We The Papers:
Journalists, Newspapers, and the Mixed Up Media Identities of Digital Journalism's First Generation

by

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Journalists have never been a group with a great deal of free time, so I must admit that even I was surprised by how many generous and busy souls were willing to sit down and spend an hour (often times more) chatting with an undergrad about a project that sometimes *she* couldn't even fully explain. A heartfelt thanks to everyone who lent their voice, their time and their wit to making this project what it is—you truly are a special community.

Though this thesis is filled with the insightful voices of journalism's community, before I begin to tell *their* story, I would like to first acknowledge another community whose presence in the pages that follow is not so blatant. For journalists, the importance of engaging in 'work worth doing' is at the heart of their passion for their craft. Their story, and my own process, taught me that this sort of work in any field— work that is truly worth doing—can really never be done alone.

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<div align="center">Finally I'd like to thank my parents.</div>

I'd like to thank my father, who has never *once* failed to come through for me. I am lucky to be his daughter and I could not have done this project without his support. Unending thanks to my mother, who simply inspires me—inspires me to be kind and helps me to believe in my own strength. For so many reasons, I thought it wouldn't be possible to do this project—it seemed such an enormous undertaking; I just couldn't do it. She told me I was wrong. Clearly she was right.

Contents

Introduction

Journalism is not—and has never been—a static practice, industry or construct. It is an evolving system: one that reacts to, interacts with, and reflects the society in which it operates. Like democracy, it is both a historical legacy and an ongoing experiment—a product and process that must be adjusted and adapted. And in the new millennium, it is threatened. The invention of the Internet and the character of digital communication have profoundly endangered the industry and practice of journalism. As our cultural scribes and record keepers, newspapers have dutifully chronicled their own plight, documenting their plummeting circulations and empty bank accounts. But we have not been getting the whole story; the inside scoop has not yet made it to press.

This thesis is a piece of investigative journalism that takes journalism itself as its subject. It is a portrait of journalism, of journalists and of newspapers in the digital age. Since it is also an academic exploration, it necessarily strays, at times, from journalism's highly codified rules of objectivity, but its premise and purpose is to illuminate what is happening to journalism and the individuals that practice it. A great deal of the research involved in constructing this story involved seeking and gathering the opinions and voices of journalists themselves. In analyzing and chronicling the upheaval taking place in our national institution, and in their newsrooms, it seemed only logical to follow their lead, constructing their stories in the same way that they have been constructing ours for decades: starting with the individual, and seeing how the story unfolds.

The practice of journalism is deeply tied to a reverence for the profession of objectivity. In this thesis, you will see it surface frequently. Though I believe that objectivity in information gathering is an admirable goal, I must frame my work with the understanding that neither journalists nor newspapers are capable of objectivity. I do, however, move forward in my analysis with a belief that it is entirely possible that a journalist's internalized goal of objectivity, as well as the structural vetting systems within newspapers, allow journalists to move further in that direction than those who have not taken such measures.

Though journalistic questioning is at its core, the organization and development of this thesis are informed by a methodology of narrative analysis. I sought out individuals involved in the practice of journalism in a variety of capacities and spoke with them about their experiences with and opinions about changes taking place in their industry and craft in the digital era.

Thirteen interviews were carried out in variety of locations, ranging from offices to coffee shops. In three cases an in-person interview was not possible and so interviews were conducted twice by telephone and once via email. Though most were around an hour and a half long, several took far longer. The earliest conversations were the most broad, and helped inform and direct areas of exploration in later conversations. Though I will only briefly address methods in this introduction, a more detailed discussion can be found in an addendum after the conclusion.

While all of the interviews began with the broad question of how the Internet was affecting the industry and practice of journalism, I felt it was important to allow the individuals I spoke with the ability to characterize this interaction personally. As

such, though there was considerable overlap, the emphasis of different interviews varied, focusing on whatever was most salient for the interviewee as a function of both personal experience and relative positioning within the industry. Their commentary fluctuates between the individual and the collective, since journalists tend to identify not only as individual professionals, but also as participants in a much larger tradition and practice.

The overwhelmingly interrelated nature of the many changes taking place in the industry became abundantly clear early on the process, but certain logical entry points for thinking about and understanding these changes also emerged. As a framework for understanding an upheaval that weaves through virtually every facet of the practice of journalism, in the following chapters I move from the outside in, looking first at the impact of new content producers and alternative voices online, next at the evolving job description and additional responsibilities of the journalist in the digital age, and finally at the ways in which all of these factors have impacted the journalistic process and changed life inside the newsroom.

No linear breakdown could ever fully capture the infinitely complicated nature and interconnectedness of the changes that are taking place, so, though useful for the sake of clarity and analysis, the segmented organization of my chapters is admittedly superficial. In my conclusion, I move beyond the categorical evaluations of change, and present a broader assessment that stems from an understanding of the many changes taking place as interacting and interrelated forces, evaluating the net effect that the many changes in journalism are bringing about in reshaping the identities of journalists, newspapers and new organizations.

Before diving into the tumultuous reality of the present, though, —in a nod to what I believe to be a strength of the journalistic approach to framing history in motion—I begin by looking back. Since my primary aim is an evaluation of the present, my discussion of history is rather brief. Still, I believe that it is a necessary precursor for understanding the current upheaval, for we cannot hope to fully understand journalism in the present if we do not first take note of its past; as I mentioned before, journalism is, amongst many things, a historical legacy.

In line with the multi-disciplinary nature of both narrative analysis and journalistic storytelling, in addition to interviews, my work draws on both traditional and non-traditional sources, citing Youtube videos, blogposts, newspapers articles and documentary films alongside history books, biographies and media theory, for this is the reality of storytelling in the digital age: our thoughts, expressions and realities—our stories—cannot be relegated to any one space or medium.

All of our narratives and all of our identities weave through an incredible diversity of expressive forms: we are what we write, what we say, what we do, what we read, and these days even what we post online, so in examining the collective and individual identities of newspapers, news organizations and journalists, I attempt to include these many and varied expressions of community and self. This thesis is about newspapers, it is about journalists, and it is about change. It is a chronicle of identity and it is a story about community. This thesis is the story of our nation's storytellers in flux.

Part I

Chapter 1

History as Legacy:

How Papers Became 'The American Press'

The press is a visible American institution. We are witness to both its triumphs and its missteps. Even decades later, one can easily retrace its steps glimpsing the "first draft of history[1]," in the United States. Modern conceptions of journalism, though, tend to neglect the more distant past of an American tradition that traces its origins as far back as 1689[2].

"Newspapers" from those days would be practically unrecognizable in modern terms. In an age when the American paper is forced to continually advocate for support and fight for survival, our definition of the "traditional" newspaper has been necessarily flattened—we commonly think of journalism as having always been the way it is now. This "traditional" practice of journalism that faces extinction, one that espouses ideals of impartiality, thorough reporting and watchdog ethics— America's fourth estate—went through many evolutions and blunders before rising to the power and prestige achieved in its finest days. Before Joseph Pulitzer, before Woodward, Bernstein and Watergate—before the Pentagon Papers—the American paper began as a simple affair, printed on a just a few sheets of paper.[3]

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[1] Philip Graham. (1963, April) speech presented to overseas correspondents of Newsweek in London, England.

[2] Charles E. Clark and John B. Hench, *Three hundred years of the American newspaper : essays* (Worcester: American Antiquarian Society, 1991). 367

[3] W. David Williams Julie Hedgepeth Sloan, *The Early American Press, 1690-1783*, The history of American journalism,; no. 1; Variation: History of American journalism ;; no. 1. (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1994). 4.

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Early iterations of the American periodical paper lacked several key features of what we now associate with "the news." First, the earliest papers were not nearly as timely.[4] It would be many years before the newspaper evolved to its current capacity to provide news on a daily or even hourly basis. Second, papers were not without bias or political agendas. Not only did they lack the presumed objective stance that is now a cornerstone in the value system of the institution, but on the contrary, were often vehicles of propaganda[5], carefully manipulated instruments used to sway public opinion and champion particular points of view. Finally, papers did not always have the professional newsmen that would later become the celebrated legends of the industry. The professionally skilled newspaper reporter with a deeply engrained belief in the inherent good of objectivity would not emerge till much later. The development would be gradual, with various turning points along the way. Though many individuals internalized the same sorts of newsroom value systems and produced work that would certainly meet modern standards of objective and in-depth reporting—it would be many decades before the industry itself developed the infrastructure to both mandate and support this sort of professional newsgathering. These defining characteristics of timely news reported objectively on by professional, would later help the paper to become what it is today. They were key building blocks in the formation of the identities not only of individual papers in their communities, but of news media as a whole in the social culture of the United States.

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[4] Ibid, 373

[5] Michael Schudson, *Discovering the news : a social history of American newspapers* (New York: Basic Books, 1978). 4

Earliest Systems of News

The societal thirst for news goes back thousands of years.[6] Even before the development of written literary systems, news was still regularly spread by word of mouth.[7] Written systems can be traced back as far as 202 B.C. during the Han Dynasty in China, where government-produced news circulated fairly regularly amongst officials.[8] Ancient Roman society also employed a similar system, posting daily handwritten newssheets in the Roman forum as early as 59 B.C.[9]

Although both the Roman and Chinese systems are good examples of the sorts of early systems set in place to facilitate the spread of news, neither the newssheets from China nor the posted affairs of Rome are considered true precursors of the newspaper because like circulating pamphlets and news spread from ear to ear, they lacked consistency, and for this reason, had no identity of their own. Mitchell Stephens, author of the most in depth encyclopedia entry on 'the newspaper,' explains the why these early systems are not considered ancestors of the modern newspaper:

> Although they touched upon a wide variety of news…newsbooks and
> news ballads did not qualify as newspapers because they each appeared
> only once, to report only one story, and they each had no identity
> separate from the particular news story they told.[10]

From the beginning then, the notion of identity becomes central to a proper understanding of what qualifies as a newspaper and therefore as an authoritative source of news and information. While early journalistic forms in

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[6] Mitchell Stephens, "History of Newspapers," in *Collier's Encyclopedia* (1994).

[7] Asa Briggs and Peter Burke, *A Social History of the Media : From Gutenberg to the Internet* (Cambridge: Polity, 2002).

[8] Stephens, "History of Newspapers."

[9] Stephens

[10] Stephens, "History of Newspapers."

places like Rome and China replicated many of the features associated with a newspaper, a certain sense of accountability and regularity would be necessary before the early newspaper could establish firm roots in society.

The first publications to meet these technical criteria emerged out of sixteenth century Italy, where newssheets in Venice known as *avisis or gazette* circulated weekly.[11] These sheets were filled with short news items related to wars and politics in Europe,[12] but what set them apart was a particular nuance of style: Italian newssheets bore the dates on indicating when they had been sent out and were written under the name of a particular city from whence they originated. This stylistic development is what gives the gazettes their claim to ancestry—not only did they contain information about current events, they communicated from a clearly identifiable source, and in a timely manner. This format would become the calling card of formal news communications into modernity

Early Newspaper Publication in the American Colonies

Like many of its inhabitants, America's journalistic tradition immigrated to the colonies from Great Britain. The first American paper was an act of political defiance carried out by Bostonian Benjamin Harris[13] in direct defiance of British insistence that any news be licensed and "published by authority" of the crown. As it happens, Harris had something of a

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[11] Ibid.

[12] Ibid.

[13] John William Tebbel, *The Compact History of the American Newspaper*, [1st] ed. (New York: Hawthorn Books, 1963). 11

propensity for toying with political power, newspapers being his political

prodding implement of choice.[14]

     Publick Occurrences Both Foreign and Domestick, the first multi-page

broadsheet published on American soil without government license, appeared for the

first and last time in September of 1690.[15] In it Harris directed criticism at the King of

France, whom Harris reported was rumored to have slept with the wife of his son.

The broadsheet also highlighted the mistreatment of British prisoners by the Mohawk

Indians, allies of the French[16] who were, in turn, British allies. Since the general

assumption until this point was that all news published in the colonies was done so

under the authority of the British crown, Harris' *Occurrences* threatened to

undermine British-French relations and was a general embarrassment to the British

ruling authority.[17]

     We may recognize—in this first little publication—the early trappings of an

American journalistic value for criticism of both the status quo and the government,

but even beyond this—the content of this first paper bears noting. The merits of

skeptical criticism aside, if it seems as though the first paper in the great American

journalistic tradition was filled with little more than gossip and bigotry, that's

probably because it was. Early colonial papers were more often than not, vehicles for

propaganda. Almost without exception, colonial papers served a particular political

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[14] Ibid., 12-14.

[15] Ibid., 11.

[16] Ibid. 13

[17] Sloan, *The Early American Press, 1690-1783*.

aim, with Benjamin Harris' *Publick Occurrences* setting the tone for an ongoing trend.[18]

There has been some controversy around the contention that *Publick Occurrences* was America's first paper—specifically some historians have pointed out that Harris' venture was not the first attempt to use the press as a means of disseminating information about current events[19]. This idea was adopted several years earlier by Samuel Green Jr. who reprinted portions of the government sanctioned *London Gazette* in the colonies under the title *Present State of New English Affairs*[20], which begs the question of why, the historical has remained fixated on *Publick Occurences* and not *New English Affairs*.

Publick Occurences is recognized as a foundational stepping-stone in the history of the American Press because of several key features that set it apart from efforts like *New English Affairs*. It was the first truly American paper because it focused on information relevant to American news consumers rather than merely parroting the royally sanctioned news items to a colonial audience. And unlike the *London Gazzette,* and it's New English spinoff, with *Occurences,* Harris made it abundantly clear that he had no intention of by playing the rules of the provincial government or its foreign overseers.

In these two features—an attention to local relevance and a deliberate defiance of governmental regulation—*Occurences* differed not only from *New*

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18 Tebbel, *The Compact History of the American Newspaper*: 11-31.

19 Charles E. Clark, "The Newspapers of Provincial America," in *Three Hundred Years of the American Newspaper*, ed. John B. Hench (Worcester: American Antiquarian Society, 1991), 367-89.

20 Ibid., 371.

English Affairs or any other publications that might be considered its American forerunners, but also from its British contemporaries, earning it a unique and important role in the development of American journalism.[21]

Though Harris has generally been accepted as the first publisher of an American newspaper, in due time he would be joined by many other publishers and businessmen eager to take advantage of a perceived need for news distribution. His contemporaries were generally no different in their approach to content. Published news tended to either have a heavy partisan sway or be generally dull and non-controversial. John Cambell, post-master of Boston and publisher and distributer of the Boston *News Letter* was a perfect example of the latter.[22]

Seeing the opportunity to fill a gap left in the wake of Harris' spoiled venture, which was rapidly halted by a virtual cease and desist response from the British government, Cambell began publishing and distributing *News Letter*, a royally sanctioned publication, shortly after.[23] Despite its rather orthodox[24] and generally bland approach, the *News Letter* is important because it succeeded in one place *Occurrences* had failed—publishing consistently for many years. Because of this consistency, the paper was able to take on the early trappings of an independent and fairly consistent identity.

After Cambell lost interest, it would pass hands several times before eventually flickering out,[25] but to a certain extent, it was able to achieve the sort of

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[21] Ibid., 377.

[22] Ibid.

[23] Sloan, *The Early American Press, 1690-1783*: 18.

[24] Ibid., 19.

[25] Tebbel, *The Compact History of the American Newspaper*: 15.

reliability and regularity[26] that were paramount in the development of journalism and in the success of individual papers in the new world. Wide circulation, pioneered by postmaster Cambell's *Boston News Letter,* represented a developmental milestone— before newspapers could become powerful forces in colonial communities, it was critical that they serve the general population, bringing news increasingly large sects of the population.

This being colonial America, newspapers were published with a white male audience in mind, but despite this the actual readership they achieved was broader than publishers intended. As their numbers increased, newspapers became increasingly available and accessible to the literate populace.[27] This was a critical evolutionary development for the American press as it progressed towards becoming a tool that actually served 'the people'—not just certain sectors of them. Soon, newspapers would become vehicles actually involved in "narrowing the information gap between the learned and the merely literate,[28]" an equalizing force of justice in the communities they served.

The Paper in Revolution and The Precursors of Professional Newsmen

The tendency of early colonial papers to act as mere partisan mouthpieces was exacerbated by the politically charged climate leading up to the war. Newspapers were as likely to take sides as individuals. "Propoganda…dominated papers for nearly twenty years and reduced their news function largely to highly-colored,

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[26] Sloan, *The Early American Press, 1690-1783*: 18.
[27] Clark, "The Newspapers of Provincial America," 384.
[28] Ibid., 387.

partisan accounts of tremendous events which swept the land,[29]" writes John Tebbel of the period in his *Compact History of the American Newspaper.* Having seized the opportunity to communicate en masse, publishers were quick to realize the utility of newspapers in an era of political and ideological dueling.

The polarization of American papers was not without its benefits. Despite clear bias present in much of the work, its effect on the quality of writing in the papers was by and large a positive one. Great writers put their pens to work in defense of their political leanings, and many a brilliant piece of literature found its way to the nation's revolutionary presses, which put forth a synthesis of actual news information and personal and clearly goal-oriented writing.[30]

Revolutionary discontent helped fuel the popularity of the newspaper.[31] Not only were newspapers exceptionally useful for the promulgation and digestion of political beliefs—a rather popular pastime for the revolutionary colonial gentleman— their importance was compounded as the political climate edged toward revolution, and it became rather important to keep up with current events. All about the colonies, news publications were finding their way onto the laps and into the minds of Americans, but even in a general flurry to take sides and sway minds—an interesting reverence for objectivity began to emerge. In practice, one would be hard-pressed to characterize the papers at the time as being objective,[32] but increasingly, inaugural issues of colonial papers found editors and writers eager to note their respect for, and aspirations to, fair and equal treatment of news information.

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[29] Tebbel, *The Compact History of the American Newspaper*: 29.
[30] Ibid., 33-54.
[31] Sloan, *The Early American Press, 1690-1783*: 145-69.
[32] Ibid., 159.

The Massachusetts Spy, a paper based out of Boston and Worchester, provides a relevant illustration of this developing theme, it's inaugural issue touting it as a publication "open to all parties but influenced by none.[33]" *The Spy* did, in fact, prove to be rather impartial in comparison to many other publications in the eighteenth century[34], but it too would eventually become influenced by at least some political actors. In a period of intense political passion, more partisan meant more profit,[35] and even colonial businessmen were conscious of their bottom line.

The authors and editors contributing to provincial papers prior to America's bid for independence would seem a rather unusual bunch in comparison to the sorts of reporters and editorialists that would make a profession of journalism in years to come. Prominent individuals from around the soon-to-be country frequently lent their literary talents to the many papers cropping up in the urban centers of the British colonies.[36] However great their talent though, for these men—the likes of whom included famed intellectuals like Ben Franklin[37]—journalism was never a primary occupation. For this reason, not only was the profession of journalism a ways off, a distinct journalistic style of writing was as well, since these part-time contributors imparted their own unique literary style.

Colonial and early post-colonial papers printed all manner of written items in their newssheets, completely lacking the sort of now-standard format and style present in the industry. Alongside pieces of straight news, readers might find things

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[33] Tebbel, *The Compact History of the American Newspaper.*
[34] Ibid.
[35] Sloan, *The Early American Press, 1690-1783*: 159.
[36] Tebbel, *The Compact History of the American Newspaper*: 53.
[37] Ibid.

like personal letters.[38] This was a rather useful strategy for furthering the propagandist aims of the press at the time, but it mostly likely hindered the development of individual identities for the papers themselves. Papers were platforms for spreading the word about the political ideologies they supported and for the men in the process of shaping them.

In thinking about the developing identity of the newspaper and understanding how it evolved into modernity, it is important to take note of the aspirations that prominent thinkers were beginning to develop in terms of idealizing the newspaper and the newsman. Benjamin Franklin, who published *The Pennsylvania Gazette,* put forth opinions about what he believed were necessary eligibility requirements for publishers of America's newspapers in his own publication. An editor, Franklin wrote, should:

> […] be qualified with an extensive acquaintance with languages, a great easiness and command of writing and relating things clearly and intelligibly and in few words; he should be able to speak of war both land and by sea; be well acquainted with geography and with the history of the time, with the several interests of princes and states, the secrets of the courts, and the manners and customs of all nations.[39]

Franklin's standards—although perhaps a bit overambitious—foreshadowed the sort of grandiosity and idealism that would characterize the lofty expectations increasingly central to the practice of journalism. Their aspirations would become intricately entangled with their identities as journalists and as newspapers.

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[38] Ibid., 14.
[39] Ibid., 21.

By 1754, American papers were being published exclusively by their printers.[40] Earlier experiments in sponsorship[41]—including instances in which political parties helped fund the publication of newspaper—had faded away. Though these new printer-publishers were primarily focused on profit,[42] as the next generation of editors rose through the ranks, there was a marked shift towards the aspirations that Franklin had set forth. The next fifty or so years saw the rise and success of publishers who were indeed, more than mere businessmen interested in economic gain. A sense of civic responsibility, however skewed, was building, and publishers would rise up to be much more than successful businessmen.

Dedicating their printing presses to the publication of a newspaper that may or may not turn a profit instead of taking on contracted work was a gamble[43], but by the turn of the eighteenth century, it was paying off. The mid 1700s marked a period of great expansion.[44] The number of weekly papers in major cities was on the rise, as was overall circulation[45] and demand facilitated expedience and regularity. As a consequence, the papers were going to press as many as three times a week.[46] Newspapers became essential facets of colonial life[47]—a development not lost on those involved in the business of news. "One is astonished to see with what avidity they are sought after," wrote Ambrose Serle, an Englishman in charge of the New

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[40] Clark and Hench, *Three hundred years of the American newspaper : essays.* 381
[41] Clark, "The Newspapers of Provincial America," 379.
[42] Ibid
[43] Clark, "The Newspapers of Provincial America," 382.
[44] Tebbel, *The Compact History of the American Newspaper*: 33.
[45] Ibid., 34.
[46] Ibid.
[47] Ibid.

York Royalist Press in 1776, "and how implicitly they are believed by the great bulk of people." [48]

The American Revolution provided the stage upon which papers were able to display their might. Both the American Revolution and the soon to be French Revolution would be remembered as "newspaper fueled revolutions," demonstrating the power of the press to mobilize the masses. [49] The ability of the press to incite unrest and fuel change helped lend legitimacy to the print medium.[50] Force lay not only in the deftness of their rhetoric, but also in their ability to unify. The broadsheets provided a space for rhetorical arguments to and a means by which political discourse could be brought into the collective conscience. War was declared in the pages of broadsheets long before the first shot was fired in the name of revolution.

Political Entanglements in the Federalist Anti-Federalist Debate

Having already displayed a propensity to take up arms in defense or in opposition to the revolutionary cause, the press once again reaffirmed its commitment to political entanglement with the administrations and dealings of the newborn nation's first leaders. For historian John Tebbel, the key development that took place differentiating propaganda papers in pre and post revolutionary America was a matter of sophistication: "The difference was that the newspapers themselves were more sophisticated by this time, and the men who manipulated them as propaganda weapons were among the finest intellects our country has produced."[51]

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[48] Ibid., 43.

[49] Martin Conboy, The press and popular culture, (Thousand Oaks, Calif., 2002). 37

[50] Ibid.

[51] Tebbel, *The Compact History of the American Newspaper*: 55.

The contributions of these men to the emergent Federalist Anti-Federalist debate through the nations newspapers would have a longstanding effect on newspapers in the states, for as they crafted and carved away in a debate that would define the nation, these great minds were also lending their personal prestige to the papers they used as sounding platforms—their efforts and the power of their words fostering a new respect for medium that had been abused for less noble ventures. It was duly noted in the subconscious of the nation that should one wish to brush up on the most central and significant affairs of America, there was little need to look farther than its newspapers.

Given the grandiosity and importance of the debates, it may be surprising that the post-revolutionary era is frequently described as the dark ages of journalism.[52] Why should an era in which wonderful and insightful writing filled the papers be retrospectively labeled the dark age of journalism? The historical branding of the period as a dark age demonstrates how deeply central the idea of objectivity has since become in the journalism industry.

The years that the federalist and anti-federalist debates were carried out in the paper are considered dark because of the extent to which their products departed from the more modern value system[53]—a system which claims to exist in service of a fair and at least initially neutral stance, and a system that dictates that opinion should only be relegated to very specific parts of newspaper and duly labeled as such. America

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[52] Ibid.

[53] David Paul Nord, "Newspapers and American Nationhood," in *Three Hundred Years of the American Newspaper*, ed. John B. Hench (Worcester: American Antiquarian Society, 1991), 392.

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may have only moments ago ousted imperialist royalty, but it's no secret that objectivity would soon be crowned king in the realm of journalistic ideals.

To be clear, acknowledging that universal aspiration to objectivity and neutrality were slowly developing should not be confused with any claim that such exemplars were actually achieved by newspapers at any specific historical moment or period. Though perhaps a matter best left to philosophers, it is generally agreed that perfect objectivity is a human impossibility. Intentionally and painstakingly forged, or inadvertently interwoven, opinion, bias and worldview have always lived between the lines of the paper to some degree or another.

In the years after patriots' successful bid for independence, though, American newspapers did not even attempt to live up to objective standards of journalistic conduct. Balanced coverage was practically the stuff of mythology[54], and, even after the heat of the federalist and anti-federalist debate had died down, opinion still permeated the papers.

The Press and the Presidency

The press began wreaking havoc on the novice government it helped to bring into existence the moment the first president took office, and would continue to do so time and again, delivering searing critiques of even the likes of George Washington, who considered it imprudent and unmanaged. [55] Despite criticism, the politicians of the day largely understood and acknowledged the significance of papers for democracy, and so necessarily withheld from the kind of censorship that conflicted with democratic values.

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[54] Ibid.

[55] Tebbel, *The Compact History of the American Newspaper*: 56.

Thomas Jefferson was especially insistent that the nation's presses be permitted the space to spread falsities if necessary, famously contending that a press with errors was better than a democracy without newspapers.[56] Jefferson's unconditional support of the press was not a result of his high admiration for its output during his time, but rather a consequence of a faith in his vision of its ideal purpose in the democratic system: one more check to balance the government, a true fourth arm, or fourth estate of democracy. Freedom of the press was a vital aspect of America and of the vision of democracy. By 1882 America had both the most newspapers, as well as the highest newspaper readership, of any nation in the world.[57] The free press had a great ally in Jefferson, but it's unlikely that he—or any president for that matter—would have succeeded in challenging American papers had they set a mind to it. The press was part of the revolutionary identity of the nation, and any suppression of it would have been reminiscent of British rule.

The extent to which the press had seeped into every aspect of governmental affairs and its relevance to American politicians was highlighted in Andrew Jackson's presidency. His political innovation, a "Kitchen Cabinet" of advisors, included as one of its most influential members: prominent editor of the *Argus of Western America,* Francis Preston Blair.[58] As this informal appointment makes evident, editors, publishers, and newsmen had been elevated to positions of extreme political importance, with opinions that mattered to the most powerful men of the ages. The

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[56] Ibid., 62.
[57] Ibid., 75.
[58] Ibid., 85.

papers had secured their place in the political and social fabric of democratic

America.

The Rise of the Penny Press: Finding a Voice Apart Party Politics

The 1830s marked the first historical revolution in the press.[59] Up until this

pivotal decade, the high costs associated with printing a paper had set its price around

six cents[60], a rather significant sum at the time. In 1825, Frederick Koenig invented

the first cylinder press in Germany[61] and his innovation—coupled with the power of

steam—cut the cost of printing to a sixth of what it had once been, ushering in what is

commonly referred to as the era of the penny press.[62] This was a revolution on all

fronts. With the cost of a newspaper reduced to a mere cent, the popularity of the

penny press set into motion a ripple of changes: journalism, journalists and

newspapers and newspapers would emerge entirely new beings.

The first notable change was one in readership. With such a significantly

reduced selling price, middle class Americans and the more general urban populace

could afford to incorporate the newspaper into their everyday lives.[63] What's more,

papers were sold individually rather than by annual subscription, hawked on the

streets by the now iconic newsboys.[64] Without the necessity of an annual

subscription, the financial barrier to entry was minimal, permitting a more diverse

reading public.

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[59] Schudson, *Discovering the news : a social history of American newspapers*.14
[60] Ibid 18
[61] Stephens, "History of Newspapers."
[62] Ibid
[63] Schudson, *Discovering the news : a social history of American newspapers*: 22-23.
[64] Ibid. 17

Although the concept for a penny paper originated in New York and many of the most successful penny papers would also operate out of the city, the concept soon spread to other major regions in the United States.[65] At their new, affordable price, newspapers were now read by and marketed at rich and poor alike. *The Sun*, New York City's first penny press, typified this marketing strategy, proclaiming itself a paper that "shines for all[66]." With a greatly expanded readership on the streets of New York, the first mass medium was hawked to the first mass audience in the nation.

The success of the penny press simply brought more diversity to an already thriving medium. Even before the penny papers made their way onto the streets, the United States already boasted the healthiest newspaper industry in the world. The country supported an estimated 800 papers with a conjoined annual subscription of 64,000,000 serving its population of 23,500,000.[67] Not only did almost every household in the United States subscribe to at least one paper, the majority subscribed to several. This number of individual papers operating on American soil was unprecedented, and would only increase exponentially when the cylinder press soon slashed industry expenses.

As their numbers expanded, newspapers became increasingly important in the definition and reflection of community, a source of national pride. "It is the boast of American journalists," wrote historian Henry Sampson of the era in his *History of Advertising,* "that they have papers in obscure towns many of hundreds of miles

[65] Surowieki, "Patent Bending," *The New Yorker*(2003), http://www.newyorker.com/archive/2003/07/14/030714ta_talk_surowiecki.

[66] Jane Chapman and Nick Nuttall, *Journalism Today: A Themed History* (Blackwell Publishing, 2011).

[67] Henry Sampson, *A history of advertising from the earliest times : illustrated by anecdotes, curious specimens and biographical notes* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1874). 14.

inland."[68] Such a wealth of publications encouraged an increasing emphasis on local coverage and geographic specificity, an industry strategy that would, in large part, remain intact for over a hundred years, largely unchallenged until the dawn of an Internet Age.

The Era of Personal Journalism

The significance of a medium capable of reaching such a massive audience was not lost on the advertising executives of the nation. Alongside the notion of a mass audience, mass marketing became possible as well—and advertisers were not the only ones who stood to make a fortune. With their huge circulation figures (Benjamin Day's *Sun,* for example, had built up a circulation of 15,000 in just two years[69]), penny newspapers were able to command significant sums for advertisements.[70] This had notable consequences for their publishers: it provided them with financial independence from the established political powers of the day and simultaneously transformed them into very rich[71] and powerful men.

Since penny papers of New York marketed themselves to such a diverse group of readers, they tended to shy away from direct partisan allegiances[72], opting instead for more fact-based reporting of political news and an increased focus on local coverage in the communities they served. Coverage of crime and narrative human-interest stories now found their place alongside the more political reporting and

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68 Ibid., 13.

69 Schudson, *Discovering the news : a social history of American newspapers*: 18.

70 Sampson, 13

71 Tebbel, *The Compact History of the American Newspaper*: 98.

72 Schudson, *Discovering the news : a social history of American newspapers.* 22

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68 Ibid., 13.

69 Schudson, *Discovering the news : a social history of American newspapers*: 18.

70 Sampson, 13

71 Tebbel, *The Compact History of the American Newspaper*: 98.

72 Schudson, *Discovering the news : a social history of American newspapers.* 22

editorial content which had comprised the majority of content in the past,[73] dramatically increasing the local character of the papers.

Reporting style and efficiency also evolved in the penny press era. James Gordon Bennett, enterprising founder of a penny paper called *The New York Herald,* set the pace of news at an unprecedented speed by assigning his reporters to regular beats and establishing a bureau of six correspondents in Europe to regularly send back reports from abroad. [74] This was a far more hierarchical and carefully organized system than had ever been employed in newsgathering. In order to stay competitive, competing publications had no choice but to emulate his example. The race for the day's news began.

A rhythm was established. With news increasingly reported on a daily, rather than a weekly or even tri-weekly basis[75], journalists would now come in mid-morning to read the days headlines before heading out in search of the day's stories, which would be filed and ready to go to press that same evening. Gone were the days in which reporters simply waited for news to come their way. Appearing on the scene of crimes and fighting for a place in courtrooms, reporters began to fiercely asserting their authority and right to chase the news.

In the wake of these changes, journalism became a far more visible occupation, increasingly recognized as a professional undertaking, another important shift. Writing for the paper—once the passing occupation of the intellectual and political elite—was now a full-time job. In 1869, Robert E. Lee helped spearhead the

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[73] Stephens, "History of Newspapers."
[74] Tebbel, 98
[75] Schudson, *Discovering the news : a social history of American newspapers*: 13.

opening of the first journalism program in higher education at Washington and Lee University,[76] with prominent university members calling for scholarships for students who aspired "to make journalism and printing their profession,"[77] a clear indication that journalism had been fully recognized as a professional occupation, deserving of formal training.

The credibility of the press as a collective whole was also on the rise, and at the heads of these increasingly complex undertakings were larger than life publishers whose fiery tempers and forceful opinions were as well known as their papers. Though their publishers largely avoided directly partisan ties, the papers published at the time were hardly apolitical. Rather than taking on political causes, their political nature was more frequently expressed along the lines of morality. "They were the true products of the new era—editors, not printers; their own bosses not hired, subsidized voices of greater men in higher places," writes historian John Tebbel of the powerful New York City publishers during this period, "they were as partisan as some of their predecessors, but in their own right, not as party minions."[78]

Horace Greely was one such publisher, and his paper the *New York Tribune,* provides a particularly illustrative example of the sort of non-partisan and yet undeniably political nature of the papers at the time. Greely used the *Tribune* to campaign for issues he deemed of social and moral relevance, carrying out campaigns

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[76] Samuel Turner, "Robert E. Lee, President of Washington College," http://samuel-turner.suite101.com/robert-e-lee-president-of-washington-college-a85340.
[77] Ibid.
[78] Tebbel, *The Compact History of the American Newspaper*: 94.

against governmental corruption and slavery, amongst other social and political ills.[79]

His efforts earned *The Tribune* the nickname "The Great Moral Organ."[80] Greely

made his moralizing intentions very clear—in his own words he explained his vision

his paper as a publication that would pack a moral punch and take sides whenever it

deemed necessary: "a journal removed alike from servile partisanship on the one hand

and from gagged, mincing neutrality on the other."[81]

Not all penny papers were quite so overtly political or moralistic. Though the

Tribune was, perhaps, an extreme example—far and above the most overtly political

publication issuing out of New York at the time[82] —many publications operating

during the second half of the nineteenth century also found themselves setting the

moral and social agenda of the nation, whether they wanted to or not. Each paper was

different, and perhaps as an inevitability of their sheer numbers[83], a certain diversity

of opinion emerged. Greely and the *Tribune* championed a more socially progressive

agenda, openly campaigning against slavery, while Benjamin Day's *Sun,* by contrast,

represented a more conservative view.

The personality of these publishers shone through the pages of their papers,

making them more visible than ever before. Penny press era publishers were famous

not because of any previous political importance—as was once the case with writers

like Benjamin Franklin, Thomas Jefferson, or Alexander Hamilton—they became

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[79] Donald A. Ritchie, *American Journalists : Getting the Story*, Oxford profiles; Variation: Oxford profiles. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997). 10.
[80] Tebbel, *The Compact History of the American Newspaper*: 107.
[81] Schudson, *Discovering the news : a social history of American newspapers*: 22.
[82] Ritchie, *American Journalists : Getting the Story*: 10.
[83] Schudson, *Discovering the news : a social history of American newspapers*: 18.

public figures simply by virtue of their positions as leading publishers.[84] Large egos tended to go with the territory: Bennett even went to so far as to describe himself as "the Napoleon of the Newspaper press."[85] Whether they were bickering publicly[86] or filling the editorial pages with their largess, during their national reign Bennett and his contemporaries provided their readers with an intimate view of their lives and ideologies, sharing personal beliefs and even marriage plans with readers.[87] To subscribe to a particular paper was—to a certain extent—to ascribe to the worldview of its publisher or at the very least, to enter that their world.

Soon the media would become increasingly focused on objectivity[88], and as the papers grew in size and complexity their publishers would increasingly fade from immediate view. During the late 1800s and into the turn of the century, though, the identities of individual papers were indelibly intertwined with those of their publishers, and it was these men who set the tone of journalistic and moral enquiry for the nation.

The penny papers, and the powerful barons of the press who manned their helms, were able to effectively steer the industry in a new direction. Cutting the cost of the newspaper was an accomplishment, but also key was the disavowal of partisan affiliation: not just in words—early colonial papers had a history of making vocal claims of political independence—but also through actions. By placing their focusing on local events rather than limiting themselves to political ideology, the personalities

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[84] Tebbel, *The Compact History of the American Newspaper*: 103.
[85] Ritchie, *American Journalists : Getting the Story*. 59
[86] Tebbel, *The Compact History of the American Newspaper*: 99.
[87] Ibid., 101.
[88] Schudson, *Discovering the news : a social history of American newspapers*: 4.

of the era of personal journalism were able captivate entire cities with their coverage of crime and community, a model that would soon be replicated by the thousands of smaller papers taking root in communities around the nation. As circulations rose, the power of the papers, the power of a true mass medium, was fully realized. With coffers filled to the brim with advertising revenue, the papers were—at least in theory—able to stand apart from the government, and more important than their actual objectivity was their increasing ability to convincingly present themselves as independently operated organizations and self-directed organizations.

The historical legacy of the press as a 'fourth estate' in American democracy is a reference to the utility and importance of the nations' newspapers as a necessary extension of the government and of democracy. This is what we learn about the newspapers in elementary school. This is the heritage to which the press claims ownership to this day as it struggles to stay afloat. Functionally, though, it could be argued the history of the press as a vigilant watchdog for the United States government began under the watch of the barons of press. As the nineteenth century came to a close, the concept was being crystallized. In fact, the emergence of the actual term "fourth estate" has been traced to the 1840s,[89] just a decade after Benjamin Day published his first issue of *The Sun*, and as one *New Yorker* article puts it, "the American Newspaper as we know it was born."[90]

Though the lofty idea of the press as an important element of a democratic system had been percolating some time—with Thomas Jefferson, Ben Franklin and countless others speaking out in defense of an American institution that had not yet

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[89] Briggs and Burke, *A Social History of the Media : From Gutenberg to the Internet*: 154.
[90] Surowieki, "Patent Bending".

come of age—it was not until now that the papers finally began to approach maturity. Developing individually biased personality afforded newspapers a new level of agency, freeing them to operate as entities separate from the government, a true fourth estate worthy of its title.

Transformative Telegraphy and the Development of Journalistic Form

Newspapers in America are deeply tied to the formation of community. During the Revolutionary War, the fighting words of the patriot papers helped give a voice to discontent, uniting the colonies around a common enemy. Once victory had been secured for the newly united states, newspapers remained important tools of nation building, a key ingredient in the formation of a homogenous national identity. There seemed to be something about sharing news, and sharing newspapers, that brought people together, but as the dawn of the twentieth century approached, certain barriers still remained. The papers had done a great deal to help community thrive within the boundaries of the communities they served, but the connectivity of the world was limited by its size; news could travel not faster than a passenger train or a transatlantic vessel.

Just a few short years before Benjamin Day took the streets with the first issue of his 1¢ paper in the streets of New York, Samuel F. Morse began experimenting with a technology that, once perfected, would connect the world in ways previously unimagined.[91] The significance of this new invention was well articulated by Robert Cecil, the Prime Minister of Britain in 1889: the telegraph, he said, "assembled all mankind upon one great plane whence they can see everything that is done and hear

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[91] Briggs and Burke, *A Social History of the Media : From Gutenberg to the Internet*: 109.

everything that is said and judge every policy that is pursued at the very moment when these events take place." Certainly, he mused, it was a "strange and fascinating discovery."[92]

The importance of investing in this new communication technology was almost immediately recognized by the business-savvy publishers of the day.[93] By banding together, newspapers were able to defray the enormous cost of telegraph transmissions, making the technology affordable. The *Associated Press*—a wire service still operating to this day—is relic of one of these early news-sharing cooperatives originally formed in 1848.[94] By the turn of the century, telegraph lines connected almost every major city in the world.

Although telegraphic communication did wonders for speeding up the pace of news, it also had serious shortcomings, but the challenges of telegraphic communication were, in many ways, as formative and influential as its speed.[95] Telegraphic messages had to be communicated efficiently, and newspapers could not afford to pay for telegraphs filled with flowery language. Many scholars have argued that the nature of telegraphic transmission influenced the structure and form of the communications speeding through its wires.[96]

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[92] Ibid.

[93] Tebbel, *The Compact History of the American Newspaper*: 98.

[94] Richard Pyle, "19th Century Papers Shed New Light on origin of the Associated Press," *Associated Press*(2006), http://associatedpress.com/pages/about/whatsnew/wn_013106a.html.

[95] Elliot King, *Free for all : the Internet's transformation of journalism*, Visions of the American press; Variation: Visions of the American press. (Evanston, Ill.: Northwestern University Press, 2010). 40.

[96] Ibid.

Telegraphs encouraged short and concisely worded news transmissions[97]—not unlike the news briefs that now come speeding onto our mobile devices—and stories being transmitted across oceans or traversing hundreds of miles had to be carefully and directly worded. Transmissions were often cut short—a feature of telegraphic communication which many historians have linked to the relatively organic formation of the summary lead: an introductory paragraph containing the who, what and where information for a story.[98] From there, (so the thinking goes), news articles would increasingly take on the inverted pyramid form[99] now standard in the industry, wherein the most newsworthy information in a story is featured first before the article moves into increasingly specific detail. This way, the most important information would have a good chance of reaching its destination even if the transmission was cut short.

Regardless of whether or not telegraph technology was responsible, the style of news writing was becoming increasingly formulaic,[100] and the importance of this standardization in form should not be overlooked. Built into the increasingly methodical structure of news writing was an inherent claim to authority.[101] By issuing news in a repetitive and familiar structure, newspaper writing was identifying itself as the vessel of objective information and fact sharing.

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[97] Tebbel, *The Compact History of the American Newspaper*: 121.

[98] King, *Free for all : the Internet's transformation of journalism*: 31.

[99] David Mindich, "Edwin M. Stanton, the Inverted Pyramid, and Information Control," in *Just the Facts: How "Objectivity" Came to Define American Journalism* (1993).

[100] Ibid., 68.

[101] Ibid., 64-91.

I believe this strategy can be understood even further using the lens of linguistic anthropology, which commonly puts forth the notion that linguistic features help to "signal" to a reader the character of the information that will follow,[102] providing what scholar Gregory Bateson has termed a perceptual "frame" for understanding the information that is being received.[103] "A frame is metacommunicative, theorizes Bateson, "Any message which either explicitly or implicitly defines a frame ipso facto gives the receiver instructions or aids his attempt to understand the messages included within the frame."[104]

In creating a formulaic framework for reporting news stories, journalists were able to signal through the structure style of their writing that theirs were authoritative voices of fact and objectivity. In the same way that a literary writer might use "once upon a time" to signal the fictional nature of his writing, through their use of summary leads and inverted pyramid form, journalists were distinguishing their writing from other forms.

Introduction to an Internet Era: *From the Penny to the Penniless Press*

There are certain names inexorable from our institutional knowledge of journalism in the United States. Their legacies are tied up in the very ethos of journalism, inseparable from its narrative. Some of these names have already come up—men like Bennett and Greely were legends in their own day. Perhaps even more recognizable are figures like publishing mogul William Randolf Hearst or Joseph

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[102] Alessandro Duranti, *Linguistic anthropology : a reader*, Blackwell anthologies in social and cultural anthropology (Malden, Mass.: Blackwell Publishers, 2001). 151-185
[103] Gregory Bateson, *Steps to an ecology of mind*, illustrated, reprint ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1972).
[104] Ibid., 188.

Pulitzer—namesake of the most prestigious prize in journalism—both of whom also secured their place in history during the latter half of the nineteenth century. But the era to which they belonged—an era in which the names of men were as mighty as those of the papers they published—was passing.

In their wake would rise new giants, but this time it would be the papers themselves whose names and identities would enter the history books and be known throughout the country and throughout the world. *The Washington Post*, *The New York Times, The Chicago Tribune:* these would be the new superstars of the age, their identities an aggregate of the hundreds of men and women they employed, and the thousands of historical headlines emblazoned below their authoritative mastheads.

Having told the tale of how the newspapers were able to negotiate and renegotiate their identities, of how they piggybacked on the words of politicians to gain initial traction before finding their true power as voices apart from party politics—all the while gaining prestige, authority and increasing visibility— the natural question which then arises is: how did they end up in their current predicament? How did these powerful institutions, whose identities had been almost three hundred years in the making, find themselves fighting for survival? How did they lose hold of their identities?

In the last ten years, we have witnessed the most serious faltering of the newspaper industry in history. The Internet has challenged the viability of the newspaper more furiously than any other technological innovation in history—and there were others. The invention of the radio and the television certainly did nothing

to help boost circulation numbers,[105] yet even the broad reach of radio and the immediacy of televisions broadcasts did not completely antiquate the newspaper.

As these new technologies emerged, some of the more breaking news briefs were ceded to radio and television, and readership did dive off,[106] but newspapers were able to come into their own by going into the sort of depth that just couldn't fit in an evening broadcast. Even after radios and televisions found their place in living rooms everywhere, newsrooms were still bustling, budgets were still high, and newspaper reporters were still breaking stories of national importance.

The simplest answer to the question of what happened is, of course: the Internet happened. And so perhaps a more relevant query becomes: what was different about the Internet, and how did it manage to reshape the identities of some of the most powerful institutions of our age? Having now glimpsed at the stories, shifts and evolutions that shaped American journalism in the last several hundred years, it seems prudent to preface any discussion of its digital age dilemma with at least a cursory glance at how the Age of the Internet came to be. The story is exceedingly complex, and I've necessarily pared it down, but before we can properly understand how the Internet is impacting journalism, it's important to know what the Internet really is in the first place.

Missing the Scoop*: **The Non-Linear Evolution of Computer Networking**

There are few people more conscious of societal shift than journalists, who, after all, make an occupation of setting their thumbs to the pulse of community and nation. The ability of the World Wide Web and of earlier iterations of computer

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[105] King, *Free for all : the Internet's transformation of journalism*: 13.
[106] Ibid., 157.

networks to communicate with near instantaneous speed, posed a serious threat to the steady rhythms to which newsrooms had become accustomed. Though a quick reaction might not have saved them, newspapers were slow to hop on the online bandwagon, or to make preparations to do so.[107]

Although this failure to react may seem confusing retrospectively, the reaction—or more accurately state, the lack of reaction on the part of newspapers— can be better understood by attending to two important aspects of the web's development: First, early computer networks were far more complex and morphing technologies than other advancements like television or radio.[108] Though the papers had faced competition before, the Internet was not a simple invention or a finite technology. It did not spring up overnight. This made it harder to pinpoint as a threat. Second, the Internet came into being as the culmination of *several* computer networking projects, not just one. It was not for some time that the numerous individual experiments in networking and smaller network systems blossomed into a gargantuan communication network, linking all ends of the globe.

Networked Networks

In tracing the development of the Internet, author and academic David Carlson begins by explaining difference between the Internet and the World Wide Web,[109] a starting point that I will emulate. The term 'Internet' refers to a series of interconnected networks that now collectively allow for communication between

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[107] Ibid., 146.

[108] Ibid., 111-56.

[109] David Carlson, "The History of Online Journalism " in *Digital Journalism: Emerging Media and Changing Horizons of Journalism*, ed. Kevin Kawamoto (New York Rowan and Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2003), 48.

millions of computers around the country, and for that matter, the world.[110] The

World Wide, on the other hand, is simply a method of sharing information across this

infrastructure of networks—specifically it is an "information sharing model[111]" used

to broadcast websites. This is only the beginning. Pulling up a website is just one of

the many ways that the Internet can be used as a means of information sharing; email,

file transfer and instant messaging are all also functions carried through

interconnectivity of the Internet. Though data travels through the same network for

all, each requires a different process and is carried out using a different set of

mechanisms.

Why isn't any of this common knowledge? The complexities of these various

mechanisms are hidden from modern Internet user, and it is our web browsers that

hide them. Online browers act as unifying tools and as translators; they have made the

many processes involved in transmitting information and communication across

Internet's networks appear seamless and streamline—a beautiful visual translation to

mask the complicated plumbing below. [112] Because many of us do not understand the

intricate mechanisms that take place below the surface—and because the Internet was

not particularly useful to the average citizen before it was packaged inside easy-to-use

graphical interface of a web browser—it is easy to forget the intricacy of system we

employ. Just by understanding that this complexity exists, we are better equipped to

understand the equally complex development that brought the system and the network

it operates on into being.

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[110] Vangie Beal, "The Difference Between the Internet and the World Wide Web,"
http://www.webopedia.com/DidYouKnow/Internet/2002/Web_vs_Internet.asp.
[111] Ibid
[112] Carlson, "The History of Online Journalism " 48.

The network we access each time we launch a web browser was not the first or only computer network. Almost as soon as the computers began to spring up in academic institutions around the country, attempts to connect them were simultaneously underway.[113] Many great minds lent their intellect to the project to computer networking efforts, and with accelerating speed, the various ways in which computers could communicate with one another began to expand. Networks started small, but as personal computing gained popularity, they grew. Eventually—or so the simplified version of the story goes—they merged: a series of interconnected networks that were now able to speak a common language and operate a whole.[114]

Pity on anyone who attempts to write a linear history of how the Internet came into being, for there was nothing linear about the manner by which its existence came to pass. Its development as a network—its growth—was as decentralized and multi-nodal as the platform itself. Fortunately, it is not necessary to trace the many and diffuse origins of the Internet in order to understand its relationship to journalism, but it is necessarily to at least know that "the Internet," as it exists today, is essentially a network of interconnected networks.

This is part of the reason that the Internet did not appear to pose a particularly serious threat to the newspaper's physical system of information distribution: a small network that connected several dozen or even several hundred computers was not capable of delivering the news to the millions of households that newspapers served.

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[113] Kevin Kawamoto, *Digital journalism : emerging media and the changing horizons of journalism* (Rowman & Littlefield, 2003).
[114] Carlson, "The History of Online Journalism " 48.

Even several of these small networks (which largely connected computer hobbyists and academics) were no threat.

It was not until the many small networks eventually converged into one massive system of interconnected networks, and became "the Internet," that journalism found itself in trouble. This idea is well encapsulated by the rationale of Metcalfe's Law, or 'The Network Effect,' which roughly postulates that the value of a communications network grows exponentially with each new user—a network is only a valuable as the number of people who use it.[115] Though this idea predates the computer,[116] it has since been widely used as theoretical framework for understanding the Internet,[117] and explains rather aptly how the same non-threatening networks separately, became threatening together; when many small networks became one big "Internet," this evolved system suddenly had the potential to serve as a new mass medium.

Part of the newspaper industry's failure to react, then, can be understood as a consequence of its atypical development, which was difficult to predict or track. Yet another variable that obscured any perception of the Internet as a threat was the nature of early communication on the networks. Long before a mechanism for broadcasting websites was created, other forms of dialogue were taking place via computer networks, and this early discourse was akin to what we now see on online message boards: postings and messages were frequently informal and often anonymous. The

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[115] Carl Varian Hal R. Shapiro, Information rules : a strategic guide to the network economy, (Harvard Business School Press, 1999).

[116] Schudson, *Discovering the news : a social history of American newspapers*: 119.

[117] Greaves Mark and Mika Peter, "Metcalfe's Law, Web 2.0, and the Semantic Web," *Journal of Web Semantics* 6, no. 1 (2008).

Internet quickly developed its own culture, [118] and it was not a particularly serious one.

The Internet seemed a space for more personal communication, and unlike in the early days of radio and television, the sort of communicative culture developing around computer networks did not seem to be making any attempt to replicate news delivery. It facilitated communication of a different tone and appeared to be entirely new communicative form.

In this case, first impressions were rather telling, for indeed it was. Soon, computers would find their way in to all of homes and everyday lives, and so, really, it was only a matter of time before the world of formally-vetted, carefully-prepared and consistently-timed journalistic communication would collide with the non-stop, ungoverned, amoebic entity that was—and still is—the Internet.

Dan Haar, an editor at the *Hartford Courant*, can still recall the early days of impact, before the extent of the clash became clear:

> Twelve years ago, we had a class of students visiting the Courant at our news meeting. This was the early online days, and they said: "does the fact that you're doing so much online affect what you're covering and how you cover it for print?" I was the first to speak up and I said absolutely. "We're covering more breaking news, and we're covering cheaper, quicker-hit stuff [...]" And my boss, and her boss both chimed in and they were aghast that I would say this…*Aghast!* [They said] "Absolutely in no way does it affect how we cover things for print. It is not affecting how we gather news. It is not changing the work we do.

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[118] King, *Free for all : the Internet's transformation of journalism.* 70

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That statement today would be quaint. You'd look back on that like the days of […] the milk bottle being delivered to your goddamn front door. Because there's absolutely no question, *no question*, that the material that goes into print in a contemporary newspaper in 2012—whether it's the *New York Times* or the *Butte Falls Bugle*, or the *Hartford Courant* in between—is faster gathered, quicker hit and less meticulously reported. There's no two ways about it. And that is a direct influence of online journalism and digital first. It's the two things coinciding of the way we report for online with the decline of the print economy, because we just don't have the army. We had 400 people, and we have 125 now…and we're not gonna keep the hundred and twenty five.

Part II

Introduction

Though we may not have a perfect picture, we think we know the journalist. If we can assume that an average day in his (and in perfect accordance with our cultural stereotypes about gender,[1] it is a *he*) professional life is anything like what we've seen in movies or read in books—anything like what we've observed at our own high school newspapers—a theoretical day would go something like this:

He would arrive at work mid morning. Over a cup of coffee, he would scan in the day's headlines, reading any key stories with a more careful eye to detail. Next he would pick up one of the many phones ringing off the hook all around him to make a few calls, check in with sources to see about any potential story leads or—in the case of pre-ordained assignment—set off to the scene of one event or another.

Throughout the day he would continue the process of interviewing and researching for his story, putting a great deal of thought into how best to frame it. Slowly, it would take shape in his mind. By around five, it would be on his editor's desk. He would take another hour or so reworking any necessary changes and clarifying anything deemed deserving of clarification. Later that night, he might get a last minute call from someone reading the paper for the last time before it was sent along to the printers. And the next morning he would come in and do it all again.

This was indeed the life of a newspaper reporter twenty years ago, and for many, this remains our shared cultural vision of the newsman or newswoman. But it is no longer an accurate representation. Lawrence Roberts, a three-time Pulitzer prize winner who has served, among other positions, as the chief of investigations at the

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[1] Loren Ghiglione, "The American Journalist: Fact vs. Fiction," in *Three Hundred Years of the American Journalist*, ed. John Hench (Worcester: American Antiquarian Society, 1991), 454.

Washington Post, has watched a transformation in the life of a journalist take place

over the course of his career. His description of journalist's typical duties *The Post* up

until a few years ago lines up with the theoretical day rather well:

> As recently as, [...] ten years ago, maybe less, the job of a print journalist at a major newspaper was to come in in the morning, and to spend basically until 7:00 at night doing nothing but working on the best possible version of a story they could produce. Talking to as many people as possible. Thinking about the best way to present it. Figuring out what the takeaway was. An uninterrupted period of time. Basically you know you have the right to finish that story, and send it off to the press room […] around seven or eight o'clock.

Today, he says, the day goes a little more like this:

> If you come in in the morning, and you're going to deal with a story like the President's budget…you basically have to start dealing with it instantly. You have to post something on the web about the news. You have to answer a bunch of email, maybe there's some comments on the story you just put out…that you have to address. Maybe you need to do a quick radio interview on it at eleven o'clock and your editor wants a sort of interim story at noon so it can run on the web for people to read at lunchtime about what the budget says. And in between that you've got five other calls you need to make and a hundred emails to answer. So at seven o'clock you still have to produce a 800, 1,000, 12,000 word story that sums up everything that's important in the day, but think of all the other things you're doing along the way.

His description of the daily ordeal hints at many but not all of the changes that

have taken root. Today's journalist is a different creature, faced with new burdens,

new challenges and new opportunities. Our cultural construction of the newsman or

newswoman lags behind, and clinging to a dated archetype of the journalist distorts

our ability to comprehend the Internet-driven identity crisis of the papers today. The

identity of the newspaper and that of the journalist are symbiotically constructed; we

cannot hope to understand either in isolation. So in order to tell the story of a

changing media landscape, I begin with the stories and reflection of the storytellers

themselves. It is from the strength of their many voices that the newspaper has drawn

its power and authority for decades and so this thesis places them at the root of change. Their stories, reflections and musings matter because their narratives underpin the story of the papers as a whole, and the story of the newspaper is, in turn, intricately entangled in the political and cultural fabric of our nation. This is their story, but it is also ours.

In telling the story of change in the world of journalism, I offer the voices and opinions of individuals involved in its practice in a rich variety of capacities. All of the voices I include are those of individuals involved in some way in the production of journalism. This is a cultural shift in the politics, lifestyle and practice of news making, pervasive in every aspect of journalistic life, and so I find it not only useful but necessary to include input from those who have participated and continue to participate in journalism on every level. Print journalists are prominently featured but also included are the voices of individuals who fall outside of this rather narrow description of 'journalist.' This feels a rather fitting methodology in an exploration of the Internet's influence on the professional practice of journalism, since perhaps one of the most profound changes that the move online has precipitated is an expansion of our definition of 'journalist' in the first place.

You'll notice that in the later chapters especially, I lean heavily on the input of two journalists in particular: Matthew Sturdevant and Kim Velsey. This is intentional, and I have chosen to emphasize their input for two reasons. First, they are excellent foils for one another. Sturdevant has been working in the field for some time, and entered the industry prior to the rush to get online. Velsey, on the other hand, is a recent entrant into the profession, landing her first professional job when the push to

go digital was already in full swing. The two also vary greatly in their beats: Velsey covers local Connecticut towns whereas Sturdevant is a business reporter with a far more specialized beat.

Second, both Sturdevant and Velsey are journalists employed by *the Hartford Courant*, a subsidiary of Tribune Company. The current management of Tribune Company has been heavily criticized,[2] and undoubtedly the journalists who work for Tribune-owned publications (including Velsey and Sturdevant,) find themselves in particularly difficult positions. Their experiences and reflections are particularly useful precisely because they represent an extreme, and therefore paint clearer picture of what is happening in the world of journalism as it struggles to stay alive on the Internet. Problems that are especially vivid for them are the same challenges that are faced, to a lesser degree, by thousands of journalists at hundreds of publications, but which perhaps lurk slightly deeper beneath the surface elsewhere. Highlighting the experiences of Velsey and Sturdevant helps to parse out these shifts, challenges and problems, putting them on full display.

Precipitators of Change*: Speed, Money and Competition in the Digital Space*

There is a certain hierarchy inherent in understanding the effects of the Internet on the profession of journalism. On the most basic level, it has caused changes in the financial structure and pace of journalistic production, which in turn, has altered the identity and threatened authoritative claims of newspapers and journalists alike. This chapter will follow this succession, addressing the most immediate and tangible effects of the Internet on the industry overall first, before

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[2] James O'Shea, *The deal from hell : how moguls and Wall Street plundered great American newspapers*, 1st ed. (New York: PublicAffairs, 2011), Biography (bio).

moving into the more complex changes these primary conflicts have set into motion.

I begin by suggesting that three forces threaten the traditional newsgathering practices of the newspaper: speed, money, and competition. As my earlier historical analysis demonstrates, these three rather obvious factors have been formative influences on newspapers for hundreds of years, but deserve renewed consideration and redefinition if they are to be properly understood in relation to an era dominated by online activity. In practice, these forces interact, but for the sake of analysis, I introduce them out separately, beginning with speed.

The rush for speed began over a hundred years ago with the rise of the daily paper. From that day forward, the race was on. The telegraph sped things up, as did the telephone, the radio and the television. But even with these developments, the newspaper industry was able to establish a somewhat comfortable rhythm, getting papers on doorsteps around the country on a predictable time schedule. Even at the height of the newspaper's prominence as a mass media form, the paper was only published twice each day, once in the morning and once each evening.

The invention of radio and eventually television meant the newspaper could no longer be the sole source of breaking news, but the they still had their place in our national information diet, providing depth that television and radio frequently lacked. For this reason, newspapers were, to some degree, shielded from the taxing demands of a truly twenty-four hour news cycle. This grace period was a brief. The popularity of the Internet forced all competing news forms onto a single platform. Using their websites, newspapers were now capable of breaking news with the same rapidity of broadcast, and found themselves expected to do so.

The next challenge posed by the Internet was a financial one. Traditionally

newspapers have covered the majority of their costs through advertising revenue, a

business model that was pioneered by penny press era newspapers. Though a novel

idea at the time, Benjamin Day's ad-driven funding model has since became an

industry standard.[3] By drawing on advertising revenue to defray his overhead, Day

was able to offer his paper to consumers for less; following his example, most

newspapers in America have structured their business around advertising revenue for

roughly 170 years.

Fees collected from subscribers are always an important supplement to ad

revenue, but for a very long time, subscriptions have only covered a fraction of the

costs incurred in the often-expensive newsgathering work undertaken by journalists.[4]

The Internet has slashed into both of these traditional sources of revenue for the

papers, causing circulation to fall and advertising revenue to plummet. Not only could

Internet users now access much of the same content in the papers online without a

subscription, advertising revenue was similarly devastated. Leonard Witt, Director at

the Center for Sustainable Journalism at Kennesaw University in Georgia, explains

how the Internet—and more specifically the creation of a website called

craiglist.com—undermined journalism's primary source of revenue so quickly and

completely:

> It used to be if somebody wanted to reach the masses they had to do that
> through some sort of media vehicle, and that was often the newspaper in a
> local town. Then along came Craigslist and instead of charging people to buy
> classifieds, Craigslist was giving it away for free. You can't compete with

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[3] Surowieki, "Patent Bending".

[4] Leonard Witt, (Director of the Center for Sustainable Journalism at Kennesaw State University),
in discussion with the author, February 19, 2012

free…Suddenly millions and millions of dollars got siphoned just with Craigslist. In the past about 80% of all the journalism that was being done was being subsidized by advertising, so suddenly the advertising dollars start to go away.

Though the financial problems have since become more complex, the story is rather simple: the newspapers had money…and then they didn't.

Finally, a logical extension of the challenges brought about by the need for speed and money is the challenge of new competition. In creating a common and instantaneous sounding platform for all, the Internet has forced newspapers to compete directly with broadcast television and radio. It has also provided a means by which any citizen can become his or her own publisher, with the potential to reach a mass audience: the barrier to entry is now functionally non-existent. If the telegraph once put "all mankind on one great plane,"[5] the Internet has similarly put all forms of traditional and untraditional news on a single platform; newspapers, television stations, radio stations and even individuals can reach the world through their websites.

Is this real competition though? Are blogs and non-traditional news sites really on the same level as the online extensions of historically reliable news sources like newspapers? Chances are a lone blog or non-traditional news site won't soon commandeer the entire readership of a newspaper's online community, but in thinking realistically about competition for traditional media online, we must remember that a web browser is not a newspaper: from the moment a webpage is opened, newspapers, and by extension traditional journalists, find themselves in direct competition not only with each other, but with thousands upon thousands of alternate

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[5] Briggs and Burke, *A Social History of the Media : From Gutenberg to the Internet.* 40.

sources for information and entertainment. One blog may not pose a threat, but given the combined potential of millions of blogs and websites, the probability that readers might be siphoned off in one manner or another grows higher and higher.

So in short, these are the pressures faced by traditional journalists as a result of the Internet: speed, financial insecurity and ever-expanding competition. The traditional newspaper's battle to survive has been transformative. Fighting to move what was once a print medium onto the Internet has amounted to great deal more than learning to operate faster, more competitively and with a tighter wallet: it has changed the very nature of the work that journalists do and has fundamentally altered the relationships between journalists and the publications that employ them.

Chapter 2

Journalists, Bloggers and Authority in the Digital Age

Competition is nothing new for the newspaper industry. A little less than a century ago, the moguls of the penny press battled for readership in one of the fiercest competitive climates of the day. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the tactics that papers and publishers employed to gain an edge transformed journalism, setting new standards for the pace and quality of news, and elevating the industry (and its pioneering publishers) to elite status. The competition newspapers now face as a direct result of the Internet makes the competition in the penny press era look like a neighborhood 5k next to digital journalism's Olympic marathon. If competition transformed journalism so thoroughly once, it seems safe to assume that it will do so again.

'Storming the Gates'*: Communication by the Masses, for the Masses*

If we think of the Internet as the latest evolutionary development of the mass medium, its key mutation was this: unlike previous mass media forms, using the Internet, almost anyone can put out content accessible around the world without investing in anything more than a computer and a monthly subscription to service provider. Professional journalists are suddenly no longer the ones capable of reaching a mass audience; the floodgates have opened, and they have been opened wide.

This newfound ability of the public to publish to the masses planted the seed for revolution in mass communication, and this is where the story of change begins. "Everyone could be a publisher at their own desk wherever they were, and they could publish to the world," explains Witt, who had just begun his fellowship at the Center

for Sustainable Journalism around the time online publishing and blogging began to explode. His work at Center had been aimed at finding ways for journalists to more effectively engage with the general public. Suddenly, though, he said, "the idea of needing to reach out to the public became moot because the public was now basically storming the gates."

The storm shows no sign of letting up. Ever since the first blog was published in 1997,[6] their numbers have continued to climb.[7] Where once it might have taken an aspiring journalist an entire career to make it to a paper where his or her work could be read by thousands, anyone can now publish to a readership of *millions* with the click of a button. The professional reputation and the authority that journalists and newspapers had been slowly building for decades were suddenly threatened. Their tight hold on mass communication of the written word had rapidly and forcefully loosened—a revelation that shook the ideological foundation of journalism to the core. "Whenever there is an upheaval in the communications world," says Roberts, "it makes everybody question their existence."

Bloggers and alternative media present not only a monetary but also an ideological challenge to mainstream media outlets and professional journalists, Roberts explains. "When you have suddenly a huge number of new channels of information that reach people…the new channels are not necessarily coming out of the same tradition—they don't have the same values." As challengers to the

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[6] Mary Cross, *Bloggerati, twitterati : how blogs and Twitter are transforming popular culture* (Santa Barbara, Calif.: Praeger, 2011). X.
[7] NM Incite Nielsen, "State of the Media: U.S. Digital Consumer Report," (2011).

dominance of the traditional mainstream media, he says, "They immediately throw out the ideas that are taken as gospel by the predominate media of the time."

Traditional mainstream media has long been a space guarded by gatekeepers. Aided by increased public visibility as well as the development of higher education programs, the paper became the domain of professional, but online, journalists and bloggers must share the same space—and in this shared space, the authoritative voice of traditional media is no longer a given and the distinction between the blogger and professional journalist is no longer set in stone.

Howard Schneider, former editor of *Newsday* and current Dean at the Stony Brook School of Journalism, says that the proliferation of blogs and alternative sources of information has had a direct impact on the public's perception of the journalist as a professional:

> A blog is just a platform. There are blogs in which people go out and report stuff and put it on their blog. There are people who use blogs to give their impressions and opinions. There are people who use blogs to aggregate other people's information. So there's nothing generic about a blog.
> To the extent that we now have at the end of 2011, the latest figure I saw was 179 million, a very very tiny portion of these blogs are doing any original reporting. The overwhelming majority of these blogs are people basically giving their opinion or becoming advocates or pointing me to other people's reporting they haven't validated.
> I think this begins to erode the notion of what is expertise. It used to be that journalists had expertise and that when there were people who were recognized for their expertise, it gave a certain amount of authoritativeness, and not only that, the information tended to be reliable. On the Internet, everybody's opinion is equal. Everybody's information may be as good as anybody else's. There is no such thing, necessarily, as expertise. Now, anything goes. So anybody's opinion is as good as anyone else's.

If we look to the first chapter and trace the rise of the authority of the paper as coming about partly in parallel to the rise of journalism as a respected professional

occupation, we can see how—historically—the authority of the paper and that of the journalist feed off of one another, contributing to our perception of professional journalism as expert work. If we know that journalists putting out content for a particular publication must have proved themselves somehow (whether through schooling or experience)—that is, if we know that there are certain barriers to entry at any publication and believe in the professionalism of a journalist's occupation—it follows that we are more likely to believe that the information being offered by these professionals is reliable. In this way, the professionalism of a journalist lends its authority to the paper. Likewise, if we observe that a particular newspaper as a whole consistently puts out accurate information, the institutional repute of the paper positively contributes to our perception of authority in the work of any journalist published within.

The existence of bloggers and their ability to publish in the absence of gatekeeping challenges the perception that a journalist is something more than a citizen with a computer. After all, the professional hierarchy of journalism is a rather personal industry affair; there is no formal system of certification. Roberts says that he believes there is something of a war being waged between old forms media and newcomers like the voices of the blogosphere. In this battle, the distinction between the two, and between the strong ethic of objectivity held dear by traditional media forms[8] and the sometimes less than objective tendencies of the blogging world (a

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[8] David Minidich, *Just the Facts: How "Objectivity" Came to Define American Journalism* (1993).

realm with a reputation of being a place "where facts are treated loosely"[9]) is becoming increasingly blurred, he says:

> What happens is it undermines not only the news consumer's belief that they have been getting the best, most objective news from newspapers and news outlets, but it also undermines the confidence of the mainstream press, which suddenly finds that not only is its economic foundation being trampled […] but what we've taken for granted as our values and ideals are being trampled […] It absolutely gets blurred. But not only does it get blurred, there's been this kind of campaign since the web took off to discredit objectivity.

The war against the mainstream media, and against the objective stance from which mainstream media outlets like newspapers draw so much of their authority,[10] is real. It may be most obvious to journalists like Roberts who find themselves in the thick of it, but the effects are actually measurable: not only are fewer and fewer young people reaching for the newspaper in the first place, a 2010 Gallup Pole found that only 25% of Americans reported that they had confidence in traditional news media.[11]

Fading Power: *The Indistinguishable Ethos of the 21st Century Journalist*

This is not a heartening age for professional journalists. Before we can understand the new voices sounding out online, we must first sketch out the old. The more one speaks with journalists, the clearer it becomes that their work and their belief in its importance takes on a serious centrality in both their professional and personal identities. Journalism is a system and a mission that they believe in, not just

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[9] John Fleming (Editor at Large at *The Anniston Star* and editor for the *Juvenile Justice Information Exchange*), in discussion with the author, October 25, 2012.

[10] Jay Rosen to Pressthink: Ghost of Democracy in the Media Machine, 2010, http://archive.pressthink.org/2010/07/07/obj_persuasion.html.

[11] Cross, *Bloggerati, twitterati : how blogs and Twitter are transforming popular culture*: 73.

a way to make ends meet. Roberts demonstrates this in his reflections on the

possibility that mainstream media and the ethic of objectivity it purports may very

well lose the battle for America's heart. Expressing his deep belief in the inherent

good of journalism's current system:

> There is this sort of notion of social progress, which is a constant cycle. It's possible that we would revert to the kind pre-20th century cacophony of partisan papers, where essentially every newspaper is out beholden to a political kind of view or economic point of view. But I think that would be really bad because I do think that we've gained as a society and we've gained a lot as a civilization from this perfection, in my mind, of the model…it would be tragic if it turned out that this was just a temporary blip, and that we will go back to a kind of media which is completely fractured and just forcing consumers to triangulate between publications that have a very obvious agenda in what they write.

If the plethora of personal memoirs written by hundreds of journalists who

have left the world of journalism[12] is any indication, this is a deeply personal matter.

It is not about job security, it is about the security of an entire worldview and the

sanctity of a profession and the work that it does—the role that it plays in society.

This comes out time and time again. *New York Times* reporter Tim Arango explains

his desire to work at the famous paper from a very early age in the film 'Page One':

"I always had this idea of the place as this sort of magisterial place where great things

happened and were done," he says. [13]

As Arango's determination and eventual success in securing a place at *The*

Times demonstrates, these are men and women on a mission, and more often than not,

their paths into the world of professional journalism have been hard-fought. Their

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[12] Neil Henry, *American carnival : journalism under siege in an age of new media* (University of California Press, 2007).

[13] Andrew Rossi, "Page One: Inside the New York Times," (2011), 21:35.

stories of finally making it as professional journalists are important parts of the stories of their lives. Matthew Sturdevant, now a reporter at the *Hartford Courant,* describes his entry into the field as a late night cops reporter as "baptism by fire," carried out under the close tutelage of his first no-nonsense editor. Kim Velsey, another *Courant* reporter also started off as breaking news reporter covering crime, court and car crashes. These are stories of early morning hours and numerous cups of coffee.

Ilana Ozernoy, a former foreign correspondent who now teaches journalism, jumpstarted her professional career by hopping on a plane shortly after 9/11 and teaching herself the craft in a warzone. "I crossed the border [into Afghanistan, and] I got into an old soviet jeep that was driven by like a 13 year old, she recalls. "…In hindsight it was of the most dangerous things I've ever done." After distancing herself from the majority of the press activity and making it to the frontlines of the The Northern Alliance-Taliban faceoff with a handful of others, Ozernoy describes how she earned her first byline:

> There were a lot of writers, a lot of one-man bands and a lot of photographers and I got a space in the mud hut that was fondly known as the writer's hut, (there was an AP House, there was a photographer's house and there was the writer's *hut*.) For twenty five dollars a night I got a space on the floor, put down my matt and I was fed, and I got be around these journalists and I followed them out into the field everyday and that's essentially how I learned to become a journalist: by identifying who the smartest person in the room was who was going to let me come along with them, following them out into the field, listening to them ask questions and taking very *very* good notes.

After countless hours of careful observation, Ozernoy cold called dozens of newspapers pleading her case to be taken on as a freelance writer. She received numerous rejections before finally finding a publication that was willing to take her on:

I got a harried editor on the foreign desk of *The Boston Globe*: "Yeah, yeah what do you want?"[he answered] I said: "There's some news of the day." I pitched the story: an errant bomb that had fallen on the wrong side of the front lines killing two members of the northern alliance […] He said something like "yeah, yeah okay, send me 700 words"…didn't even get my name. At which point I had to go and ask one of the writers in the writers hut "How do you write a news story?" I was kindly told to write the lead, the nut graph, put in a quote, add some context, another lead, a little background, and I was off to the races.

Another journalist with whom I spoke began his career by going to Africa after graduating from journalism school to report on wars in the Congo and Angola, the U.N. intervention in Mozambique, and the aftermath of the Rwandan genocide.[14] Even with just a few stories from a small sampling of professional journalists, we can see that this is a job that's taken seriously, a job that's worth working long nights and even worth risking one's life. Sure, not every journalist has risked his or her life for the job. Some probably didn't even have to spend late nights downing coffee at the breaking news desk, but many did, so one can begin to see why the blogosphere's questioning of the credibility and value of journalist's professional life quickly becomes personal.

The ethos surrounding a profession that so many have aspired to is morphing as new voices take hold online. While the dominant voice of the traditional journalist is challenged, the inherent authority of 'the journalist' is fading, a process that many in the industry have witnessed first hand. "I grew up in Buffalo, and if *The Buffalo News* came to town it was like 'holy crap!'" recalls Sturdevant, "It was essentially 'there's a very serious commanding voice that could change the outcome of a village board meeting.' That power is fading with alternative voices."

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[14]John Fleming, http://jjie.org/about/staff/john-fleming.

Where mere association with a powerful paper may have once been enough to project authority or command answers, with so many new voices, professional journalists are finding that their label as a professional no longer holds the same sway. This puts distance between the journalist and the news organization, since journalists can no longer lean as heavily on the prestige of a news organization to assert authority and chase the scoop. Journalists in the past have, of course, been free agents—perfectly capable of chasing down the news and deserving of credit in their own right—but fast fading is their ability to leverage the authority of the paper in their communities as an aid to their newsgathering process. The community, the paper and the journalist were once carefully intertwined beings, extensions of one another, but as bloggers challenge both the financial and ideological place of the papers in society, this mutual constitution and shared identity is fast breaking down. Journalists—now more than ever—are being left to fend for themselves. Eventually, muses Sturdevant, "It'll just seem like a bizarre anomaly of a toothless tiger when a journalist shows up."

Most say they don't begrudge a transition away from authority derived solely from their association with a particular publication. "I'm actually in favor of that to some degree—as long as the dialogue is constructive and thoughtful," says Sturdevant. "If there are competing voices and it isn't a top down authoritative presentation of news. But I think more likely is unintelligent contributions, some intelligent contributions, all sort of mixed together in some sort of bizarre finger painting." Once again, we are back to the issue of an unclear distinction between the

journalist and blogger—the professional and the citizen—because what is a finger painting, really, but a bunch of blurred lines?

"The lines are absolutely blurred," says Ozernoy "and especially blurred because readers can't tell the difference. How does a reader know based on a byline if this person is a journalist? And does it matter? I'm a citizen and I became a journalist." The categories: journalist, citizen, blogger, are not mutually exclusive, she says "All robins are birds and not all birds are robins."

The idea of credibility and authority—of truth—has become central to the profession of journalism. As the extreme lack of reported confidence in traditional media[15] suggests, journalists are having an increasingly difficult time exuding a sense of credibility as truth tellers in the current climate, since online, they must work directly alongside others that may not ascribe to or practice traditional journalistic values. Wasim Ahmad, both professor and practicing journalist describes the complexity of the situation: "There are plenty of bloggers who are great journalists," he says, "and plenty that are not, who just mouth off and spew half truths…the tough part is the ones spewing half truths demean the whole profession of journalism."

Sturdevant says that any objections or frustrations he has don't have anything to do with blogs and alternative news voices in theory, but rather in practice: "I don't begrudge anyone going out and finding information, Sturdevant explains, "the question, I think, is 'To what degree are these people credible? To what degree are they objective? To what degree is their information their own, and to what degree is it interesting and consumed by a lot of people?'"

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[15] Cross, *Bloggerati, twitterati : how blogs and Twitter are transforming popular culture*: 73.

Blogs and bloggers then affect the identity of the journalists on two fronts:

First, they compete for the same audience. Second, since their work is published on—

and can be consumed through—the same medium as the work of journalists, their

existence challenges that of journalists as the predominant source of authoritative

information, and in doing so calls the professional nature of their work into question.

Once some of the most commanding voices in their communities, committed to

giving a voice to the people, newspapers are rapidly finding that the voices most in

need of protection these days are their own.

An Introduction to Citizen Reporting: *Professional Journalism in Amateur's Era*

Bloggers are not the only players in the ring. Another recent Internet-spurred

phenomena is the rise of what is commonly termed 'Citizen Journalism,[16]' a practice

which challenges the professional nature of a journalist's occupation on a different—

but possibly deeper—level. If imitation is the sincerest form of flattery, citizen

journalists are downright smitten: where blogs and their authors provide a mixture of

content—some of which may be news, and some of which may not—citizen

journalism borrows directly from the form of journalistic writing and presentation, the

same standardized form that is so intricately linked to the presumed authority of the

newspaper.

Though thousands of citizen journalists report through their own blogs, two of

the most formally organized outlets for citizen journalism are *CNN's iReport* and

AOL's Patch.com, which I will use as examples to help show the interplay between

professional and citizen journalism. *iReport*, *CNN's* citizen journalism initiative,

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[16] Leonard Witt, "Is public journalism morphing into the public's journalism?," *National Civic Review* 93, no. 3 (2004).

encourages news consumers to become citizen journalists by submitting full stories or

raw material (pictures, video, audio clips etc.) to the network's website in an effort to

help the company "paint a more complete picture of the news."[17] Patch.com is less of

collaboration between old and new media, and instead, more mimics an online

newspaper entirely. The project is organized as a network of hyper-local

newsgathering operations and companion websites in small communities around the

country. Professional journalists oversee the sites, but individuals with other full-time

jobs often provide stories and content. I will begin with the *iReport*.

iReport*: An Army of Volunteers*

iReports, explains Richard Griffiths,Vice President and Senior Executive

Director at CNN, are an interactive new way of gathering information by taking

advantage of the fact that given the number of citizens vs. the number of professional

journalists, at least one average citizen is statistically more likely to end up being in

the right place at the right time, aptly positioned to record and to document just about

anything that passes their way, including (theoretically) the story of the century.

Though he does not draw on the idea of the *iReport* directly, media theorist

Clay Shirky has written extensively[18] about the reasons he feels that individuals are

willing to contribute their time and efforts to similar, "shared online projects." [19] He

begins with the idea of a naturally existing "cognitive surplus," which he defines as

"the ability of the world's population to volunteer, and to contribute and collaborate

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[17] "About CNN iReport," http://ireport.cnn.com/about.jspa

[18] Clay Shirky, *Cognitive surplus : creativity and generosity in a connected age* (New York: Penguin Press, 2010).

[19] Clay Shirky, "Clay Shirky: How cognitive surplus will change the world," http://www.ted.com/talks/clay_shirky_how_cognitive_surplus_will_change_the_world.html.

on large, sometimes global projects,"[20] and posits that, globally, populations have free

time, talent and the inherent desire to create and share. Shirky believes that this is the

force that compels people to contribute to things like *iReport* without compensation

or clear incentive for personal gain.

The idea of leveraging the potential of large groups of people to do useful

documentary work in journalism is also closely related to the broader concept of

"crowdsourcing." The term "crowdsourcing" was coined by Jeff Howe in 2006 *Wired*

magazine,[21] and roughly refers to the idea that an individual or an organization can

propose to a population of people (most commonly via the internet) the undertaking

of a task, and that selected individuals will volunteer their effort and knowledge.

Taken together, these two ideas provide a useful framework for understanding the

iReport: it is essentially a request from *CNN* that viewers lend their eyes, ears and

camera phones to the network, engaging in the news gathering process. And citizen

journalists everywhere have been more than willing to take part. Griffiths believes

that these newfound possibilities for documentation are positive developments for

journalism:

> Everybody has a cellphone. You have a cellphone in your pocket…you have
> an *iPhone*—[…]You are a rolling television station! You can download, you
> can stream live to *iReport* [….] You could shoot a video of something that
> happened on your *iPhone* […] upload that video, and change history because
> you've been able to record that. That is a great thing for our society.

Though *iReporters* have the ability to act independently and post entire

stories, in many ways, they are similar to "sources" of the traditional reporter—

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[20] Ibid.

[21] Jeff Howe, "The Rise of Crowd Sourcing," *Wired Magazine* 14, no. 16 (2006),
http://www.wired.com/wired/archive/14.06/crowds.html.

carefully selected and often highly placed confidants in the community who can provide journalists with the currency of their trade: information. But the relationship that a journalist has with a "source" who posts a video on *iReport* is something quite different than the relationship that a veteran crime reporter, for example, has with the police chief in the town she covers. The key difference being: in the confines (for certainly it was far smaller) of the old system, journalists and sources actually had long-standing relationships. This is not necessarily the case when an *iReporter* becomes a source. In the old tradition of information gathering, journalists often know their sources very well—and they know if they were reliable.

Forming close connections with choice community members has long been an essential mechanism through which journalists can embed themselves in a community. This is the means by which journalism has gone about connecting with community for decades—deliberately, and on its own terms. A resistance to upending the top-down control of this system by allowing the sources to seek out the journalists—rather than the other way around—has been standing. Even before the *iReport*, when email first opened up the floodgates for thousands of potential 'sources' to contact journalists of their own accord, there was great hesitance on the part of reporters.

Roberts, who was working in the then-separate digital newsroom at *The Washington Post* when the organization was cautiously dipping its toes into the uncharted territory of the online world, describes the reaction of the 'print' newsroom to the possibility of having the public contact them directly:

> At one point I went over to the print newsroom […] and talked […] about the idea of letting people send email directly to reporters. The overwhelming

desire was: "No! That would be terrible! We're going to get our email boxes filled up with all these readers giving us *feedback* about our stories—that would be an absolute nightmare."

Though that sort of thinking is now a thing of the past, there remains the odd

paradox that in a sea of sources, the journalist somehow has a less potent, or even less

genuine connection to the community. Dan Haar, who has been in the industry for the

entirety of his adult life, describes the problem he sees with a system in which sources

present themselves and their information to journalists in place of one in which

information is procured from select contacts, maintained through long-term

relationships:

> The primary source of news that we have is email. And I don't know if you're aware of this, but people don't email you stuff they want out. So if you want the news that the SEC is investigating a company that the state of Connecticut invested $2 million in January […] you have to develop that story. No one hands you that story.

Still, it can be hard to ignore the simple fact that a taskforce of thousands of

citizens—armed with cell phones and wide eyes—has unprecedented potential for

newsgathering, and from his perspective as both a long-time journalist and editorial

decision maker at a major news network, Griffith, says he believes it is imperative

that journalists take advantage of the times: "The world is being recorded now in

ways that we never would have imagined fifty years ago or twenty years ago," he

reminds us.

Even through a platform like iReport, Griffiths believes it's still possible for

journalists to build real relationships with sources. He cites the Arab Spring as an

example: journalists at CNN were able to contact iReporters and use them to access to

areas professional reporters could not. The coin flips both ways, though, he says—

there are some places that are simply *only* accessible to professional journalists,

backed by not only the institutional, but also the financial might of a large

organization:

> Don't get me wrong, we like to break our share of the news, thank you very much, and we continue to do that with good reporters that gain access to places where, frankly—iReporters don't show up. You're not in Libya in the middle of a warzone. You're not in the White House covering the president, because it's hard to get credentials. They're not in Fukushima where you have to wear a radiation suit covering those stories.

"Raw material from citizens in certain circumstances, in places where I can't

get to—or in places where they're there first—can be very valuable," says Schneider.

He cites documentation of natural disasters, or citizen journalism coming out of

countries without a free press as examples of useful and valuable citizen journalism.

Overall, though, he says, this is not the sort of work that he sees citizen journalism

doing: "That's an exception," he says of those particular instances of citizen

journalism, "People are documenting information, I buy that. And there are times

when it's extraordinarily valuable… But a lot of the citizen journalism that comes

through is not that kind of journalism."

For a long time, journalists have been something of the police officers in the

information world: authoritative and guided by clearly dictated codes of conduct.

Enter the Nancy Drew justice vigilantes, citizen journalists in the digital age.

Unbound by the obligations and regulations of the traditional world, they have the

ability to gather more information than the River Heights police department could

ever dream of getting its hands on. But then what? What is the point of paying

professional journalists if we already have thousand of volunteer citizens ready to

take over the job?

This is the challenge that the citizen journalist presents to the professional. Their sheer numbers make citizen journalists capable of recording and gathering more information—more news—than even the best team of highly trained journalists could track down on its best day. But this information is not gathered necessarily gathered by individuals who have internalized the value system of objectivity in the way that professionals have, and this is not a simple system; entire books have been dedicated to the ethics of the craft. With citizen journalists are churning out content and information alongside professional journalists, the possibility of misinformation is increased exponentially—and in an industry already fighting to maintain credibility, the danger of misinformation looms large. Even if misinformation is not cloaked in malicious intent, the mixing of citizen and professional journalism can be deeply damaging for the professional world.

Ahmad gives an example of a citizen journalism blunder he's observed: a reader who contributed a photo of two trains to *The Standard Examiner*, a paper in Utah. Ahmad pulls up the picture and points to one of the trains: "People submit photos that didn't exist. This train came by ten minutes after this train," he says:

> Photoshopped. The person who did it, he contributed. They ran it on the front page! He's not a journalist; he doesn't know that what he did is wrong. Journalists know. We have training. We know what ethics are. Photoshop is a perfectly valid and legit tool. How is he supposed to know you don't Photoshop two trains together and put it on the newspaper? It's really *really* causing problems.

So here we see a clash between the world of the professional and the realm of the citizen journalist, in which the credibility of a publication, and by extension the journalists who work for it, is put at risk.

The rise of the citizen journalist, and the increasing accessibility of the information they stand ready to document, means that journalists find themselves exposed to more information than ever before—but also to new threats and risks. Citizen journalists, and iReporters in particular, straddle the line between source and journalist. They complicate our cultural perception of what a journalist is or should be. Is a journalist a professional, working within an organization like a newspaper that forces it's members to adhere to universally applied standards and rules? Or is it anyone with the willingness and ability to gather and transmit information?

There seems to be a deep hesitation in the professional world to write off citizen journalists completely. Perhaps this is because these professionals did not enter the world with notepads in their hands, cameras slung around their necks and an ethical code hundreds of years in the making coursing through their blood; as Ozernoy said of her own creation myth: "I'm a citizen, and I became a journalist." Regardless of their common heritage, though, unlike their professional counterparts, citizen journalists have not participated in the baptismal ceremonies, or the harsh hazing rituals that stomp out bad habits. They have not undergone the metamorphosis from citizen to journalist.

Their lack of training and experience, says Schneider, is a problematic. He disagrees with the proposition that professionals can eliminate the perceived dangers associated with citizen journalism by backtracking to report 'within' its raw material. He says that though he understands the advantages of enlisting citizens in the information gathering process, the inevitable risks just don't bode well:

> This idea of citizen-journalism is a very uncomfortable notion to me. Would
> you like to go to a citizen-surgeon the next time you have an operation? Or a

citizen-dentist? Information is power. We're playing around with power! I don't think many citizen journalists really understand what journalism is. I think they will go ahead and gather information and put it up without checks and balances. So can a news organization provide those checks and balances? or do you have to have some level of training, and do you have to have sensibility, and do you have to understand that your mission is to the public? And do you understand that you have to be independent of any special interest to report the news? People on the other end of that *iReporting* don't understand that… I'm not sure you can go back and correct what they do.

Lawrence Roberts, who has served for many years as the Chief of Investigations at *The Washington Post,* says he fears that the onslaught of information (both accurate and inaccurate) threatens to erode the public's ability to ever trust that they are receiving accurate and objective information:

I think that if you're not working within an institution that both values it and punishes people who don't adhere to it, there's less confidence by the reader that this is always going to be the case. Part of the reason why these values persist is that if you work for one of them and you don't follow these rules you get fired. So there's this kind of institutional pressure to live up to those standards.

There's one other issue: professional journalists can find themselves short a job. In some ways, it's the Craigslist fiasco all over again—iReporters and most citizen journalists are not charging for their work. And like Witt said, "you can't compete with free." When asked how iReporters affect professional journalists, Ahmad points to a publicly published announcement issued by *CNN* in 2011. Authored by Senior Vice President Jack Womack, the memo explains recent cutbacks at the company—after a three-year study, the network giant had determined that it was not using its resources as efficiently as possible. Ahmad zeros in on Womack's closing remarks:

We looked at the impact of user-generated content and social media, CNN iReporters and of course our affiliate contributions in breaking news.

> Consumer and pro-sumer technologies are simpler and more accessible. Small cameras are now high broadcast quality. More of this technology is in the hands of more people. After completing this analysis, CNN determined that some photojournalists will be departing the company."[22]

Amhad provides a personal summary: "They said: 'We got iReports. We don't need professional photojournalists.'"

iReporters and citizen journalists have profound effects on the relationships central to a journalist's professional life—the relationships that hold the system together. They are hybrids: a new type of "source" and a new form of competition. What's more, their existence complicates the public's perception of journalistic expertise: when a reader-submitted photo is featured on the front page of a newspaper, the line between the work of the professional and that of the citizen is no longer as clearly distinguishable. With professional and amateur content thrown into the same melting pot, it can no longer be taken for granted that the information coming from sources like the newspaper are the output of professional journalists; the recipe contains new ingredients, and the product is different.

Patch*: Fast Food Style Journalism for the Insatiable Internet*

If the iReport is an attempt to get the stories that professional journalists can't get, Patch is something more of means for providing the coverage that newspapers have chosen to neglect. John Fleming explains Patch's 'hyper-local' approach as an understandable reaction to cutbacks in coverage by newspapers:

> Your metro paper […] the new staff has been cut back so much that they can't cover your community in depth at all, all they're doing is they're trying to concentrate on investigative reporting and public corruption […] they've had to pull back so much that they've totally abandoned their community. So the hyper local steps in. They drill down to the block level.

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[22] Jack Womack, "Memo From Jack Womack," http://cnnpressroom.blogs.cnn.com/2011/11/14/memo-from-jack-womack/.

This is where organizations like Patch enter the fray. The Patch model is roughly this: identify communities affected by traditional media cutbacks; employ a handful of professional journalist to oversee the recruited work hundreds of contributing citizen journalists covering these communities (their communities) on a semi-professional or part-time basis; put up a website—and start posting.

What's the typical citizen-generated hyper-local Patch news story? "There's a pothole at the corner on Olmsted," quips Fleming. Though he says he believes it's necessary to fill the critical coverage gaps left in the wake of the newspaper industry's contraction, he thinks Patch—with its hundreds of cookie cutter websites— misses the mark in truly connecting with community. "I just don't have confidence in the patch model because it's everywhere, you know?" he says, "It's like McDonalds: after a while it just gets cheap."

If journalists are conflicted in their opinions about the merit of the *iReport* and citizen journalism as a whole, they find harmony in their low regard for *Patch* journalism. "Every time I've visited [a *Patch* site,] it's been things like 'the garden club is meeting; here are the press releases that are being handed out,'" says Sturdevant. He says he hesitates to even categorize *Patch* content true journalism, because he doesn't believe that the information it provides is gathered critically. "It's a bulletin board really," he explains.

Velsey shares a similar view. "It's rare that I find a story on patch that I'm like 'I wish I had that' or 'I wish I got that and I didn't'," she says. Her criticism of *Patch* sites is similar to some of Schneider's fears about blogs—she says the sites are

severely lacking in terms of original reporting. "When I look through *Patch*, I don't see a lot of stuff that's actual reporting; I see a lot of opinion from people who aren't professional opinions writers, and don't know how to shape an opinion or thought or kernel of something into a larger idea."

The general consensus is that readers are quickly becoming observant enough consumers to differentiate the often unprofessional and poorly crafted sort of journalism that pops up on places like Patch from the real stuff. "Most of the public is pretty savvy at evaluating different news sources and deciding if something's reliable," says Velsey. Griffiths echos her view, positing that readers will be turned off early on by poorly executed news: "Some of that is going to be good and some of it is worth reading, but most of it is awful and so you're still going to need the [*Atlanta Journal Constitution.*] You're still going to need the newspaper in Chicago. You're still going to need the local newspaper where people can trust what they're reading."

So what's all the fuss about? Why can't we simply write off Patch journalism as something separate from professional journalism without bearing on the lives of professional journalists? Though *Patch* news sites may lag behind newspapers in terms of quality, they do rival the online sites of newspapers in another area— quantity and a key feature of the Internet as a medium is that unlike the newspaper, the web is not limited by the physical constraint of space—it can always fit more.

The Internet, says Schneider, "is [like] a beast that is always hungry." If the metaphor holds, organizations like Patch—which gather their content in large part through uncompensated contributions—are well positioned to feed it indefinitely. All

the while, the Internet simply demands more—more photos, more videos, more tweets, more stories, more time and more energy. Though practically no newspaper is likely to name the Patch site or sites in its community peers, both are theoretically competing to provide coverage to the same audience. Patch websites can generate a lot of content, and they can generate it quickly and with very little expense.

Cue the pothole stories. Reporters at *The Hartford Courant* may not be envious that Patch journalists are the first to alert the residents Enfield about local road obstructions, but Patch coverage does have real implications for their jobs. Many publications feel the pressure to put out more and more content to compete with sites like *Patch*, in order to keep readers hooked on their sites. Even if there's still a demand a need for the sort of traditional content produced by newspapers like the *Atlanta Journal Constitution,* as Griffiths suggests, there can be an overwhelming pressure to do it all—put out the old, in-depth stories *and* the more superficial content.

Not too long ago, the managing editor of the *AJC* visited David Winter's high school newspaper staff to speak with budding journalism students about the *AJC*'s digital strategy. This was an important visit for Winter, since even at a small, high school paper, the pressure to move online and construct a digital identity looms large. He was intrigued to hear that having identified hugely differing reading habits based on how news was read (on a website, in print, on a tablet or using a mobile phone), the paper was consciously tailoring different version of its product based the means by which it was being consumed.

For it's print edition, he was told, the *AJC* has tried to put its focus on traditional long-form stories—but there's a different strategy for the website: "He said the AJC motto inside the newsroom is 'we only have to be […] more interesting than your job." The implication here is that even within organizations that are still committed their print origins, and the deeper and more contextualized work that print has traditionally done—there's still pressure to fill the sites and hook the audience constantly, even if it's not through deep, contextual stories.

As a towns reporter with a geographically grounded beat, Velsey has been acutely affected by competition from hyper-local citizen journalism coverage, including Patch websites that cover her two towns: "The bar really has been lowered by places like Patch, that are just like content factories with lots of townspeople tweeting on their blogs," she says, "because even though Patch isn't doing well and it's losing a ton of money, it scares places like *The Courant*. They think that we have to change who we are to be more like them."

Journalists like Velsey are racing to keep up with the break-neck pace at which information is flowing onto the web. The pressure to produce more is both implicitly felt and sometimes even explicitly stated: "Right now we're required to post at 8 a.m. and at noon every day—ideally at least three briefs in the morning and then a story at noon." Then there's the other half of the day. "What the internet demands is quantity," Velsey says, "And unless you offset that by hiring a bunch of new people…if you ask someone to produce more, you're taking away some of the good stuff they produce."

This particular comment warrants further analysis, because its implications run deeper than a cursory read might suggest. On the surface, Velsey's comment tells us something that may seem rather obvious: if a journalist is asked to produce three stories per day instead of one, the organization that requires this likely does so with the understanding that each of these three will be less polished and less complete than if the same person's efforts were dedicated to only one. Digging more deeply, we may note another implication: that journalists are rather reflexive about their work. They know and believe that it is within their ability to produce "good" work (and identify it as such) and they are acutely aware that they're being asked to produce content at a quality below their potential—the reduction in the quality of their work is directly related to the demands of their employers. The perception for Velsey, (or any journalist in a similar situation) is one of being directly asked—if not ordered—to reduce the quality of her work in order to serve the needs and desires of the organization she works for, and to do so at the expense of her own desire to put out journalistic work that showcases her talents and enhances her reputation as a professional.

This scenario quickly becomes problematic. It places the interests of the newspaper in opposition to those of the journalist, with a clear winner and a clear loser. The situation is combative: If a journalist 'wins,' then it's on to the next contest—but probably not without the lingering fear that 'winning' on a continual basis by way of defection may put their jobs at risk. If a journalist 'loses' and ends up spending time writing stories that any intern could have churned out, it's hard to avoid feelings of animosity, and the almost inevitable stinging slight of being used. In

truth, it is a situation in which a journalist can never fully win. And it's unfortunate that this scenario of conflicting interest has even developed to begin with.

Schneider says Velsey is not alone in her frustration—the pressure to produce *more* is a complaint he often hears from alumni at Stony Brook. A dramatic increase in the journalist's workload, he says, is one of the defining ways in which he has witnessed the profession changed in recent years:

> [Journalists are] being required to feed the Internet constantly…That changes their work environment and their workload changes. There are lots of implications for journalists about whether they're getting the same kind of satisfaction about what they do because they no longer always have the time to do the depth and quality of journalism that they really want to do or that they love to do. That's why they're journalists.

When it comes to feeling pushed around, newcomers lacking seniority, (like Velsey and others who are just entering the professional workforce), are particularly vulnerable—not only are they naturally assigned more superficial work in the first place (just like in any other industry), they also lack the authority to challenge assignments. But though novice journalists do seem to have it the worst, the conflict is not isolated in the lower ranks.

As an upper-level editor at his paper, Dan Haar says that he struggles with this tension between what he (and the journalists he works with) would like to do on the one hand, and what the web (and his publication) require on the other. As an editor, he is not entirely victim nor perpetrator. Instead, his seniority puts him in the role of enforcer: he receives the mandate to produce more from those higher up the pecking order, and in turn, is expected put pressure on the journalists in his section directly. His position may not be as dire as those of staffers without the personal armor of

seniority as his editorial positioning affords him greater agency when it comes to his

own work, but it's hardly ideal:

> I've got a staff of four people and I need them to crank out news in the
> morning. Like all good journalists they want to come in at ten o'clock and get
> a coffee and read the paper and then read their email. And then call a couple
> of sources and then talk to each other in the newsroom. And then go out to
> lunch and then at one o'clock start working on a really good story of the day
> and hand it in at about five o'clock and have it be edited at six and then go
> home at seven Because that' s what journalists did, that's what I did for
> twenty years. And we can't do that anymore. We have to come in at 8:30 or 9
> and start spitting out news as quickly as we can because the world is
> consuming news not at eight in the morning in print, but at eight in the
> morning online. The stuff that's in print is more interpretative of yesterday's
> news. So we have two jobs. And one of the jobs is to just spit out what we
> know.

Schneider explains that demands like these and increasing deviation from the

work they enjoy doing are understandably disheartening for journalists. The pressure

to match the pace of the Internet—to give the beast what it desires—is increasingly

leaving them less satisfied with their jobs, and oftentimes frustrated with their

employers. "They're taking video and writing stories and working for the website and

updating everything every fifteen minutes and it's changing the nature of their job

satisfaction," he says, "If I hear one common complaint from many journalists now,

it's that they're not getting the chance to have the time to do the kinds of thing they

want to do, and frankly the kind of journalism that makes a difference."

Chapter 3

'Adding Priorities':
Expanding the Definition of 'Journalist'

Newspapers around the country are announcing their digital-era coming of age. They mark the occasion with a firm commitment to "put digital first," a pledge to prioritize the digital product over print. The announcements—and the ideologies that go along with them—acknowledge the necessity for change.

In my introduction to journalism's digital-age reality, I made the contention that our cultural template for the journalist is becoming rapidly obsolete. If this is true—if modern journalists do not fit the mold, and my introductory description of them as men and women who spend their days chasing down sources and staying generally informed is somehow flawed, what has changed? Though Roberts' description provides important hints, Dan Haar gets to the heart of how this industry shift has impacted journalists with a simple statement: "Digital first doesn't mean we're changing priorities, he says, "it means we're adding priorities."

Multimedia and the New Normal in Digital Storytelling

In the digital age, journalists have been flooded with new priorities and new responsibilities. "Journalists have had to learn new skills," says Schneider, "The notion that journalism was kind of subdivided into print or text journalists, video journalists…that's pretty much collapsing […] Journalists need to work on multiple platforms."

This is the most tangible shift in the identity of the journalist. Especially in conversation with those involved in training newcomers in journalism—preparing

them for the industry—it came up time and time again. Parameters and job requirements that were once neatly defined have become indistinct. It is not enough to simply write, not enough to be a mere photojournalist; today's reporters find themselves pushed to do all this and more.

The change is relatively recent. Wasim Ahmad, a self-proclaimed 'multimedia journalist,' entered the field as a professional in early the 2000s. "I started in the business as just a writer," he says "I worked to a deadline at five, handed it in to the editor. At six they're making changes and I went home." A decade ago, then, our earlier image of the journalist was still intact—but in the short space of ten years, Ahmad says he's witnessed a vast expansion in the sorts of responsibilities and skills required of journalists.

> As the newspapers constricted budgets, journalism had to take on more roles; unions broke up. Instead of people doing one thing, journalists—no matter what anybody says—have to be adept at *everything*. They have to be writers, they have to understand basic code…HTML, they should have a good design eye, be able to shoot video, they should be able to take audio, they should be able to write as well, of course…they just have had to do everything."

Kim Velsey explains that even the title of her position has been changed. She was hired by the *Courant* as a writer and reporter responsible for two local towns in Connecticut, making her a "towns reporter," but arrived to work one day to find that her position, as well as those of her fellow formerly-town reporters, had been renamed. "We're now supposedly multimedia reporters," she says, "they changed our job descriptions."

The multimedia reporting strategy attempts to grapple with the overwhelming competition posed by non-print affiliated websites, TV news sites and blogs alike—

and even the newspapers themselves are expanding beyond their traditional reach: posting entire photo galleries instead of single pictures, for example, or creating new divisions for videography, as they've done at the *New York Times*. The push for individual journalists to become multimedia reporters can be understood not only as an adaptation to the Internet—which by its very nature is has become platform encouraging the simultaneous use of multiple forms of media—but also as a strategic response to both the monetary and competitive challenges faced by newspapers struggling to stay afloat. Requiring multimedia reporting on the part of individuals also serves a rather explicit financial purpose: by having a single reporter play the part of both visual journalism and traditional reporter, a newspaper theoretically cuts the cost of reporting that story in half.

The idea of rolling a reporter, photographer and videographer all into one has been around for a while. It's referred to as "backpack journalism[23]"—a rather telling nickname in it's own right, as it seems to suggests not only a new type of reporter, but a new subset of journalism itself, and by extension—a new product. Though the idea has been floating around for over decade, the e*xpectation* that it be widely practiced is new. In the past, backpack journalism was just an option, and a controversial one at that, but these days—as Velsey's anecdote confirms—it's beginning to find its way into the job description.

Reactions to the increasingly widespread expectation that journalists become jacks-of-all-trades vary. The objections these days are similar to those that were first raised ten years ago. "Inevitably," wrote Martha Stone in a 2002 article with the

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[23] Rich Gordon, "The Meanings and Implications of Convergence " in *Digital Journalism* ed. Kevin Kawamoto (New York City: Rowan & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2002), 69.

biting title: *The Backpack Journalist is a Mush of Mediocrity*, "most backpack journalists will be Jacks of all trades, masters of none." Though the fear that Stone's article outlines still exists, it has taken on a modern twist when multimedia reporting is no longer a voluntary undertaking, and reporters are required to report using mediums in which they have had little or no professional training, and is perhaps even a more serious threat to quality than that posed by journalists who actually want to be doing it all.

Velsey says that she believes she has seen quality decline in the *Courant's* photography in particular, an erosion that would likely stick out more than others because since photography at the *Courant* has long had the reputation as some of the best around. The department has lost a great deal of its independence, Velsey says. There's still a photo department editor overseeing photographers, but the department as a whole is now supervised by an employee of FOX CT—beholden to the Connecticut-based (more specifically, *Hartford Courant* newsroom-based) television channel that Tribune Company also owns.

Both management and staff are out of their element, says Velsey. Not only are the *Courant's* photographers overseen by a manager whose expertise lies in television, but are also being asked to carry out assignments for television in addition to their responsibilities to the *Courant*. Velsey believes that all of this has taken a noticeable toll:

> I think the old standards have dropped a lot…Traditionally the courant had a super strong photo department. It was considered one of the best photo departments in the country and a lot of photographers who are there now were super excited to get hired at the Courant because it had such a strong tradition. They've been sent out on FOX stuff just shooting video stuff for television. They just don't have as much time anymore.

Though many reporters are enthusiastic that the Internet's ability to converge media forms will create new frontiers for storytelling, they are often less comfortable when it becomes a single reporter's responsibility to provide all of the necessary inputs for a truly multimedia presentation. "It depends on whether the employer is requiring that person to take on tasks that they're not specialized in," says Sturdevant, who says he actually enjoys getting to do things outside of his element. "For me I like that, and I'm happy with that." The same is not always true of co-worker Velsey though, he explains. He says he can understand her reasoning:

> She's a very strong writer, went to University of Chicago, went to Columbia, she writes an excellent narrative [...] She does not believe that taking photos is the best use of her skills, she does not believe that taking video is the best use of her skills […] and she's right.

This is a serious concern. It is one thing to train the next generation of journalists equitably in writing, photography, website design, and everything else in between— but what of those who entered into the business of journalism when the newspaper credo decreed that visual and written journalism were to remain separate but equal?

Some believe that the time for such an ideology has past. Barbara Selvin, a professor of journalism and former *Newsday* staff member, explains what she sees as the unavoidable reality for journalists in the digital era:

> Today's journalists need to be competent digitally, in print, on video and in audio. They don't have to be standouts on each platform, but they have to produce competent work in several media. Ten years ago, being a good writer or a good videographer or a good photographer was enough. Today, it isn't.

Regardless of whether or not the quality of journalistic work is enhanced or degraded by (to borrow Sturdevant's modern interpretation) "renaissance reporting," the shift in this direction is undeniably present. At places like Stony Brook, this

philosophy is being fast indoctrinated in the classroom, and at papers including the *Courant*, it is rapidly being forced into practice. So even by simply asking, "What does a journalist do?" we can see that the identity of a journalist has been complicated by this new push for multimedia journalists and multimedia journalism.

You'll notice that thus far, I have relied heavily on the term "journalist" when referring to the individuals employed by newspapers and news organizations. This is intentional. Ten years ago, or even five years ago, it might have been possible to sub-classify these individuals as either reporters and editors (concerned with the production of written news content) or alternately photographers and videographers (concerned with the visual practice of the journalistic trade). Though the majority of individuals whose insights and reflections I borrow here are mainly concerned with producing written work, I would argue that moving forward, it is no longer useful or even entirely possible to accurately sub-classify within the blanket term "journalist." The terminological hierarchy, as well as any clear distinction between the two, is simply gone.

In the wake of this breakdown, journalists find themselves redefined in both their own eyes and in those of the public. Those who have been around long enough may still have the luxury of classifying themselves using the old system, but newer entrants will have to devise their own distinctive identities in the space of the "journalist." And as the next generation of content producers comes of age, bringing with them a million little iterations of "journalist," the public has little else to do but expand their cultural definition to include expanding interpretations.

In answer to the question of who a "journalist" is now and how journalists will define themselves in the coming years, Sturdevant says he believes the possibilities are ever expanding:

> I think that's going to be an answer that's more varied than ever before. Let's take print: reporters, photographers, graphic artists and then some type of editor whether that's an assignment or copy editor. Now it's a huge field, so you might have people who do photos and writing, are stronger in the photo or are really only good at aggregating and looking for good news. I think there will be some who are really good at long analysis pieces. I think there will be some who are really good at getting breaking news and snippets, and that's their specialty. If I'm to be optimistic about this, and I am because I'm still in it, now more than ever a person can tailor what they will be defined as by what their work is.

Though interpretations of what being a "journalist" will vary, one reality remains constant: the journalist is increasingly self-defined. There is no longer a cookie cutter mold to strive for, no clear formula for success. The models of the past are not broad enough to encapsulate the reality of the digital journalist. Since journalists can no longer look exclusively to the institutional heritage of the press to dictate their professional identities it naturally follows that their identities become less tied to the institutional identity of the press—they are less dependent on it for definition.

What's more, by carrying out renaissance reporting, journalists are less engaged with newspapers as functioning wholes. To better understand this, think of the formula for the basic leading news story in print: written reporting is combined with at least one photograph. These two are then submitted together to the careful eye of a graphic designer, who determines the manner in which they can be arranged on a page alongside other leading stories of the day. At the very least this process requires the cooperative effort of three individuals, who are mutually dependent on one

another to get a story to press. When journalists set out to do this all single-handedly, their dependence on one another, and by extension their dependence on the newspaper which employs them, is diminished.

In taking on full and exclusive responsibility in the crafting of a story from words to image and even to web, the journalist has become a more independent being. Multimedia journalists do not have the same relationship to newspapers as the more traditional practitioners of journalism once did—they must realign their morphing identities in the relation to the paper in their new role. Becoming one-man-bands means even full time staff members are more like freelance journalists—independent contractors who do not necessarily depend on the level of support from their news organization that was once both necessary and standard.

This is, of course, all relative. By asserting that a multimedia reporting strategy creates distance between journalists and newspapers, I do not mean to imply that the identities of journalists are not still tied up in the long historical traditions of the papers for which they labor (for certainly they still are.) I am merely suggesting that the connection is not as deep as it once was, and certainly that it is different. As job descriptions and identities change, it only follows that relationships likewise adapt.

Under Construction*: Creating a Social Profile for Old Media*

As newly anointed "multimedia" reporter at the *Courant,* Velsy explains some of the new tasks that come with the territory—tacked on to her daily posting requirements: "We're supposed to post on Facebook, we're supposed to have five tweets a day, one of them is supposed to be tweeting a photo…and we're supposed to

post all our stories on Facebook as well…And do two photo galleries a month." The idea behind requiring journalists to participate in social media networks is to use their online presence as individuals to reach readers directly. Once they're on the website, the hope is that with enough photo galleries to keep them amused, they'll stay.

Jolie Novak of the *Daily Mail*, a tabloid newspaper in Great Britain with an online presence in the States, explains that the drive behind this sort of mentality ties in directly to the mechanics of online advertising. Because websites allow their hosts to keep tabs on viewer statistics, the Internet provides advertisers with far more information about how effective their ads will be than was ever available for print. Potential advertisers hoping to negotiate advertising online want to know exactly how many consumers they stand to reach by on a particular site:

> The more unique visitors you have coming to your site, the more page views, the more eyes that are on it—[…] advertisers are going to flock to your site. If you look up different stories on the Internet, what articles are coming up? What newspapers?
> Huffington Post does a really good job doing everything they can to get their *Google* search pushed up the highest. The higher you surface [in search results], the more hits you're getting. So all of these things have to be taken into consideration and that's when the advertisers decide. You say to say to them: "these are the amount of people who are visiting our site everyday…every minute." What is your stickiness? How long are they staying on your site? That's when advertisers are starting to pay premium.

From this perspective, tweeting stories doesn't seem unreasonable— advertising revenue is part of what has been lost, social media is a way to get it back. But there's also the sense that the laundry list of job requirements just keeps growing. Schneider explains that requiring reporters to post their articles and engage in social media as professionals adds "self-promoter" to the journalist's resume. "This is part of the marketing strategy, he says "Facebook and Twitter now have all become

marketing opportunities." And so journalists become the marketers of their own

work. Instead of newsboys hawking the papers on Broadway, we have journalists

pushing their wares on social media. Schneider explains the change:

> [Today's journalists] have to learn all of these multimedia skills. They have to do it in video and they have to do it in audio and they have to be able to write and now they have another step[…] It used to be, o.k. 'Turn over your story and the news organization will print it, publish it, broadcast it.' No…now you've got to personally market it. You've got to get a Facebook page and tell the whole world we want them to come to us. Now tweet the world and say 'o.k. I've got this great story'[…]This is still *another* job requirement. Now a reporter is required not only to create content, to produce content, but now to market their own content and this is another function that they've assumed.
> So over time, journalists are beginning to assume non-journalistic functions. I would submit to you that the marketing that they do is not a journalistic function anymore. It's a self-promotion. And they're doing it because their news organizations want to drive as much traffic as possible to these things.

The notion of assuming 'non-journalistic functions' is a particularly difficult

one for journalists. Not only does it take away time from the time they can dedicate to

'journalistic functions' in the most traditional sense, but some believe it toes a line

that journalists drew in the sand long ago, separating the private and public spheres of

their lives. They are not exempt from the human inevitability of subjectivity, but they

are participants in an industry that has long asked them to actively endeavor to check

their opinions and beliefs at the door.

Shedding their personal identities allows journalists space to assume the

identity of the collective, to be become extensions of the paper—capable of wielding

its institutional might if deemed necessary. It contributes to the production of a more

standardized product, one that can be refined within before being offered up as a

product of the whole. But the grievance begins more simply—with obvious and

continual objection to an assault on the kind of journalism journalists want to do.

Spending time on social media takes away from the time journalists have to report, or

refine their work. Sturdevant says required social media is not the first digital

initiative he's had pushed on him, and he's willing to bet it won't be the last:

> There are zillions of initiatives in my thirteen years that have come and gone
> as I've been a reporter[…] I was moderating online chats with health experts.
> That went on for a year; that's gone. I think these twitpics and all that *junk* is
> just gimmicks. I spend as little time on it as possible. If I were to actually
> spend time on that, I would be taking away from my career development, and
> I'm not willing to do that. If this what I'm going to do, then I'd rather get paid
> to be a PR person for any place around [Connecticut]…get paid one and a half
> times as much just to dribble out these little bits and pieces that don't *mean*
> anything. If they fire me for that, I will walk out the door.

Some (but not all) of the frustrations that journalists like Sturdevant have

regarding social media in their professional lives are closely tied with the more all-

encompassing trend of journalists having to take on more and more work—an issue I

examined in the previous chapter. These are the sorts of places were the overlap

between the many interacting forces and pressures overlap. Journalists are being

asked to take on more work, and that work can take different forms: it can mean

taking on more stories overall, in can mean taking on more roles in reporting

individual stories as multimedia reporters, or it can manifest in the form of work that

falls outside the traditional scope of journalism entirely in the case of social media.

Once again, we arrive at the same sort of conflict which first appeared in

Chapter 2, when Velsey explained that making journalists do more takes away from

some of the good work they do. Then, it was hidden in the more passive comment of

someone lower and the pecking order with more to lose by openly speaking

negatively about her organization. Here this same frustration rises up again, but this time it played out differently. Sturdevant's reaction to demands that he spend his time in a way that does not benefit him is fiercely defiant. But regardless what they do about it or how they react, both individuals are subjected to the impression that their publication does not have their best interest in mind.

To Tweet or Not to Tweet

Beyond feeling that their time and skills are being misused the second objection to self-promotion through social media (which by its very design solicits personality) quickly surfaces. Velsey says she does not steadfastly object to tweeting (it's the photo galleries that really bother her) and can see value in breaking hard news through such a fast-moving platform—but in carrying out the requirement that she tweet constantly just for the sake of producing content, she says finds her personality seeping in, which is not something she's comfortable with:

> When I don't have anything to tweet, the fallback is to rely on personal stuff: like what you're doing or what you think about something vs. news. […] It's easier when you have more time or more news content in your beat to not let your personality get in. When you just have to produce more, you sort of let yourself fill in for the stuff you don't have. I think that that's sort of encouraged with Twitter because it's supposed to be more of a personality thing, but I don't want to be a personality as a reporter.

Sturdevant says his editor, Haar, passed along a company Twitter mandate with a personal addition: "Dan Haar has actually said 'Here's a mandate about Twitter, make it an afterthought. Spend no time doing this. This should not take more than twenty seconds of your life. Don't listen to this, don't consider it, just diminish it.' " This is a relief to Sturdevant: "I think [Haar] sees beyond the current trend," he says.

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Required tweets is not even the most extreme scenario being played out in world of self promoting social media journalism. Ahmad describes the recent experience of one of his former students who was promoted to the position of social media coordinator at *Newsday*:

> They wanted him to have a personality. They wanted people to be able to reach him at all times, here's what they told him: "[…]your Facebook profile is now ours, Twitterfeed is now ours and everything you do on that is in the name of *Newsday*."

Providing enough information to feel like a real person while still maintaining the objective exterior of a professional journalist, Ahmad says, "is like walking a tight rope." But this student was a social media coordinator. It's easier to understand why a news organization might want him to have a personality and be an online presence, since social media is his job. It's a little different for a business reporter like Sturdevant, who says he's unwilling to walk the rope because he fears that letting his personal identity mesh with his professional exterior undermines his credibility: "you give up potential objectivity. To what degree is a reporter objective? I think some people can at least give the illusion of being more fair and objective than others."

Although he understands that little hints of personality may draw people in, there's a certain risk involved and it's not a gamble worth taking. He is willing to post about his love of the outdoors, but that's about it.

> On my Twitter account I say "avid outdoorsman." I grew up camping, I really love camping. That comes through—I tweet about that stuff all the time. Even *I* do that in a pretty narrow fashion, but Susan and I are also hardcore foodies; I leave that out.
> I think that for as many people as it could endear, it could also alienate. I still prefer the idea of being a more sterile person. I would rather be a sort of two-dimensional person. Maybe that's it. Maybe I'm not getting it… maybe I've missed it this whole while. I guess young people who are

journalists now are just saying "you know I went to the farmer's market and I picked up this arugula"…I think that detracts.

Ozernoy doesn't completely agree. She thinks it's more important than ever to keep people engaged in journalism, and if carried out responsibly, she can see real utility in the use of personality to get readers excited about news:

> It's just the age of personality[…] There's certainly examples of journalists who did it very successfully in the sense that they build followings and communities of readers and readerships, which I think is excellent. It is hard for people today… to make sense of all the information and misinformation being lobbed at them. It's hard to find entry points, and I find people tend to shut off or shut down. So much information is being thrown at them; they turn it all off because they don't know what to do with it. Finding a writer that they like or finding a journalist they follow on Twitter is a way in, an easy door.

This is just fine, she says "as long as it's a door in and not the only room they're in."

For Griffiths, social media like Twitter has incredible power as a tool, perfect for prodding the enigmatic online audience. He believes that with careful timing across various platforms, social media can essentially be used to shuffle audiences around and feed them back to a site. "It means being deliberative about it, not 'Oh well, here I've got a big scoop. I'm going to put it on twitter first and then give it to CNN.'" A rule of thumb: social media is best used only to point directly back to websites and spread stories, not to break the news. "We're on twitter in a major way, but we're not breaking news on twitter. We're breaking it on our platforms and then pointing to those platforms with a twitter feed…to point to it, to trumpet it."

Roberts adds yet another opinion to the chorus of voices. Though he's not yet ready to make any predictions about how Twitter will impact journalism, but he believes the platform has the potential to deeply impact the entire journalistic process.

Viewing it as a mere trumpeting system of new aged advertising, he says, neglects its

complexity:

> I think that that's how most organizations think, but I sort of have this instinct that it's kind of gotten out of control that way. I think twitter is bigger than that, and you know when you see how much people are able to use twitter to actually do real reporting […] both amateur and professional reporting on things that people care about. Like during the Arab Spring, right? All these retweets and tweets of people who are first hand witnesses to the things that are going on changes the game.
> It's not just about the distribution channel, it's about information,…reporting,…first hand reporting being distributed around the web […] I think that our knee jerk reaction of saying "We're not going to break anything on twitter" is understandable and probably the right one for now, but I think that ultimately it's going to force changes in how things are reported.

There is no way to measure the relative detriment or gain for journalism in

employing social media as a way to reach us online—in documenting the numerous

opinions that exist around the use of social media what I hope to call attention to is

the conflict itself. The range of opinions regarding the use of social media in

journalism is incredible: there's social media as the news organization's voice, calling

out into the cavernous enigma of the web and hoping the world will call back. There's

social media as the inviting entryway, our personal invitation to the discussion of

news in the age of personality. Social media can be seen as the silent stalker of

credibility or as the tip of the iceberg that the media-boat only thinks it can see.

If we do think of media as a boat floating on the surface of the water, unable

to fully divine what lies below, it's going nowhere fast. Hundreds of paddles dipping

into the water are all trying to steer a different course. Newspapers, large networks,

individual journalists and even organized subsections of newsmakers are taking

different approaches based on the various ways in which they've translated their

beliefs about how news works onto the digital frame. We may be far from figuring out what sort of a force social media is outside of the newsroom, but—if Haar's rogue business section is an indication—it appears that inside, the answer is a rather divisive one.

Opinions about social media and the manner and extent to which it should be used are endless. Multimedia journalism is also a point of contention. There are organizations with beliefs, individuals with beliefs, and groups of individuals with beliefs. There are defections, and there are begrudging compliances. With social media in particular, there is no such thing as opting out of the argument, because even inaction constitutes a stance. The steadfast togetherness of a paper delivered to your door, of the united identity behind it, is gone. Communities large and small are being torn asunder. Instead of a unified front, journalism has lone rangers and secret alliances—a collection of disparate wholes.

Chapter 4

Reckless Abandon

Inside the Newsrooms of the Digital Age

Even from the outside—without knowing about social media struggles, increased workloads or the deep ideological conflicts presented by bloggers and citizen journalists—it's not difficult to surmise that life inside the newsroom these days is not so great. If nothing else, we at least know about the layoffs, the mergers and the papers that have failed completely. But there are troubles plaguing the inside of newsrooms, ones that can't be tallied up—failings that aren't even getting a five-second mention at the end of the evening news report.

Digging Deeper: *The Consequences of Neglecting the Enterprise Story*

Layoffs are bad, but there's one thing that journalists find even more troubling than the prospect of losing their jobs. It is a loss that is mourned even by those who have already given up on making a living as journalists. I am referencing, of course, the decline of the enterprise story—arguably the most bemoaned consequence of the digital migration. Deep investigative pieces are born of enterprise reporting—the sort of general digging around that journalists do. Sometimes it amounts to absolutely nothing, and other times, has the potential to turn up stories that make it not just into the paper—but into the history books as well.

Not every enterprise endeavor is ground breaking or scandalous—many are just good stories waiting to be found. But these are the sort of stories Dan Haar explained aren't likely to wind up in someone's inbox—the ones no one hands you. Most important for our purposes, enterprise stories are the kind of stories that

journalists live for—and while the battle to figure out social media is being fought in

full force, the struggle to keep in-depth stories and long-form reporting alive runs the

risk of being neglected. Velsey explains how for her, the two are directly connected—

because of her new multimedia requirements, she's been told that she will no longer

be required or even encouraged to seek out unusual stories:

> The facebook posting…I don't know that anyone uses that—I think that's going to go away. And the photo galleries I hate, because I'm a trained journalist, and they told us they don't want to do enterprise anymore because they understand that the demands of all this multimedia stuff are time consuming so they can't expect us to do enterprise stories anymore […] the stories that are not part of your daily beat. The features and the things you sort of stumbled on and do longer-form reporting. Those are the things that they say they can't expect us to do anymore.
> As a reporter, mostly it's like your daily beat reporting and you sort of following your town, basic stuff, but what you really like to do, the things that make you a better reporter, the things that you're excited about working on, are enterprise stories…They're interesting and they're challenging. [They're] the things you find. It's not just the day-to-day stuff. Not just […] town council votes on new sewer district, or superintendent proposes new school budget […] that stuff gets kind of dull. Because of multimedia, they sort of told us "It's great if you want to do enterprise stories, but you sort of have to find a way to do them on your own time […] but it's no longer really part of your job description. Part of your job description is doing like two photo galleries a month of your town, which is really frustrating. As a journalist, the things that make me a better reporter are doing those enterprise stories.

Velsey says that even when she's not given the opportunity to she go hunting

for a scoop, she's tried to find ways to look for bigger stories hiding in the daily

material she's required to cover. After vandals stripped copper and brass off of

trolleys at a local museum, she'd hoped she could use the incident to investigate a

possible correlation between scrap metal theft and economic climate. She pitched the

idea. "Maybe later," was the almost immediate response. The story was never written.

Moving away from the mindset of placing stories in a larger context in favor

of just superficially reporting things event by event—choosing, for example to,

simply report that a trolley museum has been vandalized when there's the opportunity

to look deeper—is a mentality that goes against what she learned as a journalism

student:

> Part of what journalism is and what being a good journalist is is not just only
> telling people what's going on right now, but the oldest trick in journalism is
> telling people why they should care, and you do that through narrative. If
> some nameless twenty-six year old got stabbed in Middletown, I don't care,
> but if you tell me the story and make them a person and tell me something
> about violence and desire, that's great journalism. So to completely forget
> that?

Is it being completely forgotten? "It's definitely being ignored," says Velsey.

She says she has been "flat out discouraged" from trying to put a deeper lens on

stories. "I think because it takes longer. It takes more reporting. It's less of thing

that's just gonna fill that town news page. Competing with organizations like Patch to

spit out endless streams of content is a negative drain on journalism," she says, "It's

driven down the quality of all our work and what [editors] expect. To compete well

with Patch, why would you regionalize a story? Why would you make it a state-wide

story?"

Sturdevant is an older reporter, with more experience than Velsey, and says

that he's learned that there's only one way to get the opportunity to do longer, in-

depth stories:

> I've cheated and stolen and been aggressive and been insubordinate and I
> think that anybody who wants to survive has to do all of those things. You
> have to tell your boss 'no, that's nonsense, I'm not going to do that' to the
> degree that you can still stay alive. I've struggled with this because I used to
> be a yes guy all the time, but at the end of the year, you look back, and you
> don't have anything to enter into awards. So it's like 'O.k., where am I? That

was a wasted year. I've gotta have clips, I've gotta have something that stands out from the fray, you can't just be writing things that any other reporter could write by noon that day.

Enterprise stories are expensive and time consuming. They can't be published by noon, or even necessarily by the end of the day, which is part of the reason that publications are no longer throwing their support behind journalists who want to spend time tracking them down. It's too much of a gamble, Velsey says:

> I feel like a huge part of journalism is that to find really good stories you have to waste time. You have to follow leads that don't go anywhere. You have to spend some time researching stories that don't turn out. When you're required to just have to turn in something all the time, it's really hard to feel like you have the luxury of just taking a day and looking into to things and not having things turn out.

Being glued to the computer churning out story after story also makes it more difficult to stumble upon unexpected stories in the first place as well, she says. "It's also hard to maintain relationships with people in towns because a lot of that is dropping in and chatting and seeing if anything is up. And a lot of that building relationships and building sources like reporters do…it doesn't always yield a story."

Backspace*: Understanding Error Online*

Though cheating, stealing and insubordination probably don't do much to improve the cohesive functioning of the newsroom, they may very well be effective strategies for warding off grunt work. Even the most senior and insubordinate journalist in the newsroom, however, cannot avoid the universal pressure to get the news up faster. This is the unavoidable consequence of life out of print—everything wants to move faster. Blame it on the pressure of competition from new news sources like Patch, or on the blazing speed with which a single tweet can tell the world Osama

Bin Laden is dead in 140 characters or less. Or blame it on the public, constantly glued to cell phones, wanting more and more. It matters not—the need for speed is felt by all.

"The pressure for speed has a destructive presence in terms of accuracy and quality," says Ozernoy. "I find that there used to be great writing and now there's really okay writing. Or there used to be these really great photographers… and now it's harder to find the 'great.' There's a lot more of the 'good' or the 'o.k.' And people are okay with that, so news organizations aren't pushing for quality or artistry or craft, they're pushing for delivery….and that's not a good thing."

In the online world, says Dan Haar of *The Courant* "There is no such thing as wait for news to develop. As the story develops, the reader watches it develop and this is a process that journalists have had to learn, myself included." The general premise of the digital-first mentality says Haar, "is that the faster a story makes it online," the better. All the clichés apply. For every action, there is an equal and opposite reaction and getting things online fast means that something's gotta give. We've already discussed the first thing that usually get's nixed: depth. The second? Fine-tuning.

Journalists say it's often in the details. A spelling error here, and a run on sentence there. Sturdevant explains what it's like to have an editor breathing down his neck, pressuring him to get a story 'live' as quickly as possible:

> "do it, do it, do it fast, fast, fast"…so you write the sentence and it's online and you're like "Oh shit. I misspelled it. I jammed words together. It looks terrible!" All the concern about that is gone. And as a result I think that really jeopardizes the quality of our product, and jeopardizes our long-term value. Fortunately most of what I'm doing…it's not breaking news it's not

developing stories, so I don't feel the pressure as much as others. But I've certain had cases where you know … don't think just write it."

Many believe that newspapers, editors and journalists may be more willing to allow small errors to slip through the cracks and onto their online servers because of the nature of the medium. The mentality is different when mistakes can theoretically be corrected. Making a mistake in print Velsey says, is traumatizing in a way that making a mistake online simply just isn't:

> I definitely feel more comfortable [with errors online]. [Making a mistake in print is] pretty horrifying. I've only done it a few times, where I've had to have a correction in the paper for something that I wrote. But it's horrible to have to have a correction run with your story. You have to email the editor and be like "so I messed up, can we print a correction?" And that sucks. Because not only do you know you made a mistake and were contacted by someone, but you have to go and tell your editor *and* ask them to print something. If it's all online I don't tell anybody, I just go fix it. Unless it's something huge and I thought it was going to blow up. But if someone was just like 'Oh this is wrong,' or 'You spelled someone's name wrong,' I would just go fix it.

John Fleming doesn't make it all the way to the newsroom of his paper too often these days. To be fair, the ninety-mile commute to Anniston Alabama from his Atlanta home is a little strenuous. Working almost exclusively outside a newsroom, he's about as completely immersed in the online realm as a print journalist could possibly be—but he still remembers the days of print, as well as the horror of realizing you've made an error that no backspace button can ever undo. He says that the entire psychological experience of making an error is different:

> You'd be laying in bed at night and you'd think 'Oh my god, did I fix that last edit that came through? I can't remember if I did or not.' Because once the press run goes, it's embedded in history. And now it's like 'Oh my god, there was that change!'…o.k. go into wordpress and fix it. And then of course the reality is that the first time the google spiders crawl it…that mistake is out

there, but it's not as visible. You change it on the website and at least psychology it's like 'O.k. well it's fixed now."

Increasingly, says Sturdevant, he gets the sense that mistakes online are not being taken seriously: "I mean, it's not even a concern. Nobody's concerned about it!" He shares Fleming's opinion that the mindset about small errors, especially errors in spelling and grammar, is different: "We've fixed [online errors]…but they got up. And the idea is that we can fix them two minutes from now."

If you've read a newspaper with any regularity, you probably know that mistakes do make it into print. But you've probably also noticed that compared to the sheer volume of content put out by your average daily paper, mistakes are minimal. Errors in print can stick out like sore thumbs when the reader's expectation of a harmonious flow of information and grammar is interrupted. But as Fleming points out, errors on the web can a little more be more difficult to pin down, since fixing them only requires completing a few quick keystrokes.

Though I admittedly have no empirical evidence, subjective testimony from the journalists I interviewed seemed to strongly suggest that errors are much more common on the Internet. Are digital journalists making more mistakes in their written work than their print predecessors? Perhaps. This would be hard to measure retrospectively, but it is a possibility. But regardless of whether or not journalists are becoming less verbally nimble in their first drafts, there is one definite factor that's visibly contributing to the proliferation of errors, and it has to do with editing…a lot less of it.

Going it Alone*: Journalists, Editing, and the Changing Climate of the Newsroom*

Thinking back to Sturdevant's recollection of years as breaking news reporter—desperately scribbling down a story, handing it over to his editor, and adding details from a notebook as his rough draft was furiously edited—we know that for certain types of news, speed has always been a factor, even in print. If a fire breaks out at ten in the evening, and the story is going to make it into the next day's paper, the reporter writing it is going to have to spit something out just as quickly as a journalist today who is rushing post online.

In the past, this process was something of a relay. The moment a last-minute story was finished, it was whisked onto section editor's desk, then on and up through a team of editors—shedding spelling errors and jammed sentences along the way. Sturdevant describes how this system worked to counteract the erroneous tendencies that came as part and parcel of learning to report on a tight deadline:

> In the past it would be "O.k. Write anything just so you can get to be fast and then we'll jam it through this purification process that we call line editing, copy editing, and slot." Three layers of editing before anybody's gonna read this… actually four! When I started off there was a line editor, a copy editor, a slot editor and a proofreader. Four editors.

Each editor, says Sturdevant, had different role in the purification process. Besides section editors who work with on a story (and with a journalist) from beginning to end, a separate copy editor would also look at the story for overall flow, while a line editor, as the name suggests, would break it down, searching for mistakes, you guessed it, line by line. Next, says Sturdevant, were proofreaders and slot editors.

> The Proofreader came after the proofs came through and she or he would be looking for very little mistakes. Very minor stuff. The slot editor, on the other hand, would be someone who had massive amounts of institutional knowledge, an encyclopedic brain, some introvert with an idiot savant who

could say "wait a minute, I know that Guevara is not the right name here."
Finding things that nobody would know, like "Wait a minute, you said that
this was in the one hundredth block of Albany Drive but I know that it's in the
two hundredth. I can think of two people at the *Corpus Christi Caller-Times*
who were *really* good. You'd hate to play trivial pursuit with these people,
because you'd just be demolished.

As Sturdevant's partial memory lapse in recalling the number of editors that
were once involved in getting his story 'fit to print,' might have already revealed, the
system is not quite the same anymore. What has become of it? What's happened to
the position of slot editor, possessor of infinite stores of unusual knowledge? "If it's
not gone," says Sturdevant, "that person is reading a greater number of stories per
night, so the level of attention is not where it used to be."

"This is a phenomena that has happened as the focus shifts to digital. We've
had new people come on to edit the website, which is great, but we've cut back on the
people who are copy editors," says Velsey. She's only ever had two editors read her
work, her section editor and a copy editor. When told the tale of Sturdevant's four-
person editing team (in addition to a section editor), she says simply, "Wow." As the
patchwork biography of Velsey offered thus far reveals, she is a rather new addition
to the world of professional journalism. After receiving a Master's degree in
journalism from Columbia University, she was quickly hired by the *The Hartford
Courant*. She's never had the luxury of having five pairs of eyes on her story, of five
unique minds checking and double-checking her story on every level. This is simply
not her reality.

In the absence of this system, with fewer eyes to ensure that nothing is amiss
before journalistic work is plastered across webpages and later, sent along to the
printer, a rise in the number of errors that pass into publication unnoticed seems an

inevitability. The responsibility for catching and fixing errors, says Sturdevant, has

fallen increasingly on individual journalists, who must constantly monitor their own

work to avoid damaging their personal credibility:

> It's the reporter who's going back and saying, 'For fear of my own brand
> being tarnished or me being embarrassed, I'm going back and checking.' So
> you're pleasing both worlds. You're pleasing the editor and getting the thing
> online, but you're having to go back to make sure it's done right or else you
> look like a fool…Spelling errors and grammar errors that would have been
> fixed in the editing process and are not being fixed until maybe an hour or two
> online.

Though he has not yet had any particularly horrendous editorial oversights make it

online in his stories, Sturdevant says he's watched it happen to co-workers.

> I was in Texas when there were some people from Mexico were brought in a
> box truck…smuggled, and then left in that boxtruck... Eleven people died, so
> the headline that we had was this big [gestures with hands] and "immigrants"
> was spelled incorrectly. It was "immigants" in like whatever point type that is
> Where is the proofreader?!?

> In journalism, errors tarnish reputations. Memory of their specific

manifestations will likely fade from our minds with time, but the damage they can do

to reputations, the silent mental mark ('prone to error') that our endlessly sorting,

categorizing and organizing minds can file away, has the potential to be downright

indelible. When mistakes slip through the cracks, the reputations of the newspapers

themselves are not the only thing at stake. Regardless of whether or not an individual

journalist is responsible for making the original error, the name on the byline takes a

blow.

> This is why journalists and newspapers have historically made a point of

protecting one another, journalists by following certain rules and procedures, by

internalizing institutional values, and newspapers by providing editorial support, by

setting up checks and balances within the organization to purify the final product and

safeguard against error. When these steps are not properly carried out, trust and

relationships can be destroyed. Sturdevant says that his coworker, whose story ran

under the large glaringly incorrect "immigant" headline considered the error

something of a personal affront. She eventually left the paper and now works for

Huffington Post, an online publication in New York.

> The reporter who wrote the story had nothing to do with it…She had a theory
> that they were trying to ruin her clip. And I said I think you can just chalk it
> up to stupidity. Nowadays, [people are] running sentences together; Dan [is]
> putting spelling mistake into things that are online for an hour. Janice had a
> story that had notes that were not in notes, so there was this half sentence that
> was the lead of the story and then a couple spaces down the actual lead of the
> story.

Selvin says that though many of her students are new to the world of

professional journalism (Stony Brook's School of Journalism was established in

2006, less than a decade ago), she's already heard from some grads that the editorial

oversight at the publications they're working for is mediocre at best:

> Interns and entry-level employees don't have much experience to compare,
> but nevertheless some of our alums have told me they're shocked by how little
> oversight their work gets—especially those working online-only, who
> frequently post without having been edited at all. Sometimes the editing
> comes later, sometimes never. This is dangerous. Everyone needs an editor.
> This is how mistakes, sometimes libelous mistakes, creep in. People can get
> hurt, both those written about and those doing the writing.

Dan Haar offers up an example of a recent editorial oversight that was

discussed at a panel he moderated at his alma matter on jobs in communication and

media. Not only was this oversight damaging to the company involved, it involved an

offensive racial slur and most likely ended the journalistic career of the individual

responsible. The incident occurred at ESPN, where Haar's classmate Rob King is

Senior Vice President of editorial, print and digital media. And *everyone* got hurt:

> A lot of things get posted and published that don't get read. And that was [the case] of course, with ESPN last week with the unfortunate comment that Mr. King spoke about. As he said, it didn't get read. Let's say ESPN is one of the top five websites in the world. Easily, right? No doubt about it. And here's ESPN putting up on its website 'Chink in the armor' about an Asian player who had a bad game. Nobody read it. ESPN has 3800 employees…in the building where that guy worked, there are 3800 employees! I would venture to say that any one of the 3800, the lowest paid one of the 3800, if asked to read that headline, would have said "Don't push that button!"

But no one read the headline. The button was pushed, and faster than you can

hit refresh, someone's career was over. King explained that the mistake was one of

naivety, a common phrase employed by an inexperienced journalist too young (or

perhaps too sheltered) to know the negative cultural connotations associated with the

word "chink." This is the sort of error that the safety net of the editorial hierarchy is

set up to protect against. Oversight, a buffer—this is part of the 'give' that

newspapers or news organization as a whole are supposed to offer up when they

'take' a young journalist's work to fill their pages in print, or online. Now, the safety

net is smaller if not non-existent. It is not as strong as it once was, and where it breaks

down, where it is weakened, so too are the ties that bind the journalist and the

organization.

The Invisible Newspaper: *A Story of Change*

A professional journalist since he graduated college, Haar demonstrates the

extent to which he is a storyteller to the core when asked to explain how the evolution

and editing process for a story differs in the digital era—he gives no immediate

answer but responds with a tale. I include it here, lengthy even in an abridged

retelling, because it so vividly illuminates the many ways in which the task of storytelling, of producing journalism, has changed for the individual journalist.

"Grote & Weigel: hot dogs, sausage, meat processor," he begins, pausing to spell out each name and ensure that an ampersand is included. He goes on:

> Historic company—123 years old, founded in 1890—an Old Lyme Company, went out of business at the end of January, putting a grand total of like 30 people out of work. Not a hit to the economy at all […] because you have Mucky's and you have Martin Rosal's and you have a half a half a dozen companies that would more than happily fill the gap. So not a big economic story, but a good story about the heritage of Connecticut and how's it's changed and the pressures on business. So a good story for us. People care about it in print, they care about it online….We made a lot of the fact they went out of business in Janurary, we wrote the story.

He goes on to explain the many angles the Courant employed: a story about how it happened, a story about a local restaurant that could no longer get its hands on the two-foot hotdogs only Grote & Weigel could supply…"the whole bit," says Haar.

> So, comes to us this past Wednesday, a piece of breaking news: that lo and behold Grote & Weigel, which had a scheduled for a…bank liquidation auction, on Tuesday, the twenty-eighth of two thousand twelve, had been bought by a food company in Massachusetts and was saved. We got this news in the form of a press release at eight thirty. By nine fifteen I had written a story that pretty well had all these details up. And then we proceeded during the day to evolve that story into a real tale of how it happened…by the next day the story online and the story in print was 'How an Auctioneer's Mailing Saved Grote & Weigel.'

As it turns out, one of the companies that received the auctioneer's auction announcement had heard of Grote & Weigel, and wanted to buy it. The historic company was saved, and all was well. "And that story, how it happened, was the heart of the newspaper story…that's a classic case of a story that…evolved online.

Haar tweeted the story, put it on Facebook…"the works." This, he says, was an ideal situation. "We can't do that with every story because we don't have the

bodies. I worked a thirteen-hour day." Here the themes of the modern journalist and modern journalism begin to emerge: the decline of the long-form story and the overworked employee are on full display. Though Haar fails to mention it, he was also interviewed by the *Courant*'s affiliated television network.

The astute reader may have observed another oddity: the conspicuous absence of any other journalists from the story. "I wrote the story," says Haar, "I edited the story; I did a lot of stuff." The 'lot of stuff,' again, is familiar, as we've so recently shed light on the many the many so called 'non-journalists' functions often assumed by journalists. As an editor, Haar is also responsible for assigning and supervising all stories for his section. But editing his own story? "Nobody else edited it," he confirms. "It got into print without anybody reading it." Is the hierarchy of the editing process breaking down? "No question about it," say Haar.

This particular story made it online and into print without any serious errors. But, given the circumstances, this seems a small miracle. The story, 'An Auctioneer's Mailing Saves Grote & Weigel,' was not the product of a paper, it was the product of an individual. Haar the reporter researched the company, conducted interviews and wove together a narrative. Haar the section editor assigned himself the story in the first place and helped put it in the context of state business, reminding us that taken in perspective, the loss of thirty employees is not a great loss for the Connecticut economy. Copy, slot and proof editor Haar—responsible for proper spelling, style and general local knowledge, including, for example how a local business prints their name—surfaced early on to ensure that 'Grote' does not become "Groat" and to remind us that an ampersand really does make a difference when it comes to getting

things just right. Dan Haar the publisher launched the story online, and Harr the newsboy made sure that everyone read all about it.

Where is the newspaper in this story? I'm not speaking about newspaper in the sense of ink and paper, but of the newspaper as a community—an institution and a system for putting out the news. It is nowhere to be seen. Without a system, without collaboration or support, journalists are just journalists. They cannot be newspapers. With nothing to hold them together, the identity of the journalist and the identity of the news organization are quickly growing apart.

State of Disunion*: The "Mercenary" Culture of Journalism*

Several years ago, Gannett Company—one of the largest newspaper publishers in the country—distributed a survey to the management in its publications in the hopes of gauging the pulse of its newsrooms. Ahmad had not yet started teaching, and was working in an editorial position at the Gannett-owned *Press and Sun-Bulletin* at the time, so he was amongst those who received it. The response of one of his colleagues, has stuck with him.

> She was not very happy about the newsroom because they were cutting back—making us all do more—and one of the questions was "how would you rate your loyalty to Gannett?" Her best answer was this—it's something that I have taken to heart with every job from that point on—she wrote: "I rank my loyalty to Gannett directly proportionate with Gannett's loyalty to me."

If this metric is any basis for evaluating the state of the newsrooms today, things aren't going so well. "There used to be a loyalty," say Sturdevant. "I think this goes back pre-'90s, where people would come at a paper and stay for twenty or thirty years and really become a local voice. I don't see that."

Change in the profession of journalism is taking place on every level. The medium has changed, the pace has changed, the competition has changed and the process has changed. The structure and the system of mutual responsibility and trust that holds journalists and news organizations together is threatened. Increasingly, journalists are simply left to fend for themselves. "The individual brand of journalist," says Sturdevant, "is more now than ever before. With blogs, with voices, with content that is individualized, and as a contractor that is under pressure of constant layoffs, loyalty is gone."

What happens to journalists in this sort of climate? "I think they become more cynical about their news organizations because of what's happened in the last five or ten years," says Schneider, "I think they feel that loyalty is not rewarded, that they watch colleagues either get forced out, pushed out or voluntarily who jumped out of their news organizations." Cynicism brought on by the realization of the precariousness of their news organizations, Schneider says, has created a culture in which journalists are forced into roles and obligations they might have otherwise refused.

> There's a sense, I think of great uncertainty in their job security. So where ten years ago if I asked a reporter: "Oh, while you're out doing a story take your own photos and then come back and post your own video,' this is what they'd say to me: "That's not my job. I don't want to do that, I didn't come here to do that." Now they'll do anything that they're asked to do, because they understand how precarious it is and how they have to compete at every level. The end result is, whether it's an insecurity or a cynicism…they have less confidence in their news organizations and in the future. They're worried about their news organization. They no longer feel that they can come here and this is a lifetime job. The bonds between the individual journalists and the organizations are fraying for sure.

Staff jobs are hard to come by. Recent graduates are still managing to get by, Ahmad says, but by securing consistent work—an increasing number of his students are sustaining themselves on freelance work alone, with no meaningful bond to the organizations that employ them. This makes it near impossible for them to connect, he explains. The limitations on a freelancer go beyond the lack of salary:

> I feel it removes engagement with the employees of a news organization because there's a lot of limitations imposed on freelancers. I have freelanced a little bit here and there as a photographer for newspapers. A lot of places you're not allowed to use company equipment because you're a freelancer. You're not allowed to go into the building in which you're working for! So how does that foster engagement with the company you're working for? It doesn't[…] It's a brain drain […in] that, you're just losing minds of people who are just are there all the time and know what's going on […] It erodes that voice of authority.

A culture dominated by freelance work in lieu of full time staffers compromises the ability of a paper to effectively cover its community, he says. Not only are they not able to connect to a newspaper or news organization, Freelancers can also lack any meaningful ties to the communities they're supposed to be covering. Their experience is just a snapshot: "If people are doing things in bits and pieces they're not going to get the whole picture of history or of what happened, and the retraction of staff jobs from the newspaper is bad because it creates a sort of mercenary culture where people are going to take their story to the highest bidder rather than producing good consistent work and building a newspapers image and brand over years. It's sad to see the shift."

Sturdevant is far from being a freelancer. His job covering an important and specialized beat is about as secure as they come these days, but he says that even

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though he's a full-time staffer—even in his own work—he feels a certain disconnect

with the community he's covering because he's moved around so much in the past:

It's a disservice to the readers because I don't share their memories. There's a place that makes hot dogs and sausages and specialty meats. It closed down. It was in Connecticut for a hundred and however many years. An institution, it was an institution, and it closed and as much as I could grasp that it was a local institution, I didn't have the shared emotions. To some degree that's an advantage because I can be detached, you know the peripheral character to the whole narrative, but to some degree you really miss out on 'wow' we're missing a family member here. These are the hotdogs I ate on Fourth of July. If I would go to the grocery store this is the nostalgia I would have felt with that brand [....] I didn't have any of those cultural references. My ability to tell that story wasn't there.

If you interviewed someone who was like sixty, they would tell you a very different story but for my entire time it's been cut bait as soon as you can and get to a bigger paper, cut bait and get to a bigger paper. So as for like a geographic identity, I almost don't have one because I've lived in too many damn places. And that also makes me more willing to go on to the next one.

Conclusion

From an outsider's perspective, the story of journalism and the dawn of the Internet is a financial one. The story that we're privy to is the story of how the Internet undermined the ability of the papers to make money and how in doing so, set into motion or (depending on who you talk to[24]) at the very least expedited the most serious financial crisis the industry has ever seen. By looking at the crisis from within, we can begin to understand that the story is more complex. Business models are just models; they can be fixed and adjusted. What is being lost is more than profits and more than jobs: it is the culture and community of journalism. It is the bond of identity that once tied journalists not only to one another and to the collectives of their organizations, but to the entire institutional legacy of their craft.

"Those of us who have built our careers on the notion of the general inherent good in the way we do what we do….we've convinced ourselves, for better or for worse," says Roberts. "We fear that the sort of foundation is being chipped away at…What we've taken for granted as our values and ideals are being trampled." The common perception is that the aggressors who challenge the system and hope to break down the institutional foundation of journalism are outsiders, that bloggers and new media are making the masses question the values of traditional journalism's objective, top-down system of information. This is partly true. But just as detrimental to the survival of the press's strong tradition is what's happening inside its walls.

Moving online has made the press forget itself, because even the newspapers are not practicing what they preach. Rather than acting as unified fronts, they are

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[24] Ben H. Bagdikian, *The media monopoly* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1983).

bickering within, and again and again they are leaving journalists to fend for themselves, making them fight to do the sort of work in which they take pride and joy. They are losing all sense of community. The identities of the journalist and the papers are no longer tightly interwoven. These are the bonds that hold the system together, that link not only journalists to newspapers but newspapers to each other and to the past and to the traditional of journalism.

More and more is being produced, and simultaneously, more and more is being lost each day in the newsrooms. Newspapers trying to cut costs by getting fewer people to produce more are not pulling one over on employees. More now than ever, the people who choose to pursue journalism do so in spite of menial pay and long hours. Journalism draws people in do to its bidding because of the sacred space it occupies in so many of our world views.

It is a profession of identity. Like soldiers, recruits enlist not only with the work, but also with the community in mind. They are enticed by a sense of duty and the legacy that precedes them. However flawed, however far from reality their vision may be, the journalist is an archetype in our shared cultural mind. The mission of a journalist—their obligations, their purpose—is clear before they even walk through the door; it's been taught in schools and included in history lessons.

The press is a visible American institution. It leaves behind a record of its triumphs. It reminds us why we should want it around in the first place. Each time a crooked businessman is toppled or corruption is exposed, it asserts its importance in our lives. And if a loved one dies, and when the general store we grew up with closes

its doors, it is there to help us capture these moments; it offers us the opportunity to submit our stories…for the record.

Sturdevant expresses something of surprise at his own observation of the never-ending supply of new journalists, young people, ready to take up the profession, even as he's seen so many walk away. No matter how bad things get, he says "there's enough young people who will always want to come into journalism, it seems…I don't know why." The answer lies with every single young person that enthusiastically piles belongings onto another empty desk, and it is what the papers truly gamble when they ask journalists for more and more: It's a matter of identity.

Why is the procession so seemingly endless? It's the desire to fuse your identity with the identity of an institution that can touch the untouchable and stop crime without raising a fist; as Schneider said, journalism means playing with power. But its appeal is also in its remarkable range—so fierce it can scare the mob bosses, and so gentle that it can carefully collect the story of a slain child. It is an institution and a practice that many of us have seen at its best.

Wanting to be a journalist, even in the roughest times, reveals the strong desire to be part of a community; deeply embedded in its draw, is the urgent desire so many have to be a part of the community that has followed *your* community—every one of your communities, for the entirety of your life: from the small town paper that reminds us of home, to giants like the *Times* that connect us to a community it might otherwise be impossible to feel. It is the desire to tell stories. To collect stories about others, and in doing so to tell deep stories that live within…about who we are and what we see. Telling stories helps find our place in the world.

This is what is put at risk when newspapers ask that journalists reorient their focus away from the sort of work that moved them to walk through the door in the first place. Forcing journalists to stray from the work they love endangers the community. Leaving them to fend for themselves and failing to provide them with support dissolves trust. Eliminating the elements of the journalistic process that tie the parts together into a whole, means that people can't be papers as we've known them: not just as wood pulp, but as bonded communities with a spirit of their own. Even the most beautifully crafted website, teaming with paid subscribers won't restore this collective identity if the connection that binds journalist, newspaper and legacy is severed. There will be nothing left to translate into digital. Newspapers and news organizations—for the difference is no longer totally clear these days—may be fully aware that town journalists are not happy simply covering town council meetings every week, and that laying of the entirety of the copy staff won't bode well for newsroom morale, but what is really put at risk is not something that can be seen.

In the transition to digital age newspapers have endangered is the collective connection that all journalists have to the mission and values of their profession. When journalists feel that they no longer exist within newsroom communities—that the work they do does not matter—that they are not truly parts of the communities they serve, when the reality catches up to our flawed archetype and journalism ceases to be a profession of purpose and discovery, new ranks of journalists will stop flocking through its doors journalism will find itself truly lost.

Towards the end of our interview, Velsey makes a confession:

Well, to be honest I'm going to accept a different job. It's the stories that you care about that keep you going on a daily basis or make it worthwhile, you

can't remember why you loved journalism and want to be a journalist in the first place…"

She's not ready to give up on journalism yet, just the *Courant*. She's moving on to some place new, hoping to rediscover the thing that drew her in to begin with. Pray that she finds it, because if not—this is what journalism truly risks losing. This is the state of disunion in the nation's newsroom, and it is more important, more crucial to the survival of journalism than any business model will ever be.

A Forward-Facing Epilogue: *Community Beyond Geography*

> I think that this is actually a very good time for journalism. It may be that there's a very difficult time figuring out the business model for journalism, but in terms of reach, journalism has never been healthier.
> -Richard Griffiths, *CNN*

> I think you have to start with the idea that the Internet is just a platform. There's nothing insidious about the Internet, in fact it's wonderful. It's tremendous. It's great…We're not the first to deal with…profound changes. Having said all that, I think the biggest challenge for me is how are we going to find a way to sustain and invest in serious quality journalism? To me we've got to find a business model that will allow for the investment in this kind of journalism.
> -Howard Schneider, Dean of Stony Brook School of Journalism, Former Editor of *Newsday*

> In an environment where there are too many choices, too many decisions, too much information, and too many demands on our cognition, it pays to be judicious about the complexity we voluntarily sign up for.
> -Rebecca Costa, *The Watchmen's Rattle*

Mainstream media must rethink community. If losing sight of its own collective identity has been its greatest downfall, rethinking the identity and community of others may be its salvation. Change will start with a re-conceptualization of the identities of readers and the communities journalism serves.

I will begin with the premise that the digital era is, as one journalist mentioned in the previous chapter, an age of personality. Facebook, Twitter, blogs and hundreds of other online sites allow and implore us to construct identities and be part of communities in the online space. What's more, the creation of identity online is an act

of agency. Through social media and online interaction, we can consciously construct our identities online and have been doing so with vigor across the globe.

This brings me to the second aspect of online interaction, namely that it is not bounded by geography. Twenty years ago, our ability to interact with others across long distances, let alone form long-distance communities, was minimal at best. The ability to interact online has eliminated these barriers allowing the formation of community completely independent of geography. Through online interaction, we can now form communities based on virtually any common aspect of identity or commonality: communities can be formed based on share similar political beliefs, hobbies, taste in music…the list is endless. The internet even allows us to continue to engage with communities formed on the basis of geography even when geography is no longer involved: we can continue to engage with our friends from high school long after graduation. Though geography will likely always remain a crucial aspect of human identity, in a digital age, I would argue that geography is no longer the only or even the most central aspect of identity for many people.

Newspaper coverage, by contrast, is deeply dependent on geography. This is an unavoidable aspect of its design. Stories, scandals, current events, all occur within geographic bounds, and so in order to uncover them, news-gathering organizations of any sort (networks, newspapers, online sites, etc.) must embed themselves within geographic communities. Even when journalists broaden the reach of their work by placing stories in a larger context, these efforts reflect a geographic sensibility and are rooted in geography. In an attempt to create more depth for a local business closing, for example, a journalist would likely frame the incident in terms of a statewide trend.

So, more often than not, even when stories are framed to appeal to a larger audience, the contextual layers are still rooted in geography. Stories are expanded to national relevance, or even to international relevance, but still the mindset is to conceptualize in increasing hierarchies of geography.

Prior to globalization and the birth of Internet communities, this was a perfectly reasonable strategy, but in an era when the communities to which we belong to are no longer merely geographical, this approach is antiquated. I do not suggest that newspapers uproot themselves from their communities, but instead that when considering the framing of the story, they add contextual layers based on non-geographical interest groups and communities.

What would this look like? I'll use one of my own stories as an example for familiarity's sake: an alliance of landscape architects, both professionals and students set up shop in Hartford this summer to take a stab at redesigning a barren concrete plaza that currently sits unused in the downtown area. The redesign was controversial because the original space was part of a larger project designed by now internationally famous architect I.M. Pei, designer of the iconic glass triangle at the Louvre in Paris.

Certainly this is a story of interest to residents of Hartford and perhaps to the larger Connecticut community, but what of the other potential interest groups involved? The story might be marketed to readers anywhere interested in architecture or urban renewal; it holds potential interest for students, and for anyone interested in the work of I.M. Pei. Suddenly, a rather local story about a one-day event in Hartford is relevant to groups far beyond city bounds. In fact, once posted, some of these

groups were even able to find the story on their own, and it was reposted via social media.

The context in which journalists place local stories must be re-envisioned. Rather than placing stories in context for increasingly larger geographic communities, the strategy should be to target communities outside of geography. By employing this strategy, journalism can begin to rethink and update its concept of 'community' to align with the reality of the digital age. Stories will still naturally begin with geography, but by thinking about potential interest groups as 'the larger audience,' journalists could begin to truly serve the communities to which their stories hold relevance.

The next obstacle to overcome is making such a model profitable. This is a serious consideration: just because the *Hartford Courant* has written an article that would interest an architecture student in Los Angeles doesn't mean that that reader will want to sign up for a subscription to the paper. Most of what it contains will be of little relevance to him. This is not a new phenomena, Griffiths reminds us, as to a certain extent news has always been consumed on a piecemeal basis. "People only read what they were interested in when it came on a printed page," he says.

The current model for monetizing online content is flawed. Newspapers end up giving away all of their content virtually for free, or alternately, throwing up paywalls that essentially pose the following question to readers: would you like all, or would you like nothing? If the content is only available through subscription to the entire site, the news organization loses every reader who might have been interested in the story but is unwilling to pay for complete access. If the content is given away

for free, stories begin to be increasingly consumed as individual units,[25] with less importance tied to their origin. The problems with paywalls do not end there.

All-or-nothing paywalls that either grant complete access or shut people out entirely do not allow for, or even acknowledge, the individuality of their readers. The individuality that millions of online users have been so desperately trying to express from the moment that blogs, Myspace, Facebook, Twitter and hundreds of other social media outlets popped up and gave them the opportunity. Online news consumers have already begun attempting to put their personal news consumption habits on display using existing forms of social media. We post stories we've read and want to share onto our social media outlets (like Facebook and Twitter) and through this conduit the stories reach our friends. We spread news and in doing so, we express ourselves and continue to construct our identities online. The stories we read, the things that interest us, these are all mechanisms for self-expression and the construction of identity.

Taking all of this into consideration, I envision the following reformation of newspaper subscription. In soliciting subscriptions and readership, newspapers should acknowledge the individuality of their readers and allow them infuse their identity into their consumption of news. Instead of having to subscribe to a website in its entirety, readers should be able to subscribe to broader categories of information, which I'll call 'channels.' This particular name is intentional, for in many ways my

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[25] S. hrg. ;; 111-428; Variation: United States.; Congress.; Senate.; S. hrg ;; 111-428., *The future of journalism hearing before the Subcommittee on Communications, Technology, and the Internet of the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation, United States Senate, One Hundred Eleventh Congress, first session, May 6, 2009*, 2010.

proposal draws on the sort of subscription system employed by cable providers that allows subscribers to build their own packages.

A publication could create a channel for stories relating to social justice, a channel filled with content of interest to students, a channel for business news, or for a particular city, town or state. A channel filled with stories relevant to readers interested in women's issues. Channels could even be formed based on age group. The possibilities are endless. Locale would still be an important channel, but it would no longer be the only channel. Stories could then be cross-catalogued based on these various channels so that a single story could be distributed to many different channels.

To a certain extent, newspapers have already begun to towards creating slightly different products for different readers. Lawrence Roberts explains a natural division he sees for the *Post*: "The online version is going to sort of supplant the print version as the main product of the organization and the print paper is going to have to become more of a niche product that is much more focused on the geographic audience. That's a no- brainer," he says. A system based on channels of information expands beyond this idea, sorting readers into more complex communities rather than labeling them as merely, "local" or "everyone else."

Allowing readers to choose the sorts of information they'd like to receive sets up a structure where users could pay for as little or as much content as they are willing. It also grants them conscious agency in their paid consumption of the news, creating a means by which they might actively use news consumption as a form of online identity display. This concept could be integrated with social media, permitting

users to display the news channels or news topics they follow, so the expression of self through news consumption preferences is both internal and external.

Natural avenues and mechanisms for spreading content through cyber space already exist. In examining trends for viral videos on *Youtube*, the company's trends manager Kevin Allocca observed a consistent pattern: shortly before videos 'went viral,' receiving millions of viewers, they were often published on social media by key cultural 'tastemakers,' catalysts for a video's rapid spread online.[26] Digital journalism should be taking advantage of this natural system of online tastemakers. Rather than attempting to force journalists with contrived and restricted online personalities into the position of tastemakers, allowing readers to choose and display their news reading preferences would harness the Internet's natural system of tastemakers to help spread stories and content.

Some early attempts at this have already started to pop up. The *Washington Post*'s 'social reader,' for example, tracks a user on the newspaper's site and then publishes the articles he or she has read on Facebook. The idea of publicizing an individual's reading habits, thereby taking advantage of the organic system of tastemakers within the Internet is a good beginning, but misses the mark in forcefully tracking a reader's every habit. Constructing online identities and expressing personality through social media is all about discretionary selection, putting forward a desirable portrait of the self. If readers were involved in selecting their categories of preference, the ability to spread individual stories could still exist, but broadcasting

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[26] Kevin Allocca, *Why videos go Viral TEDEducation* (youtube.com: TED Talks 2012).

categories of information that a reader is interested in rather than following his or her every move gives members of the online audience discretion and agency.

Large newspapers like *The New York Times* or *The Washington Post* may have enough resources to maintain an appropriately prolific 'Architecture channel,' but what about smaller publications that may only churn out a few relevant articles per month? To combat this inevitability, I would propose first that in creating channels, newspapers be individually selective about what they provide (a channel with insurance news, for example, might make more sense for a newspaper in Hartford than for one in San Francisco) and second that newspapers actively purchase content from one another.

In a way, this is reminiscent of the current wire service for purchasing news, but would provide several key improvements. On the most basic level, newspapers would support each other in their purchases: rather than having hundreds of papers pay for access to the same sterile coverage provided by enormous wire services like AP, papers could pay one another for their content. This would also offer vast potential for improvement in the quality and depth of stories being purchased by the papers that already buy content from third parties to fill their pages. Unlike the purposefully general stories written for the wire by reporters without the huge institutional presence of a newspaper in a given community, newspapers could instead purchase richer work written with both a local and a larger audience in mind.

One serious concern that has been raised with frequently in discussions about journalism in internet era is that reporters and newspapers are no longer receiving credit for the work they do, that their stories are gathered and aggregated online

without due credit to the source.[27] Griffiths names this as one of the most serious challenges presented by the online platform. Bloggers sharing their opinions or publishing personal commentary on current events does no harm to society, he says, but "there's harm when information is stolen and presented as their own, as I've seen repeatedly." Creating a system in which newspapers could sell their work to one another would standardize and regulate procedures for purchasing the work of others, creating an infrastructure of accountability and transparency in which the source of a particular story could be very clearly displayed no matter what publication's 'channel' brought a reader to it in the first place. This would allow a newspaper to build credibility based on good work even if a reader did not happen upon the story through the website of the paper at which it originated.

A great deal of the technology that could make a system like this successful already exists. A self-described "news junkie," Griffiths explains that he currently uses two iPad applications to help him narrow down the stories that might be of interest to him: Zite and Skygrid. "Zite is a tool which learns from your preferences, and Skygrid is you set up the things that you're interested in and then it generates that content for you," he explains. Think of the potential for using these two combined to develop paid content channels: users could choose their own set of channels initially, and then websites could monitor their reading habits and make suggestions for other channels they might wish to subscribe to, not the way in which shopping websites like Amazon.com make "suggestions" about items we might like to buy. We could also be enticed based on the habits of our peers, again with a model similar to

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27 Rossi, "Page One: Inside the New York Times."

Amazon's "customers who viewed this also viewed." So even outside of our own immediate social circles, the habits and preferences of peers could be used to entice us to consume more news.

One objection that might be raised to this sort of news consumption, indeed a concern that has been raised about the digital age in general, is that we will begin living in our own little worlds of self-confirming biases. Some have argued that with increasing personalization on the part of sites like Google, this is an almost unavoidable side effect of the online reality. [28] I would suggest that within the model I've proposed, this danger be combated by having all newspapers provide each and every one of their subscribers (regardless of how many or how few channels they choose to sign up for) with a certain basic set of stories each day. In this way, it's as though thousands of readers each have their own newspapers with the same front page, but the size of the publication varies with each reader, and everyone gets his or her choice of sections.

The end result would hopefully look something like this: In the initial construction of their stories, journalists would write with multiple audiences in mind, starting with geography and then moving into more abstract categories. The reading experience begins next: a combination of entertainment and self-expression. Readers would get the sense that they are paying for the journalism that impacts them personally. Consciously selecting the sorts of material they'll choose to read would give news consumers a feeling of purpose, their selections both resonating with and helping to construct their identity. Their decisions and personal choices as readers

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[28] Eli Pariser, *The filter bubble : What the Internet is Hiding from You* (New York: Penguin Press, 2011).

will likely influence friends, setting the news in motion along thousands of complex and individualized social structures and information pathways. Along the way, news organizations will be gathering information about their readers' habits and making suggestions about possibilities for expansion. All the while, the origin of every story remains clear and journalists and news organizations have incentive to work together to produce polished work that is attractive for potential buyers, and that will reflect positively on their publications.

If news organizations were selling content to one another, not only would they have the incentive to write in-depth pieces that tell all sides of a story, but would also have incentive to put out polished pieces; any work picked up by other conglomerates would be a reflection on their organization as a whole, and could bring potential readers and subscribers to their site. The best pieces would be those put out by journalists with the most supportive community backing them.

'The Press' is not an outdated institution, not a relic necessarily doomed for failure. Though we might have to envision a world where the term 'press' itself might better refer to the pressing of a mouse pad than to a machine rolling out ink on paper, its function and purpose remain the same. We need journalism to chronicle our collective existence and to safeguard society where the legislature and the justice system cannot. What we need in the digital age is a way to revive and preserve the communities that produce valuable, well-researched journalism, and such journalism can only be produced within a system with a large and supportive infrastructure, one that has its own safeguards set in place and one that is stronger and more powerful than any individual.

The connections that journalists and citizens have to newspapers are not superficial. We are not connected to broadsheets or to ink. We are attached to journalism as a practice, and a craft of community, and this is part of journalism to which we must remain steadfastly bound as we all move forward. The proposal I've put forth for reform is not a perfect solution. The model is complex, but the problem is complex as well. Still, something must be done, and at the very least, my hope is that it provides a framework for thinking about the problem: perhaps by rethinking the communities it serves, journalism can begin to save its own.

Addendum:

Methodology

Throughout the course of this project, the thesis of my thesis—the story I felt needed to be told—seemed to evolved so thoroughly, and so frequently that at times it left my head spinning. There were moments when I found hunches I'd developed refuted, and moments when I wonder if perhaps I'd not been asking the wrong questions to begin with. But even as I stumbled along, I was constantly grounded by strong belief that at the very least, I could have conviction in the way I was asking question.

Hoping to find out what find out what was happening to journalism, I felt that the only place to begin was by asking the people who produce it. I chose employ a narrative analytical methodology throughout the research process, since it aligned most closely with a journalistic style of inquiry and allowed interviews to flow organically. Interviews are supplemented by books, newspaper articles, documentary films, *Youtube* videos and just about everything in between. These materials not only supplement, but enrich my participants narratives by context and support for their commentary

Participants

For this project, I interviewed 13 participants, selected because of their personal-identification with the practice of journalism. Though all participants are involved in the practice of journalism in some capacity, the relationships that they have to journalism, and the roles they carry out in the journalistic world, vary. Some are involved in print media, and others are not. Some are primarily academic thinkers.

Some work mostly online, and some have left the traditional practice of journalism to teach. This range gave me a diverse sampling of the journalism community, equipping me to characterize the community as well as the individual. In line with a narrative analytical methodology, the subject pool was kept relatively small so that interviews could have real depth.

Participants were recruited in a variety of capacities. Three were reporters I'd met during my internship at *The Hartford Courant*, but hoping to include voices beyond *The Courant* staff, I expressed my intended area of research—broadly investigating the ways in which the move online was affecting my field—to my own immediate social community, asking them to contact me if they could put me in touch with anyone in the industry who might be willing to speak with me. For this reason participants were recruited somewhat but also a self-selecting group, open to discussing their professional life on record. In the earliest stages, I tracked down family friends. I contacted a visiting professor. One particularly dedicated friend went digging and found out that the mother of one of *her* friends was involved in journalism. In a true testament to the power and generosity of human connection, just a few starting points were enough. I concluded every interview by asking participants if there was anyone else they thought I might be able to talk to. By simply asking, I was able to find more than enough voices to fill my thesis.

Procedures

I developed a general set of introductory question before beginning the process these questions were as follows

1. Current state of Journalism Industry.
2. Personal experiences over time in the newsroom.

3. Beliefs about the future of the industry.
4. Effects of Internet on Journalism and the newsroom. (Specific sub-topics of interest will include search engines, twitter, and rapid publication)

I began by asking participants how they thought the Internet had changed (and continues to change) journalism, newspapers and journalists. The responses of my earliest subjects framed further interviews, but though I kept some discussion topics in mind—specifically the impact of citizen journalism, social media and blogs—I tried to allow each participant to direct the conversation as much as possible. For this reason, different interviews naturally emphasize some topics more than others. Throughout the interview process, I was attentive for any recurring themes or topics in my interviews. After completing all of my interviews, I transcribed each one. This process helped to further my intense familiarity with my interviews and provided me with both a visual means of searching for themes. Each participant was interviewed only once, and all comments draw from these interviews which can be found in cited works.

Analysis

As I carefully combed through my interviews, several themes and important areas of discussion stood out. I pulled out quotes relating to topics that naturally occurred with the most frequently. Because of the complex and interacting nature of the changes taking place in journalism as a result of the Internet, I began by attempting to weave the many powerful quotes together into a single—and incredibly long—story. I grouped related quotes and tried to include anything that felt especially powerful. True to the disorganized chaos of the Internet, I was left with a story song long and so deeply interwoven, it was hard to follow.

I used this semi-structured aggregation of opinions, memories, and reflections to pull out the strongest themes, outlining within the story. Using this evidence, I was able to decipher the strongest emergent themes and to pull them out to be addressed individually, breaking them up first into chapters and then again into subtopic—all the while incorporating my researching. Analysis took place throughout the course, since I felt about to make more pointed analysis and critical commentary within evolved structure. Since my thesis explores identity I dedicated one section to history, which serves the same function as a more traditional literature review. My hope is that this process culminates in a both a clear and an honest portrayal of digital journalism and the first generations of journalists who have set out to navigate it.

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All interview materials are drawn from the following interviews

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John Fleming (Editor at Large at *The Anniston Star* and editor for the *Juvenile Justice Information Exchange*), in discussion with the author, October 25, 2012.

Richard Griffiths (Vice President and Sr. Editorial Director at *CNN*), in discussion with the author, January 5, 2012

Dan Haar (Business Editor and columnist at *The Hartford Courant*), in discussion with the author, February 25, 2012.

Jolie Novak (Photo Director at *The Daily Mail*), in discussion with the author, November 5, 2011.

Ilana Ozernoy, (writer and Assistant Professor of Journalism at the Stony Brook School of Journalism), in discussion with the author, February 24, 2012.

Lawrence Roberts, (recent Executive Editor of the investigations unit at *The Huffington Post* and long time Chief of Investigations at *The Washington Post*), in discussion with the author, February 16, 2012.

Howard Schneider, (founding Dean at *The Stony Brook School of Journalism* and former editor of *Newsday)*, in discussion with the author, February 24, 2012.

Barbara Selvin, (Assistant Professor at *The Stony Brook School of Journalism* and former reporter for Newsday and Newsday New York*)*, in discussion with the author, March 21, 2012.

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