When Tradition meets Immediacy and Interaction
The Integration of Social Media in Journalists' Everyday Practices

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A n increasing number of studies focuses on journalists' perceptions of the changes in newsroom culture, and their own understanding of their profession (Artwick, 2013; Deuze, 2003; Fortunati et al., 2009; Gulyas, 2013; Lasorsa et al., 2011; Ryfe, 2009; Singer, 2013). Within the past decade, newsrooms have adapted to the new influences on journalism practices stemming from participatory and social media so that a process of normalisation can now be observed (Hermida and Thurman, 2008; Robinson, 2007; Singer et al., 2011; Singer, 2005).

The analysis of the newly emerged newsroom cultures and journalism practices is an on-going process, given the rapidly changing nature of social media and their impact on news media reporting, as well as news reception/usage (see for example Zeller et al., 2013). However, most studies focus either on the micro or on the macro level. The micro level describes journalists' own understanding of their profession and actual newsroom processes and routines, and the macro level the societal perspective regarding the changes of social media and particularly notions of participatory culture in news production. Our study contributes to such research by providing the often missing meso-level perspective. Besides the individual (micro) and societal (macro) perspective, it is also vital to address the organisational perspective (meso level). As Reese suggests, *"if the routines are the most immediate environment*

within which a journalist functions, the organisational level considers the imperatives that give rise to those routines" (2001, 181) .This is particularly relevant when it comes to mainstream, traditional media outlets, which often integrate hierarchical decision-making structures given their legal and organisational set-up.

Moreover, a certain need for hierarchical structures when it comes to news editing, for example, can be seen to be inherent in the defining characteristics of quality journalism. According to Shapiro (2010), quality journalism is *independent, accurate,* open to *appraisal, edited,* and *uncensored.* Being open to appraisal and editorial feedback calls for a multi-actor system where mutual editorial activities take place in the context of hierarchical structures that enable such activities. Ryfe (2009) provides one example for an ethnographic study that aimed at describing the influence of the meso-level on the news/journalistic practices of a single news outlet. Our objective is to provide insights for new avenues into investigating the meso-level of news media. We will do so by addressing the opinions and attitudes of senior online news executives and journalists in Canada. We aimed to examine their approaches as decision makers to the impact of social media on journalism and professional constructs of the journalist. Based on semi-structured expert interviews, we explore trends, challenges, and routines in news production, with a focus on the growing influence of social media on journalism practices. Our study discusses personal descriptions of these processes, and how these processes are rooted in the interviewees' subjective, experience-based understandings of the changes in journalism. Given that the study focuses on an exclusive vanguard group that is often hard to access, this study presents preliminary insights and reflects on the research process and its challenges, as well as further avenues of study.

Research Context

Terms such as participatory journalism, citizen journalism and user-generated content are commonly used to refer to the greater role of members of the audience to create and disseminate news and information. With more and more people creating and disseminating information online, the question of who is a journalist and what is journalism becomes open to interpretation. The results are attempts to reassess the conception and definition of journalism to counter the question that *"Isn't any citizen, in principle, a journalist when seeking to gather and disseminate information?"* (Brethour et al., 2012, first paragraph),

A range of studies have been conducted in the past 10 years that focus on the changes in journalism practice and newsroom culture. These studies encompass a wide variety of different methods, with either qualitative or quantitative designs. Among the latter design type, there are also comparative studies such as Fortunati's et al. (2009) study on the influence of the internet on European newsroom cultures, Hanitzsch's et al. (2011) broad study on mapping journalism cultures across 18 different countries, and the work of Singer et al. (2011) on participatory journalism through expert interviews conducted in 10 different countries. Other studies employ qualitative methods such as ethnographic studies in newsrooms (Ryfe, 2009), qualitative website analysis (Domingo et al. 2008) or newsroom observations (Quandt, 2011). Hermida and Thurman (2008) applied a mixed method design that consisted of expert interviews and a quantitative content analysis to analyse how British newspapers integrated user-generated content in their publications.

Much of the body of literature on participatory journalism points to a process of normalisation with journalists and newsrooms applying established norms and practices to newer forms of content production and dissemination by the public (Hermida and Thurman, 2008; Robinson, 2007; Singer et al., 2011; Singer, 2005). Studies have documented a dramatic increase in the opportunities for audiences to contribute to online news outlets, with the use of citizen media part of newsroom routines, above all in situations and times of breaking news (Bruno, 2011; Wardle et al., 2013). Journalism has always been expected to offer avenues for voices from outside the media to be heard (Christians et al., 2009). But research points to how journalists have held on to key stages of the news production cycle, framing the audience as active recipients who act when news happens by providing eyewitness accounts, photos and videos, and then react by commenting and sharing when a news article is published (Singer et al., 2011). New technologies of content production operate within the social and cultural constraints of media institutions. Even at the BBC, which pioneered participatory practices in the first decade of the 21st century, *"rather than changing the way most journalists work, 'Audience comments', 'Audience content' and 'Audience stories' are firmly embedded within a traditional news-gathering process, and in most cases are being used as just another journalistic source"* (Wardle and Williams, 2010, 791).

The development and growth of networked technologies, usually referred to as social media, have provided more opportunities for more people to create, communicate and consume news and information. Industry surveys suggest that social media,

and specifically Twitter, has become part of the everyday toolkit of journalists (Cision, 2009, 2010; Oriella, 2011, 2012), though there are variances in the extent of use on a daily basis (Hedman and Djerf-Pierre, 2013). Journalists largely use social media platforms such as Twitter to gather the news, find sources, report the news and share links to news websites (Artwick, 2013; Broersma and Graham, 2012, 2013; Brown, 2012; Gulyas, 2013; Hedman and Djerf-Pierre, 2013; Lasorsa, Lewis, and Holton, 2012). Yet, at the same time, journalistic conventions of objectivity, sourcing, and verification are being bent as the sociotechnical traits of social media shape journalistic practices. In his overview of the growing body of research on journalism and social media, Hermida points to a fragmentation of professional norms and practices, as "*journalists seek to shape a new communicative space to fit within prescribed conventions while they are, themselves, shaped by its sociotechnical traits*" (2013, 301).

Those changes in journalism and newsroom cultures are often claimed to be based on two main reasons: first of all, as "*collapsing*" to describe the economic situation of the news media, particularly print media (Soloski, 2013), and the influence of the internet and its social or interactive features. The last point integrates two aspects; infrastructure (internet, semantic and social media applications) and audience behaviours (see for example Dahlgren, 2010). In order to be able to address those three dimensions or influencing variables—economic pressure, technological progress, and audience behaviour—we selected senior journalists and executives for their role as decision makers and strategists for our study. Each interviewee we chose was actively involved or even a leading figure in the introduction and establishment of digital divisions, platforms, etc. in either print or television media institutions.

Canada represents a noteworthy object of analysis when it comes to journalism and newsroom cultures as national media markets play a role in the diffusion of novel journalistic practices (Singer et al., 2011). It has one of the most advanced mass media systems in the world (Vipond, 2011) while, at the same time, a high concentration of media ownership (Beaty, 2008; Raboy, 1990, 2006; Skinner, 2008). The broadcast industry has consolidated around four major commercial conglomerates since 2011: Quebecor Media, Rogers Media, Shaw Communications, and BCE (Dewing, 2012). The newspaper industry has undergone increasing concentration of ownership and media convergence (Soderlund and Hildebrandt, 2005).

The high level of media concentration does not appear to have eroded public confidence in the mainstream media. Nine out of ten Canadians consider news provided by traditional news media as reliable and trustworthy (Fletcher et al., 2011). Habitual consumption of news is declining, though, particularly among those under 35 years of age, compared to older generations. Canadians have historically been known as avid consumers of news (Keown, 2007). While television remains a major source for news, many are regularly sampling different platforms and media outlets for their news (Ipsos, Reid, 2010; Keown, 2007). The trend in Canada is in line with developments across the border in the US (Purcell et al., 2010).

Social media platforms have developed as spaces for the dissemination and recommendation of news and information in both the US and Canada, as well as internationally. Canada scores among the top ten countries in the world with the highest usage rate of social networking services such as Facebook. For many, the site has become part of their news consumption. In Canada, 43 per cent of social network users turn to their friends and acquaintances daily for news and information (Hermida et al., 2012). Through social media, audiences are able to curate, reframe or reinterpret the news, taking on the role of secondary gatekeepers through the selective re-dissemination of professionally produced content (Hermida et al., 2012; Singer, 2013).

The shifts in habits and attitudes towards news consumption, together with the continuing relevance of the mainstream media to Canadians, raise questions as to how media managers and online journalists perceive these changes in audience behaviours and preferences, and how it influences their understanding of (online) news media production and digital journalism.

METHOD

The paper is based on nine semi-structured expert interviews with senior online news managers and leading online journalists in Canada. The interviews were designed to provide a thorough understanding of the personal opinions and attitudes of a small and select group of leading professionals in the field of digital journalism. The use of qualitative interviews to investigate evolving attitudes and practices is well established in journalism studies and beyond (see, for example, Singer et al., 2011). It provides for insights into the subjects' individualistic perceptions and belief systems, allowing researchers to "*step into the mind of another person, see and experience the world as they do themselves*" (McCracken, 1988: 9). Thus the qualitative interview is well suited to investigate sub-cultures within professional groups

such as journalists, as it explores "*areas of broad cultural consensus and people's more personal, private and special understandings*" (Arksey and Knight, 1999, 4).

The number of participants in a typical qualitative research study is too small to be representative of the general population, though it does surpass McCracken's suggestion that "*for many research projects, eight respondents will be perfectly sufficient*" (1988: 17). The research is not intended to represent the general population of journalists in Canada or elsewhere, but to provide insights into a specific group selected for their involvement with particular decisions in the newsroom. Purposive sampling enables researchers to focus on a select group of individuals involved in specific news activities to explore the "sub-cultural level", as well as "unusual contexts" and "new contexts with clear, familiar features," (Arksey and Knight, 1999: 4). Such an approach contrasts with and complements other studies that have focused on journalists with a significant presence on social media (Artwick, 2013; Noguera-Vivo, 2013) or on self-selected non-representative samples (Gulyas, 2013; Jordaan, 2013). The sampling of the interviewees was done through researching online news media managers and executives, as well as leading online journalists regarding the main media outlets in Canada, taking account of gender and medium. However, the response rate resulted in a greater number of broadcast subjects than print. Additionally, the under representation of female journalists at senior levels in digital journalism affected the gender balance of the sample. In the end, we had to find a pragmatic compromise between our targeted sample and the responses we received (Baker and Edwards, 2012; Flick, 2009).

Our final sample was made up of one woman, and eight men. Four came from print media and five broadcast media. Our interviewees consisted of three senior editors from the digital news divisions of *CBC* and *GlobalNews*, two senior *CBC* journalists with a track record in digital and computer-assisted journalism, three senior print journalists involved in digital journalism (*Globe and Mail*, *Vancouver Sun*, *The Province*), and one senior journalist involved in the development of online community interaction and programming for Bell Media. French-language media were excluded from our study to ensure consistency in results. The difficulties we encountered regarding our sample reflect generally known recruitment challenges in rare population subgroups, i.e. access difficulty to an already small group of potential subjects.

In order to encourage the interviewees' disclosure of their personal opinions, we guaranteed an anonymised analysis and reporting. To further accommodate our objective of gathering personal opinions and attitudes, we chose a semi-structured expert interview approach. The interviews were carried out via telephone and the Voice over IP service and software application Skype, and were completed in a two-month period July-August 2012. They lasted between 30 minutes and an hour. The interviews were recorded, anonymised and transcribed, and finally analysed with Atlas.ti. Atlas.ti—a Computer-Assisted Qualitative Data Analysis Software (CAQDAS)—was used for both inductive and deductive category development, and for cross-references of joint opinions and topics in the analysis process.

Due to the small pool of digital journalists in Canada, and in order to guarantee an anonymous discussion of the results, we chose general descriptors that differentiate between print interviewees (Print 1-4) and broadcast interviewees (Broadcast 1-5). Any more detailed differentiation, for example between public and private broadcasters, could reveal too easily the interviewee's identity. Given that we could not find any striking differences in the opinions between those groups, our citation strategy can be regarded as sufficient.

Research Questions

Our study is a preliminary approach that aims to identify, through qualitative expert interviews, further avenues of research that integrate the meso/organisational level into research regarding social media and journalism. As often is the case in qualitative studies, our research questions were exploratory rather than following a concrete set of hypotheses. Since our main aim was to understand leading news makers' opinions and attitudes, the first research question was:

RQ1: What is the understanding of leading media/news strategists, managers, and journalists regarding the influence of social media?

The second research question integrates their view and understanding as organisational decision makers, in the light of establishing the necessary changes for their newsrooms and journalists working in them. It integrates thus the notion of participatory journalism, including their understanding of their profession.

RQ2: What are leading media/news strategists', managers', and journalists' professional constructs of journalists, and how has it changed, if at all?

As stated above, this study is a preliminary approach, exploring a so far under-researched area in

social media and journalism, and a rare subgroup population. Further work could integrate different methods, such as ethnographic studies, content analysis, and organisational communication and management studies. The results depicted here highlight initial directions for further research into professional attitudes and approaches towards the integration of social media in journalists' everyday practices.

Main Findings

The semi-structured interviews covered three main parts: (1) Online news media production, (2) social media, and (3) multimedia in online news media. The first two parts relate to new forms of journalism—such as participatory journalism—and related social media adoption. The third topic focuses on online news media production and envisaged trends in this area. In the course of the semi-structured interviews, the first two parts turned out to be pivotal in order to answer our research questions. The following discussion of the main results will therefore focus on the two main parts (online news media production and social media), while integrating the third part (multimedia in online news media) in some points as additional perspectives on the main findings.

Tradition Meets Immediacy and Interaction

The main theme that emerged from the interviews on attitudes towards changes in journalism can be summarised as *'Tradition meets immediacy and interaction'*. There was significant, albeit realistic, enthusiasm for new forms of journalism, such as participatory or citizen journalism. Nevertheless, some core aspects of traditional journalism and the definition of journalism emerged as central in the discourse. Overall, the interviewees adhered to the notion that established notions of what constitutes news remained unchanged. In the words of one of the journalists: "*I would argue actually that a journalist is a journalist and news is news and that the platform doesn't really matter to me*" (Broadcast 4).

Tradition
One of the broadcast interviewees provided a clear description of the traditional news coverage process:

"*Traditional media was a very controlled, fully integrated, news-gathering process where an editorial newsroom team would go out and get the news, shoot the news, file the news, come back, write the story or package the video and*

then distribute it of their own channels whether it was a broadcast channel or a print newspaper product and send it out to the world. And the whole process was their own; they controlled it all." (Broadcast 4)

He then explained how this traditional process has become "*disintegrated*" due to digital media, noting that "*the people who go out and get the news are not necessarily the same people who then package the news or the same people who distribute the news.*" He considered this as the "*biggest distinction or disruption*" in his own journalistic work. This actor-oriented view was also underscored by stating that: "*I think that the values and principles of journalism have not changed, that it's still the same. The difference is that the people, the actors involved in doing the journalism they have changed*" (Broadcast 4).

Another interviewee—from the print media—expressed a similar actor-oriented viewpoint that acknowledged the ability of the audience to take a more active role in the news. "*Journalism in its previous incarnation was left to professionals and I think Twitter, especially, has allowed way more participatory factor within journalism. Anybody can be a news gatherer and a content creator*" (Print 3). However, the interviewee went on to highlight the value of the journalist in an open media ecosystem, referencing the need to verify reports circulating on social media. "*That's where you need a professional journalist to apply the standards of journalism say. Is this correct? Is this accurate? Is it, you know, is there some context of this?*" (Print 3). In his view, Twitter was a "*great tool*" for information gathering, but "*it is not a definite tool,*" meaning that news circulating on Twitter still needed to be processed for veracity and copy-editing.

The emergence of social media as spaces for people to contribute, share and discuss the news where individuals can shape the flow of news among their social circles has influenced discussions of the construction of news (see for example Zeller et al., 2013). Another print interviewee compared social media with very early concepts and processes of news:

"*I've often thought about what news was in the very beginning of news even before the printing press. I think they feel what news was back in those days was things you heard from your friends and neighbours and people you ran into at the market and that sort of thing, kind of the whole backyard fence idea. And I view social media as a new version of that.*" (Print 4)

The comments reflect the challenge to the significant degree of control over the news exercised by journalists, as the profession developed as a distinct occupation over the past four hundred years. The shifting nature of the journalistic function of gatekeeping was explicitly acknowledged in a different comment from a broadcast interviewee: "*It's this idea of having moved from the traditional gatekeeper role to journalism towards more of a sort of a two-way relationship*" (Broadcast 1).

Academic discourses have addressed changes from the traditional two-step flow of mass media communication towards the new three-step flow approach (Jensen, 2009).What has changed in the self-understanding of journalists is—according to the interviewee—that a journalist is now an "*authenticator of content [rather] than somebody who has a monopoly on the information*" (Broadcast 1). The concept of 'content authenticator' derives from Kovach and Rosenstiel's 2010 book on the changing roles and relationships of journalists and news consumers (as was pointed out by the interviewee). It is a role for journalists in line with their societal role and relevance. The role of authenticator is based on the function of verification, a normative practice by which journalism has sought to differentiate itself from other forms of public communication.

Immediacy

Immediacy emerged as the key differentiator of online news production compared to traditional news production. Interviewees from both broadcast and print media often mentioned the accelerated pace and speed of news reporting as "*the key determining factor*" (Print 3). Moreover, the need for constant live news production was underscored. One broadcast journalist described the change that the news media have undergone this way: "*Let's say it's television, right? Used to be that the news was on at 12:00 noon or 6:00 at night or 10:00 at night on CBC. That's the way it used to be. But now we have something that's on live about 20 hours a day*" (Broadcast 2).

Print journalists, in particular, underscored differences between the immediate and rapid publishing of online news compared to print deadlines: "*I would say immediacy is the first thing. Obviously when you have news in the digital world, you don't want to hang onto it. You want to get it out there right away. You're not waiting for a print deadline or anything like that*" (Print 4). Another print interviewee referred to the life cycle of online stories and the need to be across developments over time: "*Obviously newspaper production is a 24 hour news cycle. By the time you get it published, the story has evolved probably with at least a dozen different*

angles so immediacy is a top priority for the web" (Print 3).

Regarding immediacy in connection with the aforementioned notion of the traditional gatekeeping, one print interviewee mentioned that "*There's no middle man in social media*" (Print 4), which certainly facilitates a more rapid reporting/news coverage (apart from the internet and the improved tools combined with increased broadband capabilities).

The notion of immediacy was also mentioned in connection to multimedia in online news production. Online news websites tend to integrate different modes of media such as text, images, audio, video, hyperlinks. The traditional bi-modal communication format that consisted of text and images has expanded to news coverage that integrates videos, audio, interactive graphics, and hyperlinks (Jacobson, 2012; Karlsson, 2012; O'Halloran and Smith, 2011). One broadcast interviewee framed video as a medium suited to immediacy. "*Video is channeled to be an immediate way of conveying a story [which is] live video*" (Broadcast 1). The interviewee, a digital media manager and platform developer, also highlighted the inherent affordances of social media tools for timely news reporting. "*Twitter is that it's essentially a real time medium and, what's great about it is that you can express yourself really quickly*" (Broadcast 1). However, the interviewee also added that being able to express oneself quickly had risks, and compared Twitter to live reporting on radio or television. The advice was "*to not say anything on Twitter that you would not be comfortable saying in front of an open microphone because essentially it's a live broadcast medium*" (Broadcast 1).

The notion of multimedia and its potential to create immediacy (through, for example, videos) also came up when talking about the changing image of news organisations. Journalists deemed the integration of multimedia content as influencing the public perception of a news organisation. One broadcast interviewee stated: "*I think that it [multimedia] might change the relationship. It might make us more immediate in the eyes of people*" (Broadcast 3). The same interviewee also framed interactivity as contributing to immediacy by reducing the gap between journalists and audiences. "*If we put our stuff out there in a digital format using multi-platforms to tell our stories, that has a potential I think of increasing the immediacy because all of a sudden people can get right back to us*" (Broadcast 3). Increased proximity and faster accessibility was also considered as a potentially negative development. Talking in general terms about how social media, one broadcast interviewee said: "*Social media has really changed the way journalists can reach out*

and actually get connected with. Sometimes they're a little bit taken aback by how quickly they can be talked about" (Broadcast 5).

The theme of immediacy also runs through the academic discourse on the changes in journalism (see for example Karlsson, 2011). However, there has been little research into the notion of viral news and memes that is often linked to immediacy in scientific studies (Brown, 2012; Leskovec et al., 2009; Shifman, 2013). Some of the interviewees did mention negative examples of social media, for example when a news item had been released too quickly, and where the verification process had failed. But these were rare examples. One reason for this could be that the interviewees represented major mainstream media outlets that seek to maintain a high quality of news, and also apply this to the usage of social media.

Interaction

The third main pillar of our study—interaction—is closely connected to the concept of participatory journalism. The following quote from a broadcast interviewee strikingly describes the connection between these two ideas:

> *"There is a misconception that vast numbers of people are going to be prepared at the drop of a hat to act like journalists when a news event happens. Really what participatory journalism is about is people offering their own thoughts and opinions and connecting around a story that they're either interested in or of which they have personal experiences. It's not about journalists going out or about citizens going out and doing the job of people who have had, you know, 20 years of training or anything like that. My approach to participatory journalism now is far more around how do we involve our users in our story telling?"* (Broadcast 1)

It is precisely the question as to how and to what extent users can and should be involved in the news making process. The same interviewee framed participation as a form of audience engagement: *"What we're talking about is how we connect with our audiences. I work on digital platforms because that's where my expertise happens to be but what I'm doing is I'm connecting with audiences through those technologies"* (Broadcast 1).

The evolving relationship between journalists and audiences has been described and analysed in a range of studies, starting with the notions of the internet as an interactive medium and how this enables more direct feedback and interaction between journalists and news consumers (Deuze, 2003; Sparks et al., 2006). Other studies, though, suggest that interaction operates within pre-existing normative practices (see, for example, Singer et al., 2011).

The overall tone of comments on interaction was very positive. The interviewees did not reveal any apprehension or perceived pressure as to having to use interactive features or to interact directly with users. On the contrary, most of them appeared to embrace this as a new opportunity: *"I love being able to spontaneously collaborate with people once you identify people who are out there at an event and are doing it on their own volition"* (Print 4). The idea of collaborating with audience members or 'people out there' seemed to be appealing as it was seen as a way to enrich a story. *"The advantage of doing it publicly too is sometimes you get other people chiming in that you never even realized could be involved in the idea and they come forward and it ends up being a fuller, more fleshed out thing than you originally thought,"* said one of the interviewees (Print 4).

In a similar positive tone, a TV interviewee described the intertwined process of news coverage and consumption:

> *"When you have people watching television news and they've got their tablets on their lap or their smartphones in their hands and they are in real-time having a conversation about the content they're seeing and then we're part of that conversation as well and the audience at home watching on TV is also part of that conversation, I think that's when you'll see really neat integration of it and more voices being heard."* (Broadcast 5)

The same interviewee acknowledged that this immediate feedback channel could be used to utter 'disagreement' with the coverage. But he seemed reconciled with the potential for negative feedback. *"That's totally cool, but at least that conversation is happening and people are exposed to that conversation and I think that will only help us get better and really provide even more value to the viewer both online, on their phone, or at home on the TV"* (Broadcast 5).

The idea of interaction as providing a feedback loop was seen as beneficial by interviewees. *"Now we're looking at what the behaviours of people online are doing with our content and that is helping to shape the content we're putting up again,"* said one of the TV interviewees (Broadcast 5). For another TV journalist interaction was seen as a way of improving the work of journalists: *"I don't look at it as, you know, what will we do that will change the*

audience. I think it's what will the audience do that will change us" (Broadcast 4).

A few more cautious remarks were uttered by one print media journalist, particularly regarding the danger of journalists' mixing their own role of neutrally reporting facts with the one of a private person's opinion. This journalist mentioned that social media might be seen as an invitation to do this: "*There are particular issues about people blending their, you know, if they have a Twitter account, blending their personal opinions with their journalism. That's a tricky balance to manage between being wisely and being overly opinionated*" (Print 2). He also mentioned the newly established job role of the community editor, "*whose job is only to monitor and also generate comment from our readers*" and attends all story meetings of the news outlet. The journalist mentioned that he personally also monitored social media constantly.

This points toward the dynamics of internal and external interactions: Internal in terms of new community editors interacting with journalists within the same news outlet, and external in terms of monitoring social media and getting in touch with other journalists and main content providers on social media. The perceived increased internal interaction and collaborative nature in the news room was also mentioned by a senior journalist who developed an online news community: "*And what we've noticed which is really lovely and I think is a different way for new generations of journalists to work is that they all help each other and it's not something that's altruistic. I think this is just a very different work environment*" (Print 1). This statement indicates how the dynamics of immediacy and live news content, in contrast to personnel and budget cuts, have not only changed the work environment, but also prompted more internal collaboration.

DISCUSSION

Our study contributes to the body of work on a profession negotiating the meaning and value of journalism at a time when the role is shared with the public (Bruns, 2012; Hermida, 2012; Robinson and DeShano, 2011; Tumber and Zelizer, 2009; Zelizer, 2007). The professional construct of the journalist is called into question when anyone can commit what could be described as journalism, yet it does not necessarily mean that journalists are obsolete. Rather, meaning and value of the profession is shifting as the occupational turf it has traditionally occupied is shared with others.

The journalists interviewed for this study demonstrated a tacit understanding of a shift away from the traditional role of gatekeeper, where the journalist made decisions about what information to make publicly available (Shoemaker and Vos, 2009; White, 1950). There was a broad acknowledgement that journalists are part of a larger ecosystem of news and information, sharing the media space with many others outside the profession. Journalism was discussed as less as a "*regime of control*" (Bruns, 2005, 11) and more of a collaborative enterprise, but within established profession limits. One way of sustaining and reinforcing the role of the journalist is through the practice of verification, described by Shapiro et al. as a "strategic ritual" (2013, 669). In their report for the Canadian Association of Journalists, Brethour et al. (2012) included verification as part of the criteria for an act to qualify as journalism. By positioning the journalist as authenticator, interviewees underlined the occupational boundaries of journalism and rearticulated their authority (Hermida, 2015; Lowrey, 2006; Robinson, 2007).

The question of immediacy is related to verification, as speed is often positioned as the enemy of accuracy (Gowing, 2009). However, concerns about the impact of immediacy on the quality of news reporting were largely absent from the discourse of the interviewees. Instead, immediacy was seen as the inevitable consequence of a 24/7 news cycle measured in instant tweets, with journalists having to adapt production cycles to match. Overall, immediacy was framed as a positive development that could enable journalists and newsrooms to be more responsive and relevant to audiences. Part of the reason for this may be due to the inclusion of interviewees from broadcast who may be more familiar with live reporting than print journalists. More importantly, though, immediacy was not seen as questioning the fundamentals of journalism, but rather as a changing how some practices were implemented, such as the greater use of video.

Similarly, the increased opportunities for interaction with audiences were not seen as an intrusion into the occupational turf but rather as operating alongside the mainstream media. Audience participation was framed as complementary, rather than competitive, to professionally produced content. The attitude of the interviewees could be due to the Canadian context of the study. Despite facing a similar decline in advertising and jobs losses as US media organisations, especially in print, (Freeman, 2013), the Canadian mainstream media still enjoys high levels of trust and audience reach.

All three main dimensions—economic pressure, technological progress, and audience behaviour—proved to be relevant perspectives or topics that came up in the interviews, with some exceptions

as to the first one. There were different results between the print and broadcasting media. Economic pressure was mentioned by all print interviewees, but not consistently by the interviewees from broadcast organisations. This might be due to the fact that our sample included a range of broadcast journalists and managers that worked for the public broadcaster, *CBC*, which is partially state-funded. However, our study took place before the severe budget cuts at the *CBC*, so future research could investigate how these cuts have affected not only work routines and organisational set-ups, but also organisational decision-making.

Another finding connected to the three dimensions is the need for a clearer understanding of the concept of the audience. First, not all news consumers are participant journalists. Likewise, interviewees noted that not all participant journalists undertake the role continuously. Rather they act as news contributors on an intermittent, irregular basis. At the same time, audience members that would not necessarily contribute content may also develop news preferences and consumption patterns that need to be taken into account by the media organisations. In addition to the normative role of verifying the news, news organisations also appear to face the responsibility and necessity to track and follow their audiences, potentially adapting news production processes to match audience's preferences, based on technological choices, and with the awareness of economic pressure in terms of guarding their readership and audience numbers.

To sum up, our findings suggest a profession that is cognisant of the pressures on the traditional professional construct of the journalist, at least among those who may be considered as leading the charge into digital. Rather than resist and adopt a fortress journalism mentality, our interviewees are seeking to adapt and benefit from a more open and participatory media environment. Our results may be indicative of the nature of our sample. In line with much online journalism research, we focused on professionals who are using emerging technologies and who may be far from typical (see, for example

Artwick, 2013; Hermida et al., 2014; Lasorsa, et al., 2011; Newman, 2009; Vis, 2013). Our findings are based on interviews with senior journalists and editors who have been at the forefront of digital developments at their respective media organisations. As such, they are not broadly representative of the attitudes of most journalists, either in Canada or elsewhere. Rather, they represent a select group at the vanguard of digital journalism within mainstream media in a Western liberal democratic system.

Further research could add to our understanding of the everyday use of social media in news routines. Our interviewees appeared to have difficulties outlining their actual ways of working with social media in detail. In order to gain more insights, further studies using a different method, such as autoethnography, could help shed light on this area. Given that this method makes considerable demands on participants, practical concerns as to finding a sufficient number of subjects are again at stake here.

More research is also needed to understand how far attitudes among different groups of journalists, from veterans to newcomers, are evolving, and how these are connected or represent the decisions made on the organisational level. This research, however, needs to be strongly correlated with a better understanding of the changing user behaviours, needs, and preferences. The question as to who follows whom—the audience following the media producer or vice versa—was addressed in some of the interviews. This calls for further studies that integrate approaches into audience studies. We can find a range of newly emerged audience forms, such as prosumers (Bruns, 2005), citizen journalists, but also more indiviualised forms of news consumption. Combined with the growing awareness of the potential of Big Data as a source for understanding user behaviour (see for example boyd and Crawford, 2012; Manovich, 2011; Zeller, 2014), there is potential for more research that apply mixed methods (such as Hermida and Thurman, 2008) in order to be able to investigate the ongoing evolving relationship between news organisations and their audiences.

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ABSTRACT | RÉSUMÉ | RESUMO

En. Journalists in Western liberal democracies face similar challenges in melding existing, hierarchical models of media production with emerging communications technologies where knowledge, expertise and authority are networked and distributed. This paper examines the attitudes and approaches of a select group of digital journalists in Canada to the impact of social media on journalism and professional constructs of the journalist. It is based on expert interviews with nine leading senior online news managers and journalists from Canada's principal news organisations, with a focus on the growing influence of social media, and the professionals' subjective, experience-based understandings of the current changes in journalism. The interviewees demonstrated a tacit understanding of a shift away from the traditional role of gatekeeper towards a shared ecosystem of news and information. While journalism was conceived as more of a collaborative enterprise, with interviewees seeking to adapt and benefit from a more participatory media environment, the journalists also expressed the occupational boundaries of the profession as a way of rearticulating their authority. While immediacy was mentioned as one of the main new factors in news media reporting, concerns about the impact of immediacy on the quality of news reporting were largely absent from the discourse of the interviewees. The increased velocity of information due to social media was thus framed as a positive development that could enable journalists and newsrooms to be more responsive and relevant to audiences. It was also seen as providing the increased opportunities for interaction with audiences. The study contributes to the body of work on how digital news leaders are negotiating the meaning and value of journalism. As such, our sample is not broadly representative of the attitudes of most journalists, either in Canada or elsewhere. Rather, it represents a select group at the vanguard of digital journalism within mainstream media in a Western liberal democratic system.

Keywords: Canada, digital journalism, expert interview, journalism practices, participatory journalism, social media.

Fr. Les journalistes dans les démocraties occidentales libérales font face à des défis similaires en mêlant des modèles hiérarchiques existants de production médiatique avec des technologies de communication émergentes où les connaissances, l'expertise et l'autorité sont distribuées et en réseau. Cet article examine les attitudes et les approches d'un groupe restreint de journalistes en ligne au Canada vis-à-vis de l'impact des médias sociaux sur le journalisme et des constructions professionnelles du journaliste. Il est basé sur des entretiens avec des experts, neuf cadres supérieurs et journalistes en ligne provenant des organismes de presse principaux du Canada, avec un accent sur l'influence croissante des réseaux sociaux, et sur les compréhensions subjectives et fondées sur l'expérience des changements actuels. Les personnes interrogées ont démontré une compréhension tacite d'un déplacement du rôle traditionnel de gardien (*gatekeeper*) vers un écosystème partagé de nouvelles et d'informations. Même si le journalisme est conçu davantage comme une entreprise collaborative, avec les individus interviewés cherchant à s'adapter et à bénéficier d'un environnement médiatique plus participatif, les journalistes ont également exprimé les limites pratiques de la profession comme un moyen de réarticuler leur autorité. Alors que l'immédiateté est mentionnée comme l'un des principaux nouveaux facteurs dans la production des nouvelles médiatiques, les préoccupations concernant l'impact de l'immédiateté sur la qualité des informations ont été largement absentes du discours des personnes interrogées. La vitesse accrue de l'information due aux réseaux sociaux est donc cadrée comme un développement positif qui pourrait permettre aux journalistes et aux rédactions d'être plus réactifs et pertinents pour les publics. Cet élément est également considéré comme offrant des possibilités accrues pour l'interaction avec les publics. L'étude contribue à l'ensemble des travaux sur la façon dont les dirigeants de l'information numériques sont en train de négocier le sens et la valeur du journalisme. En tant que tel, notre échantillon n'est pas représentatif des attitudes de la plupart des journalistes, que ce soit au Canada ou ailleurs.

Il représente plutôt un groupe restreint à l'avant-garde du journalisme numérique dans les médias grand public et dans un système démocratique libéral et occidental.

Mots-clés : Canada, journalisme digital, entretien avec expert, pratiques du journalisme, journalisme participatif, médias sociaux.

Pt. Os jornalistas nas democracias ocidentais liberais enfrentam desafios similares e que misturam os modelos hierárquicos de produção midiática já existentes com as tecnologias de comunicação emergentes em que os conhecimentos, a expertise e a autoridade são distribuídos em rede. Este artigo examina as atitudes e as abordagens de um grupo restrito de jornalistas online no Canadá face ao impacto das mídias sociais no jornalismo e nas construções profissionais do jornalista. Ele faz uso de entrevistas com especialistas. Foram entrevistados nove jornalistas e gestores superiores do meio online provenientes dos principais veículos da imprensa do Canadá. As entrevistas enfatizam a crescente influência das redes sociais e as compreensões, subjetivas e fundadas na experiência, sobre as mudanças atuais. Os entrevistados demonstraram uma compreensão tácita sobre o deslocamento do papel tradicional do *gatekeeper* rumo a um ecossistema partilhado de notícias e de informações. Embora o jornalismo seja concebido como um processo colaborativo – em que os entrevistados buscam se adaptar e se beneficiar de um ambiente midiático mais participativo – os jornalistas também exprimiram os limites práticos da profissão como uma forma de rearticular sua autoridade. Apesar do imediatismo ser mencionado como um dos princípios fatores da produção das notícias, as preocupações sobre o seu impacto na qualidade das informações estiveram ausentes no discursos dos entrevistados. A crescente velocidade da informação com o advento das mídias sociais é, dessa forma, enquadrada como um desenvolvimento positivo, o que permitiria aos jornalistas e às redações serem mais reativos e pertinentes em relação aos públicos. Também se considerou providencial as crescentes possibilidades de interação com os públicos. O estudo contribui para o conjunto de trabalhos sobre a forma como os dirigentes dos meios de produção de informação digital estão negociando o sentido e o valor do jornalismo. Enquanto amostragem, os nossos entrevistados não são representativos das atitudes da maioria dos jornalistas, seja no Canadá, seja em outros lugares. Ele diz respeito sobretudo a um grupo restrito da vanguarda do jornalismo digital nas meios de massa e em um sistema democrático liberal e ocidental.

Palavras-chave: Canadá, jornalismo digital, entrevista com especialistas, práticas do jornalismo, jornalismo participativo, mídia social.