. Extraneous noise should be avoided, but sound which illustrates a location can be a bonus. Interview material should be focused and edited without misrepresenting interviewees because with airtime at a premium it will almost inevitably need to be used sparingly. Short-form items, such as illustrative clips used to break up the live delivery of journalistic copy by the newsreader, are inevitably subject to high levels of selection and editing. A number of such clips may be used in a 'package' which provides a more detailed account of a news story and – depending on its length – may be intended for use within a longer bulletin or to be incorporated into the programming of the station.

This blend of illustrative sound and authoritative comment characterised radio news journalism for many years before the arrival of digital technology: what has changed is the *ease* with which it can be created. The editing of source material,

the removal of mistakes in the delivery of the recorded script and the blending of sound from different sources are all far quicker and simpler than the cumbersome manipulation of analogue recordings that was commonplace just a decade and a half ago. Today's roving radio reporter is likely to carry a laptop, a smartphone or a tablet in order to carry out post-production tasks and send the finished recording back to the newsroom: gone are the days of tape recorder, razor blade, chinagraph pencil and splicing tape. Moreover a notable recent development has been the widening of the radio journalist's brief to encompass other media. Both when planning and gathering source material and during post-production, the journalist may also be preoccupied with the role of the web and with parallel visual content that will be broadcast digitally or posted online. As well as creating a radio report, she might, for instance, produce copy as a visual text which contains headlines and even photographic images.

The erosion of localism in the digital era

What, though, are the implications for radio journalists of some of the other developments in recent years, whether technological or otherwise? What is their likely impact on the development of the medium in the present and in the future? One of the most significant trends since the introduction of IR has been its dislocation from the communities it was intended to serve. In its original form it was a network of separate locally owned and operated companies, each being able to connect with its listeners in a way that could not be achieved by regional or national radio (Starkey, 2011). By the beginning of the last decade the number of independent local radio (ILR) stations far exceeded the sixty that were envisaged in the election promise which brought about the end of the BBC's monopoly of radio in 1973 (Conservative Party, 1970). But by 2008, when the number of local broadcasting licences approached three hundred, a period of mergers and takeovers had already elapsed, and the vast majority of stations belonged to one or another of the large radio groups which dominated the commercial sector.

In that year the formation of Global Radio was one of the most significant events of the decade for the commercial sector, coinciding as it did with Ofcom's latest reinterpretation of the frequently rewritten rules governing ownership and the origination of content. No longer would locally relevant content have to be produced in the locality, and neighbouring stations would be allowed, if the circumstances were judged appropriate, to 'co-locate' in shared premises which might even be outside the editorial areas of one or more of the stations. The production of local news at a distance was also trialled, with some local newsrooms being reduced to only a minimal presence (Crisell and Starkey, 2006). Then Global pulled off a magnificent coup, rebranding most of its stations, irrespective of their location, as either Heart or Capital and networking and syndicating programming as much as it could.

Other developments in journalism in the digital era

While consolidation in the commercial sector has left bulletin-driven news journalism intact in many locations around the country, it has had little effect on news talk.

This has remained largely the preserve of the BBC, although an enduring example of forays into the genre is London's Biggest Conversation, LBC 97.3. Compared to the cost of playing virtually non-stop music between advertisements and news bulletins, this is a relatively expensive form of radio to produce. With its inherently higher production values, documentary making for radio is now almost exclusive to the BBC, and a recent, outstanding history of its 'intelligent speech' network, Radio 4, provides a real flavour of the richness of long-form radio journalism as it is practised there (Hendy 2007). At many times during its history, the BBC's journalism has appeared unassailable – certainly from within the corporation – and notably under the news-driven approach to governance of one of its most controversial Directors-General, John Birt (Born 2004).

Times change even at the BBC, however, and although the World Service continues to provide a high standard of radio journalism for the benefit of numerically and geopolitically significant audiences overseas, changes to its funding are behind a new tightening of budgets. Thanks to a disadvantageous licence fee settlement agreed with the Conservative–Liberal Democrat coalition government in 2010, the BBC's domestic services also face cuts, and one of the solutions being mooted at the time of writing is a severe scaling back of the output of its local radio network, perhaps reducing it outside peak time to a relay of 5 Live. This would have the effect of restricting the output of all those local radio newsrooms to the production of the harder news demanded by the breakfast and drive-time slots and abandoning the softer journalistic material which fills much of the rest of the day. While many deplore such moves to downgrade its radio journalism, critics of the BBC would argue that compared to the commercial sector the corporation's news operation remains relatively handsomely resourced.

Despite the need to balance budgets and cope with the constraints imposed by the wider economy, the news about radio news is not all negative. The record listening figures recorded by RAJAR in recent years suggest that two of radio's greatest strengths, its portability and its secondariness, might make it one of the more durable of the 'old' media in the 'new' media age. If radio combines with other media it will almost certainly dwindle to a soundtrack, but if it stays true to its pristine blindness, news and news talk will help to ensure its future.

References

Born, G. (2004) *Uncertain Vision: Birt, Dyke and the Reinvention of the BBC*, London: Vintage.

Carter, R.E. (1958) 'Newspaper gatekeepers and the sources of news', *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 22.

Conservative Party (1970) *1970 Conservative Party General Election Manifesto: A Better Tomorrow*, London: Conservative Party.

Crisell, A. (1994) *Understanding Radio*, 2nd edn, London: Routledge.

— (2003) 'Look with thine ears: BBC Radio 4 and its significance in a multi-media age' in Crisell, A. (ed.) *More than a Music Box: Radio Cultures and Communities in a Multi-Media World*, Oxford: Berghahn Books.

Crisell, A. and Starkey, G. (2006) 'News on local radio' in Franklin, B. (ed.) *Local Journalism and Local Media: Making the Local News*, London: Routledge.

Hendy, D. (2007) *Life on Air: A History of Radio Four*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Jauert, P., Ala-Fossi, M., Lax, S., Nyre, L. and Shaw, H. (eds) (2010) *Digital Radio in Europe: Technologies, Industries and Cultures*, Bristol: Intellect Books.

Ofcom (2011) *Broadcasting Code*, London: Office of Communications. Available online: www.ofcom.org.uk.

RAJAR (2011) *Quarterly Summary, Third and Fourth Quarters*, London: Radio Joint Audience Research Limited.

Starkey, G. (2007) *Balance and Bias in Journalism: Representation, Regulation, and Democracy*, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

— (2011) *Local Radio, Going Global*, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Starkey, G. and Crisell, A. (2010) *Radio Journalism*, London: Sage.

White, D. M. (1950) 'The "Gatekeeper": a case study in the selection of news', in D. Berkowitz (ed.) *Social Meanings of News: A Reader*, Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

TWEET THE NEWS: SOCIAL MEDIA STREAMS AND THE PRACTICE OF JOURNALISM

Alfred Hermida

The first signs that a major news story was about to break on May 1, 2011, came in a terse message on Twitter from the communications director at the White House, Dan Pfeiffer. "POTUS to address the nation tonight at 10:30 p.m. Eastern Time," said the tweet sent at 9.45 EST, referring to a surprise appearance by President Barack Obama. Less than an hour later came the first credible report on what the president was set to announce: the death of Osama Bin Laden.

The news did not come from a news agency or a 24/7 news channel, but on Twitter in the form of a message sent at 10:25 EST by Keith Urbahn, the chief of staff for the former defense secretary Donald Rumsfeld: "So I'm told by a reputable person they have killed Osama Bin Laden. Hot damn." (Urbahn, 2011). The tweet reverberated

@keithurbahn
Keith Urbahn

So I'm told by a reputable person they have killed Osama Bin Laden. Hot damn.

1 May via Twitter for BlackBerry®   ☆ Favorite ⇄ Retweet ↩ Reply

across social media, triggering a flood of reactions and discussions on Twitter. Just over an hour later, at 11.35 EST, a sombre President Obama confirmed that US special forces had killed Bin Laden in Abbottabad, a Pakistani city about two hours from the capital Islamabad. The flow of messages on Twitter reached fever pitch, with the company recording more than 4,000 tweets per second as the president spoke (Twitter Comms, 2011). Among the messages were those of Pakistani IT consultant Sohaib Athar, who unwittingly live-tweeted the US raid on Bin Laden's compound (Butcher, 2011).

The death of Bin Laden led one commentator to say that Twitter had experienced its "CNN moment" (Rosof, 2011), a reference to how the 24-hour news channel broke through into the mainstream during the first Gulf War with its live broadcasts of the aerial bombing raids on Baghdad. But this was far from the first time that Twitter played a significant role in the flow and spread of breaking news.

The social messaging service has been in the media spotlight for its role in coverage of major events such as the earthquake in the Sichuan province of China in May 2008, the terrorist attacks in Mumbai in November 2008 (BBC News, 2008), the crash of a US Airways plane on the Hudson River in January 2009 (Kwak et al., 2010), the protests following the Iranian election in June 2009 (Grossman, 2009) and the uprising in Egypt (Crovitz, 2011). In its brief five-year history, Twitter has developed as the default media network for real-time news, accelerating flows of information, leading one commentator to note that "news no longer breaks, it tweets" (Solis, 2010).

Twitter is one of a range of digital communication tools and services, usually identified by the catch-all phrase of social media, that are transforming the way news is gathered, disseminated and consumed, and influencing the direction and practice of journalism. Social media platforms build on notions of a participatory media culture, where the people formerly known as the audience (Rosen, 2006) can do more than simply read the news. The technologies allow citizens and organisations to take on some communication functions that were previously largely in the hands of media institutions. It has become common for the first reports, photos and video of a breaking news event to come from people caught up in the incident. As a result, the media circulating in the social media has become an integral part of newsgathering by news organisations.

Making sense of Twitter

Twitter has come a long way since its launch in August 2006 by a San Francisco start-up, asking its users the question "What are you doing?", later changed to "What's happening?" Towards the end of 2010, it had a reported 175 million registered users (Cain Miller, 2010). According to its own figures, an average of 140 million messages were being sent daily on the service by March 2011(Penner 2011). Twitter now describes itself as "a real-time information network that connects you to the latest information about what you find interesting" (Twitter, n.d).

The free service brings together aspects of text messaging, blogging and social inter-action. Twitter is usually described as microblogging but it is perhaps more accurate to

refer to it as a social messaging technology that extends our ability to communicate. Users can share short messages of 140 characters or less that are sent out to their followers – people who subscribed to receive the tweets. Since accounts are public by default, the messages can be seen by anyone, regardless of whether or not they have signed up to Twitter.

There is a conversational aspect as users can send a public message directed at another person by using the @username convention. People can also resend a message by someone else to their social circle by retweeting it, generally using the "RT @ username" format to acknowledge the original source. The @username convention is also used when a person is mentioned in a message. Thus, it is easy to see recent messages in which a user was replied to, retweeted or mentioned.

Twitter supports a hash annotation format that allows users to tag a message. The hash sign, #, is used to indicate the topic of a tweet. The hash convention means discussions on issues such as the uprising in Egypt in early 2011 could be tracked using the tag #Jan25, a reference to the day when mass protests started against the then president Hosni Mubarak. Twitter uses an algorithm to identify and rank keywords or hashtags that are immediately popular, creating a list of trending topics. These trending topics reflect what new or newsworthy topics are occupying the most people's attention on Twitter at any one time, exposing the aggregate interests and attention of global and local communities.

Twitter and related social media platforms such as Facebook that allow users to share streams of content, from short status messages to links, photos and videos are social awareness streams (Naaman et al., 2011). Initial research into the content of these streams on Twitter identified four main activities: daily chatter, conversation, sharing information and reporting news (Java et al., 2009). Sharing information and reporting news are directly relevant to journalism, but so too are daily chatter and conversation.

By providing a means for millions to communicate, share and discuss events in real time, Twitter can provide a constantly updated live representation of the lives, interests and opinions of its users. Sankaranarayanan et al. go as far as saying that "Twitter, or most likely a successor of it, is a harbinger of a futuristic technology that is likely to capture and transmit the sum total of all human experiences of the moment" (2009: 51). Of course, the topics range from the trivial to the ridiculous to the momentous. For example, at the time of writing, a trending topic worldwide was a rumor, later confirmed, that actor Ashton Kutcher was replacing Charlie Sheen in the popular TV sitcom *Two and a Half Men*. In contrast, at the same time one of the preoccupations of Twitter users in Vancouver, Canada, was the recent election of the provincial premier Christy Clark.

Twitter and journalism

The streams of data on social media such as Twitter can be described as ambient journalism (Hermida, 2010a; 2010b). Ambient journalism posits that journalism itself has become omnipresent, like the air we breathe, due to the emergence and uptake of

social awareness communication systems. Twitter is part of an ambient media system where users are able to dip in and out of flows of news and information from both established media and from each other.

Social awareness streams create a multifaceted and fragmented news experience, marking a shift away from the classical paradigm of journalism as a framework to provide reports and analyses of events through narratives. The immediacy and velocity of microbursts of data can strain the cognitive abilities of journalists and audiences to spot the important amongst the trivial and obtain a developed picture of events. The problem is exacerbated during breaking news events. For example, during the protests against the Iranian election results in June 2009, the volume of tweets mentioning Iran peaked at 221,774 in one hour, from an average of between 10,000 and 50,000 an hour (Parr, 2009).

The overwhelming nature of the messages on Twitter is one of the most common critiques by journalists. In their analysis of US media coverage of first three years of its existence, Arceneaux and Schmitz Weiss found critics commonly mocked the service for unleashing "a torrent of useless information upon users" (2010: 1271). At other times, the media expressed skepticism about Twitter. Remarks by journalists such as "it's like searching for medical advice in an online world of quacks and cures" (Goodman, 2009) and "Twitter? I won't touch it. It's all garbage" (quoted in Stelter, 2009) reflect the intensity of derision from some in the profession. Even the renowned *New York Times* columnist Maureen Dowd described Twitter as "annoying", suggesting to its founders that they had created "a toy for bored celebrities and high-school girls" (2009).

The negative reactions to Twitter reflect what Arceneaux and Schmitz Weiss call "the contested process of technological adoption in response to new forms of media," (2010: 1263), such as the telegraph, radio and the internet. There are parallels with the initial reaction of journalists to another form of social media, blogs, in the early 2000s when established news outlets regarded them as "amateurish, filled with errors and not credible" (Tremayne, 2007: 261). What makes journalists and others uneasy about technologies such as Twitter is that "they disrupt established concepts of communication, prevailing notions of space and time and the distinction between public and private spheres" (Arceneaux and Schmitz Weiss, 2010: 1265).

Despite some vocal critiques of the social media platform, Arceneaux and Schmitz Weiss conclude that USA media coverage was primarily positive about Twitter, with most stories mentioning at least some benefit. This might go some way towards explaining the rapid adoption of the service by journalists and newsrooms. The number of media professionals signing up prompted the American Journalism Review (AJR) to publish an article in April 2009 entitled "The Twitter Explosion". It pointed out that some well-known media figures had followings that are almost as large as the circulation of their newspapers or viewership of their TV show, but also mused whether Twitter "is more than just the latest info-plaything" (Farhi, 2009).

Since then, the Twitter explosion has reached more journalists and newsrooms. Research in the US found that by 2010 all but one of the top 198 newspapers and TV stations in the US had an official Twitter account (Messner et al., 2011). Some news

organizations have encouraged their staff to sign up for the service, while others have created a new post of social media editor to engage with audiences and teach reporters how to make the most of Twitter (Gleason, 2010).

Every new communication technology, from radio to TV to the internet, has played a role in influencing how journalists think and go about their work. We are still in the early stages of understanding how Twitter and similar real-time social messaging tools are affecting well-established journalistic norms and practices. But there is a growing body of work into how mainstream journalists are figuring out how to integrate what Lasorsa et al. label as "a new media format that directly challenges them" (2011: 1). Twitter is one of a range of technologies that undermine the traditional gatekeeping role of journalists by allowing anyone to gather, publish and distribute news and information to a broad audience. I have previously argued that social media platforms are "creating new forms of journalism, representing one of the ways in which the Internet is influencing journalism practices and, furthermore, changing how journalism itself is defined" (2010a: 4).

Journalists' use of Twitter

When media take up a new communication technology, there is a process of negotiation as newsrooms incorporate novel tools and techniques into time-honored ways of working. Journalists have tended to transfer their organizational norms to digital media rather than rethink established routines and conventions. There is an emergent body of literature into what journalists are doing on social media platforms, and how these new practices are interacting with journalistic conventions.

Initial research suggests that journalists are extending existing practices to social media. There are four main ways that journalists have been using Twitter: to report the news, to drive traffic to websites, to gather the news and to find sources. The ability to send short bursts of information in real time has been embraced by journalists as a way to post snippets of news and to share and send links to their material. As Farhi (2009) notes, "reporters now routinely tweet from all kinds of events – speeches, meetings and conferences, sports events." Twitter has even become a factor in court reporting, with tweets from the courtroom offering virtually contemporaneous accounts of proceedings. One particularly notable case was the trial in Canada of convicted murderer Colonel Russell Williams, where the graphic nature of the evidence led to questions about the appropriateness of Twitter as a reporting tool (Zerbisias, 2010). Similar questions were raised in 2008, when a US reporter provided real-time updates from the funeral of a three-year-old boy, prompting a wave of criticism (Degette, 2008).

News outlets have tapped into the ability to reach a broader audience by incorporating social media platforms as distribution networks for stories. Both news organisations and individual journalists have used Twitter to promote their work and build the online audience. In their analysis of the official Twitter accounts of the top newspaper and TV organisations in the US, Messner et al. (2011) found that most tweets were links back to their websites. In effect, Twitter was being used as an alternative to an automated RSS feed of the latest news stories. One study found that

many newsrooms automatically generated a tweet with a link anytime a story was published on their website, (Blasingame, 2011). "The use of the news organisation's official Twitter channels has not yet developed beyond the utilization as a promotional tool to drive traffic to websites," suggest Messner et al. (2011: 20). A study of the use of Twitter by regional news outlets in Portugal reached similar conclusions (Jeronimo and Duarte, 2010). As for individual journalists, an analysis of the tweeting habits of US journalists by Lasorsa et al. (2011) found that 42 percent of the tweets contained an external link, with half of these to the journalist's own host news organisation.

There are mixed indications as to the effectiveness of Twitter as a platform for journalists and newsrooms to promote their work. Following an analysis of 80 US media sources on Twitter in 2009, An et al. (2011) suggested that social links increase the reach of a news organisation, particularly for those with smaller audiences. However, a study by the Project for Excellence in Journalism found that Twitter accounted for a small percentage of the total traffic sent to the top news sites in the US, especially when compared to visitors coming via Google or to the news sites directly (Olmstead et al., 2011). Links to news stories posted on Twitter.com made up just over 1 percent of traffic to top news sites such as the *New York Times*, *New York Post* and the *Huffington Post*.

But news organisations do see value in extending their newsgathering operations to Twitter and related social media platforms. Time and again, Twitter has demonstrated its potential as a platform for eyewitness reports of events as they unfold in real-time.

For example, one of the first reports from Haiti when the devastating earthquake struck in January 2010 came in a tweet from Frederic Dupoux just seven minutes after the tremor, followed by dozens more (Bruno, 2011). "Once again social media took charge of 'breaking the news' to the world about a major crisis event," wrote Bruno (2011: 13).

At the time of the quake, the only two foreign correspondents on Haiti were an Associated Press reporter and a Reuters local stringer. While news outlets rushed to get their correspondents to Haiti, many newsrooms turned to Twitter, Flickr and YouTube for first-hand reports from witnesses on the ground. A senior TV news editor in the UK, Ed Fraser, remarked that "for the first time really, certainly in online terms but also for broadcast, Twitter was one of those vehicles which had a life of its own. It gave us real time information as to what was going on on the ground" (quoted in Bruno, 2011). In these types of situations, Twitter users take on the role of social sensors of the news (Sakaki et al., 2010). The network functions as a detection system that can provide early warning of breaking news, and then provide a stream of real-time data as events unfold.

By extension, journalists have turned to social media platforms to find and develop a range of sources and contacts. A reporter can chose to follow specific people relevant to their beat or create lists of users, based on topic or location. *We the Media* author Dan Gillmor recommends that journalists "follow people who point them to things they should know about" (quoted in Farhi 2009). Twitter enables journalists to create a personalized news wire, with potential thousands of sources relevant to the focus of their professional work. A survey of nearly 500 journalists across 12 countries found

that nearly half of respondents said they used Twitter to source new story angles, compared to 35 percent who used Facebook (Oriella PR Network, 2011). Now, in journalism classes, students are being taught how to monitor the chatter on social networks on issues in their areas and connect with key sources (Hermida, 2010c).

By and large, journalists have been adopting social media tools like Twitter on their terms. In his analysis of how prominent news outlets such as the BBC, the *Guardian* and the *New York Times* were using social media, Newman concludes:

> So far at least, the use of new tools has not led to any fundamental rewrite of the rule book – just a few tweaks round the edges. As with so many aspects of the Internet, social media are providing a useful extra layer of function- ality, enabling stories to be told in new ways, not changing the heart of what journalists do. "Same values, new tools", sums up the core thinking in most newsrooms.
>
> (Newman, 2009: 39)

However, there are indications that decades old norms and practices are bending as social media plays an increasingly prominent role in journalism.

New roles, new rules

The use of social media by journalists raises questions about key tenets of the profession. Journalism is built on the basis of verify first, then publish. In their seminal 2001 work *The Elements of Journalism*, Kovach and Rosenstiel state, "the essence of journalism is a discipline of verification" (71). Through the discipline of verification, the journalist establishes jurisdiction over the ability to objectively parse reality to claim a special kind of authority and status. However, the emergence of Twitter as a source for breaking news, and the speed at which information is disseminated on the network, is challenging the "verify first, then publish" premise of journalism.

One of the early examples of these tensions came in November 2008 when gunmen carried out a series of coordinated attacks in Mumbai. The BBC adopted a collabo- rative style of newsgathering that combined reports from its own correspondents with contributions from ordinary citizens. The venerable news organization published unverified tweets on its news website as part of its 24-hour rolling news coverage of the bombings (BBC News, 2008). The decision to publish unsubstantiated, and at least in one case, false, information circulating on Twitter was heavily criticized. While acknowledging the need to check tweets for authenticity, BBC News website Editor Steve Herrmann argued "there is a case also for simply monitoring, selecting and passing on the information we are getting as quickly as we can, on the basis that many people will want to know what we know and what we are still finding out" (Herrmann, 2008).

The use of social media content by mainstream media came to the fore a year later during the Iranian election protests of June 2009. With severe reporting restrictions on foreign correspondents on the ground in Tehran, newsrooms turned to social media

to fill the news vacuum. Leading news organisations, from the *New York Times* in the US to the *Guardian* newspaper in the UK, published constantly updated accounts that relied on unverified videos and Twitter messages, complemented with reports from their journalists in Tehran (Stelter, 2009). Since then, the blend of professional and amateur content has become a feature of how breaking news is reported.

News organisations are in the process of figuring out how to marry established practices with the notion of "publish first, verify later", given fears that it may erode public trust in the media. There are signals of a shift in the standards of verification applied in the real-time coverage of ongoing, fast-moving events. The discussions at a BBC social media conference in May 2011 suggested that there is "a view within the mainstream media that audiences have lower expectations of accuracy and verification from journalists' and media outlets' social media accounts than they do of 'appointment TV' or the printed page" (Posetti 2011).

Research by Italian journalist Nicola Bruno into the rolling news coverage of the 2010 Haiti earthquake by three major news outlets found that only the BBC consistently sought to verify information on social media before publication (Bruno, 2011). The two other organizations, the *Guardian* and CNN, chose speed versus verification, at least some of the time. As a consequence, the BBC used less content from social media than other outlets that chose to "tweet first, verify later."

One technique adopted by news organisations is to differentiate between material produced by its journalists and content drawn from social media. The publication of unverified material has tended to take place within live blogs, a commonly used online story-telling format that is distinct from more traditional journalism. Matthew Weaver at the *Guardian* suggested that audiences have a different set of expectations from a live blog compared to an article authored by a correspondent. "On a live blog you are letting the reader in on what's up there, and say: look, we're letting you in on the process of newsgathering. There's a more fluid sense of what's happening" (quoted in Bruno, 2011: 44).

The integration of social media content into the newsgathering process is giving rise to an emerging role of the journalist as curator. Their primary role is to navigate, sift, select and contextualise the vast amounts of data on social awareness streams such as Twitter. The most well-known example of the journalist as curator is Andy Carvin, a social media strategist at NPR in the US. He rose to prominence during the uprisings in Tunisia in December 2010 and Egypt at the start of 2011 when he turned to Twitter to find and reach out to credible sources, carry out real-time fact-checking and aggregate news as it happened.

Carvin's Twitter stream has been described as "a living, breathing real-time verification system" (Silverman, 2011). The verification process, though, differs from standard journalistic practice, as it takes place in the open on Twitter. In his messages, Carvin would regularly turn his online social network to verify or confirm a piece of information, a process he himself described as an "open newsgathering operation" (quoted in Farhi, 2011). In the role of journalist as curator, the media professional lays bare the manner through which a news story is constructed, as fragments of information are reported, contested, denied or verified. Journalism is transformed

from a final product presented to the audience as a definitive rendering of events to a tentative process where contested accounts are examined and evaluated in real-time. In commenting on Carvin's work, the head of NPR's digital media division, Kinsey Wilson, make this distinction clear, stating "it's not positioned as the definitive sort of piece that you might hear on NPR. It's a different form" (quoted in Farhi, 2011).

This different form of journalism on social media is also challenging another key tenet in journalism: objectivity. Journalists are expected to keep their personal opinions out of their reporting (Kovach and Rosenstiel, 2001), yet new media formats such as blogs have enabled the personality of the author to be more visible (Singer, 2005; Domingo and Heinonen, 2008; Hermida, 2009). Social awareness streams can exacerbate the tensions between professional and personal behaviour for a number of reasons. Accounts can be set up in both the name of a news organization and an individual journalist. The messaging activity takes places on a platform beyond the framework of a news organization's website.

There is also an ethos on Twitter and similar platforms of life sharing, with users expected to discuss personal aspects of their lives. "In an emerging communication space like Twitter, which can be used for everything from breaking news to banality, journalists have far greater license to write about whatever strikes their fancy, including the mundane details of their day-to-day activities" (Lasorsa et al., 2011: 6). The extent to which social media is chipping away at the divide between the personal and professional in journalism is unclear. Lasorsa et al. found that US journalists deviated from traditional expectations of objectivity by offering opinions in their tweets. They conclude:

> J-tweeters appear both to be adopting features of Twitter in their micro-blogging and adapting these features to their existing norms and practices. Specifically, much like other Twitter users, j-tweeters are offering opinions quite freely in their microblogs, which deviates from their traditional professional conventions.
>
> (2011: 12)

The journalists also talked about their personal lives on Twitter, but significantly, they were less likely to take part in a conversation with the audience. Other studies suggest that engaging in an exchange with readers on social media is not part of the journalist's toolkit (Garcia de Torres et al., 2011). Attitudes and practices to contend with the blurring of the personal and professional on social media are evolving. Newsrooms have drawn up specific editorial policies out of concerns about trust and credibility to aid journalists in negotiating their interactions on social media. The introduction to guidelines issued by the American Society of News Editors (ASNE) reflects the tensions:

> Putting in place overly draconian rules discourages creativity and innovation, but allowing an uncontrolled free-for all opens the floodgates to problems and leaves news organizations responsible for irresponsible employees.
>
> (Hohmann, 2011).

Conclusion

A degree of hyperbole tends to accompany new technologies and Twitter is no exception. The social media platform itself may be "the app du jour that will fade from the limelight, or it could become a staple of daily life," (Arceneaux and Schmitz Weiss, 2011: 1263). Communication services are subject to shifting social and cultural habits. It is important to consider the affordances of a technology that provides for real-time diffusion of short bursts of data from individuals and institutions in a highly connected and public social space.

Twitter is part of an array of Web 2.0 technologies that are enabling forms of interpersonal communication online that have an impact on how citizens gain the news and information they require to be free and self-governing, transforming how journalists and audiences relate to the news. Even skeptical voices such as *New York Times* executive editor Bill Keller concede "Twitter is a brilliant device – a megaphone for promotion, a seine for information, a helpful organizing tool for everything from dog-lover meet-ups to revolutions" (2011). There is growing research into understanding of how traditional functions of journalism – informing citizens, holding the powerful to account, providing analysis and mobilizing public opinion – are being transformed.

The changes impact how the news is reported and distributed, together with who is doing the reporting. Social awareness streams such as Twitter present the ultimate unbundling of the news into its individual components, where the journalism itself becomes fragmented, omnipresent and ambient. Contradictory reports, rumors, speculation, confirmation and verification circulate via social interaction in a compressed news cycle on digital networked platforms, laying bare the processes of journalism.

Twitter is affecting how news organisations respond to breaking news, how journalists go about their reporting and whose voices are heard. New journalistic genres are emerging as news outlets incorporate social media services into daily routines. A process of negotiation is taking place, as traditional ways of working bump up against social, cultural and technological practices that disrupt established journalistic norms. The role of the journalist has evolved, and continues to evolve, as a vital node in a networked media environment that is trusted to authenticate, interpret and contextualise information flows on social awareness streams.

References

An, J., M. Cha, K. Gummadi and J. Crowcroft, (2011) 'Media Landscape in Twitter : A World of New Conventions and Political Diversity,' Association for the Advancement of Artificial Intelligence. Retrieved from http://www.cl.cam.ac.uk/~jac22/out/twitter-diverse.pdf.

Arceneaux, N. and A. Schmitz Weiss (2010) 'Seems Stupid Until You Try It: Press Coverage of Twitter, 2006–9,' *New Media & Society*, 12 (8), 1262.

Blasingame, D. (2011) 'Twitter First: Changing TV News 140 Characters at a Time,' International Symposium on Online Journalism, UT Austin. Retrieved from: http://online.journalism.utexas.edu/2011/papers/Dale2011.pdf.

BBC News (2008, Nov. 27) 'Mumbai Rocked by Deadly Attacks,' BBC News.com. Retrieved from: http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/south_asia/7751160.stm.

Bruno, N. (2011) 'Tweet First, Verify Later: How Real-Time Information is Changing the Coverage of Worldwide Crisis Events,' Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism. Retrieved from: http://reutersinstitute.politics.ox.ac.uk/fileadmin/documents/Publications/fellows__papers/2010-2011/TWEET_FIRST_VERIFY_LATER.pdf.

Butcher, M. (2011, May 1) 'Here's The Guy Who Unwittingly Live-Tweeted The Raid On Bin Laden', TechCrunch. Retrieved from: http://techcrunch.com/2011/05/01/heres-the-guy-who-unwittingly-live-tweeted-the-raid-on-bin-laden/

Cain Miller, C. (2010, Oct. 30) 'Why Twitter's C.E.O. Demoted Himself,' *New York Times*. Retrieved from: http://www.nytimes.com/2010/10/31/technology/31ev.html

Crovitz, G. (2011, Feb. 14) 'Egypt's Revolution by Social Media,' *Wall Street Journal*. Retrieved from: http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052748703786804576137980252177072.html.

Degette, C. (2008, Sept. 10) 'RMN 'Tweets' the Funeral of 3-Year Old Boy Killed in Ice Cream Shop,' *Colorado Independent*. Retrieved from: http://coloradoindependent.com/7717/rmn-tweets-the-funeral-of-3-year-old-boy.

Domingo, D. and A. Heinonen (2008) 'Weblogs and Journalism. A Typology to Explore the Blurring Boundaries', *Nordicom Review*, 29 (1), 3–15.

Dowd, M. (2009, April 22) 'To Tweet or Not to Tweet,' *New York Times*. Retrieved from: http://www.nytimes.com/2009/04/22/opinion/22dowd.html?_r=3&ref=opinion.

Farhi, P. (2009) 'The Twitter Explosion,' *American Journalism Review*, April-May. Retrieved from: http://www.ajr.org/article.asp?id=4756.

Farhi, P. (2011, April 12) 'NPR's Andy Carvin, Tweeting the Middle East,' *The Washington Post*. Retrieved from: http://www.washingtonpost.com/lifestyle/style/npr-andy-carvin-tweeting-the-middle-east/2011/04/06/AFcSdhSD_story.html.

Garcia de Torres, Elvira, L. Yezers'ka, A. Rost, M. Calderin, M. Bello, C. Edo, E. Sahid, P. Jerónimo, C. Arcila, A. Serrano, J. Badillo and L. Corredoira Alfonso (2011) 'See You on Facebook or Twitter? How 30 local News Outlets Manage Social Networking Tools,' International Symposium on Online Journalism, UT Austin. Retrieved from: http://online.journalism.utexas.edu/2011/papers/Elvira2011.pdf.

Gleason, S. (2010) 'Harnessing Social Media,' *American Journalism Review* 32(1), 6–7.

Goodman, E. (2009, July 5) 'Journalism Needed in Twitter Era,' Columbia Daily Tribune. Retrieved from: http://www.columbiatribune.com/news/2009/jul/05/journalism-needed-in-twitter-era/.

Grossman, L. (2009, June 17) 'Iran Protests: Twitter, the Medium of the Movement,' Time.com. Retrieved from: www.time.com/time/world/article/0,8599,1905125,00.html.

Herrmann, S. (2008, Dec. 4) 'Mumbai, Twitter and Live Updates.' BBC The Editors. Retrieved from: http://www.bbc.co.uk/blogs/theeditors/2008/12/theres_been_discussion_see_eg.html.

Hermida, A. (2009) 'The Blogging BBC', *Journalism Practice*, 3 (3), 1–17.

Hermida, A. (2010a) 'Twittering the news', *Journalism Practice*, 4 (3), 297–308.

Hermida, A. (2010b) 'From TV to Twitter: how ambient news became ambient Journalism', *Media-Culture Journal*, 13 (2),

Hermida, A. (2010c, Aug. 30) 'How to Teach Social Media in Journalism Schools,' PBS Mediashift. Retrieved from: http://www.pbs.org/mediashift/2010/08/how-to-teach-social-media-in-journalism-schools242.html.

Hohmann, J. (2011, March) '10 Best Practices for Social Media.' American Society of News Editors. Retrieved from: http://asne.org/portals/0/publications/public/10_Best_Practices_for_Social_Media.pdf.

Java, A., X. Song, T. Finin and B. Tseng (2009), 'Why we twitter: An analysis of a microblogging community', *Advances in Web Mining and Web Usage Analysis*, 118–38.

Jerónimo, P. and A. Duarte, (2010) 'Twitter e Jornalismo de Proximidade: Estudo de Rotinas de Produ{cc}{at}o nos Principais Titulos de Imprensa Regional em Portugal" Prisma.com, 12.

Kwak, H., C. Lee, H. Park and S. Moon (2010) 'What is Twitter, a Social Network or a News Media?' *Proceedings of the 19th international conference on World wide web*, 591–600.

Keller, B. (2011, May 18) The Twitter Trap, *New York Times*. Retrieved from: http://www.nytimes.com/2011/05/22/magazine/the-twitter-trap.html.

Kovach, B. and T. Rosenstiel (2001) *The Elements of Journalism*. New York: Crown Publishers.

Lasorsa, D.L., S.C. Lewis and A.E. Holton (2011) 'Normalizing Twitter: Journalism practice in an emerging communication space,' *Journalism Studies*, first published on 21 April 2011 (iFirst).

Messner, M, M. Linke and A. Esford (2011) 'Shoveling Tweets: An Analysis of the Microblogging Engagement of Traditional News Organizations,' International Symposium on Online Journalism, UT Austin. Retrieved from: http://online.journalism.utexas.edu/2011/papers/Messner2011.pdf.

Naaman, M., H. Becker and L. Gravano (2011) 'Hip and Trendy: Characterizing Emerging Trends on Twitter,' *Journal of the American Society for Information Science and Technology*, 62(5), 902–918.

Newman, N. (2009), 'The rise of social media and its impact on mainstream journalism', Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism Working Paper. Oxford: University of Oxford.

Olmstead, K.A. Mitchell and T. Rosenstiel, (2011, May 9) 'Navigating News Online,' Project for Excellence in Journalism. Retrieved from: http://www.journalism.org/analysis_report/twitter_0.

Oriella PR Network, (2011) 'The State of Journalism in 2011,' Oriella. Retrieved from: http://www.oriel-ladigitaljournalism.com/.

Parr, B. (2009, June 17) 'Mindblowing #IranElection Stats: 221,744 Tweets Per Hour at Peak,' *Mashable*. Retrieved from: http://mashable.com/2009/06/17/iranelection-crisis-numbers/.

Penner, C., (2011, March 14) 'Numbers,' Twitter blog. Retrieved from: http://blog.twitter.com/2011/03/numbers.html.

Posetti, J, (2011) 'BBC Social Media Summit Fixates on Creating 'Open Media'', PBS Mediashift, 7 June, 2011, accessed 7 June 2011 http://www.pbs.org/mediashift/2011/06/bbc-social-media-summit-fixates-on-creating-open-media158.html.

Rosen, J., (2006) The People Formerly Known as the Audience, PressThink. Retrieved from: http://archive.pressthink.org/2006/06/27/ppl_frmr.html.

Rosoff, M. (2011) 'Twitter Just Had its CNN Moment,' *Business Insider*. Retrieved from: http://www.businessinsider.com/twitter-just-had-its-cnn-moment-2011-5.

Sakaki, T., M. Okazaki and Y. Matsuo (2010) 'Earthquake shakes Twitter users: real-time event detection by social sensors,' *Proceedings of the 19th international conference on World Wide Web*, ACM, New York, NY, USA, 851–60.

Sankaranarayanan, J., H. Samet, B.E. Teitler, M.D. Lieberman and J. Sperling (2009), 'TwitterStand: news in tweets', *Proceedings of the 17th ACM SIGSPATIAL International Conference on Advances in Geographic Information Systems*, 42–51.

Silverman, C. (2011, April 8) 'Is This the World's Best Twitter Account?' *Columbia Journalism Review*. Retrieved from: http://www.cjr.org/behind_the_news/is_this_the_worlds_best_twitter_account.php

Singer, J. (2005) 'The Political J-blogger: 'Normalizing' a New Media Form to Fit Old Norms and Practices,' *Journalism* 6 (2), 173–98.

Solis, B. 2010. The information divide between traditional and new media, Feb 10, 2010. http://www.briansolis.com/2010/02/the-information-divide-the-socialization-of-news-and-dissemination/

Stelter, B. (2009, June 2009) 'Journalism Rules Are Bent in News Coverage From Iran,' *New York Times*. Retrieved from: http://www.nytimes.com/2009/06/29/business/media/29coverage.html.

Tremayne, M. (2007) 'Harnessing the active audience: Synthesizing blog research and lessons for the future of media', in M. Tremayne (ed.) *Blogging, citizenship, and the future of media*, New York: Routledge. 261–72.

Twitter Comms, (2011, May 1), Twitter. Retrieved from: http://twitter.com/#!/twitterglobalpr/status/64917013851680768.

Twitter, (n.d.) About, Twitter. Retrieved from: http://twitter.com/about.

Urbahn, Keith (2011, May 1) Twitter. Retrieved from: http://twitter.com/#!/keithurbahn/status/64877790624886784.

Zerbisias, A. (2010, Oct. 22) 'Murder She Wrote: In 140 Characters or Less,' *Toronto Star*. Retrieved from: http://www.thestar.com/news/insight/article/880020--murder-she-wrote-in-140-characters-or-less.