UNIVERSITY OF THE WITWATERSRAND

Social Media and Investigative Journalism in South Africa: the extent to which investigative journalists in South Africa use social media to further their investigations, the impact and its pitfalls.

By:

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Declaration

I, Zeenat Abdool (0306677F), hereby declare that this research report is my own unaided work. It is submitted for the degree of Masters of Arts by Coursework and Research Report in the Department of Journalism at the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg.

It has not been submitted before for any other degree or examination at any other university.

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Abstract:

This research explores the level to which investigative journalists in South Africa use social media applications to further their investigations. As social media applications such as Facebook and Twitter are instant tools for news agencies and reporters, investigative journalists are also benefitting from the use of these tools. This paper will explore how these tools are used by investigative journalists in South Africa, for what purposes and explore the challenges that may arise. Emphasis is placed on Facebook and Twitter as the research found that these social media applications are the most commonly used applications by investigative journalists in South Africa. This research is located within two theories namely Jurgen Habermas's (1989) theory of the public sphere and John Arundel Barnes's (1954) social network theory. These theories explore how social media applications create networks that are beneficial for investigative journalists for a variety of reasons. The discussions that take place on social media applications contribute to the digital public sphere – a platform where people can come together to discuss issues of relevance to them. Investigative journalists form part of the digital public sphere and this adds value to investigations. This research further delves into the change of relationship investigative newsrooms have with their 'audience' because of social media applications. Social media applications, such as Twitter and Facebook, have led to consumers of news no longer being passive viewers or listeners of news, but rather having an opportunity to voice their opinions, provide feedback and share information that influences investigations. Both quantitative and qualitative research methods were used to ascertain which investigative journalists are using social media in their investigations followed by in- depth interviews across the country.

1. Introduction

1.1 Aim

This research aims to examine the extent to which investigative journalists in South Africa are using social media to further their investigations. The research will explore the impact that the use of social media is having on investigative journalism; its advantages and disadvantages as well as the ethical challenges that may arise therefrom. The research also aims to incorporate some of the limitations experienced by investigative journalists when using social media.

According to online journalism lecturer, Mindy McAdams (2012), social media can be defined as "digital systems that enable people, identified by profiles, to share information." McAdams (2012) unpacks this definition further by stating that the use of the word 'digital' is important as it indicates online technology. Also, the information shared through social media is two-way communication as compared to traditional media which is described as a one-way flow of information. She also adds that social media would not be social media without profiles. Profiles allow us to friend/unfriend, follow/unfollow and include or exclude people from conversations.

The Investigative Journalism Manual (2010) compiled by investigative journalists from Africa defines investigative journalism as, "an original, proactive process that digs deeply into an issue or topic of public interest, producing new information or putting known information together to produce new insights, multi-sourced, using more resources and demanding team-working and time, revealing secrets or uncovering issues surrounded by silence, looking beyond individuals at fault to the systems and processes that allow abuses to happen, bearing witness, and investigating ideas as well as facts and events, providing nuanced context and explaining not only what, but why, not always about bad news, and not necessarily requiring undercover techniques – though it often is, and sometimes does." (2010;4)

Investigative journalism is an intense process which requires time and digging to expose issues that are often hidden. It differs from general journalism as it is more specific and extends beyond the reporting of events, news and feature writing. Investigative journalism zooms in on specific issues or people and requires evidence or what investigative journalists term a 'paper trail' and often document analysis to prove wrong doings or expose activities perpetrated by people or systems.

Investigative journalism was chosen as the focal topic because of its difference from other forms of journalism. With general reporting and citizen journalism, social media applications are used as tools for information and to keep abreast of what is happening. Because investigative journalism differs by being heavily reliant on evidence or concrete proof, it is interesting to explore how social media can be of assistance to investigative journalists in South Africa by providing that evidence or sources needed for a successful investigation.

From international investigations, it is evident that social media applications are adding a different dimension to the process of investigations. This research aims to understand how social media applications are contributing to investigations in South Africa.

The University of the Witwatersrand latest '*State of the Newsroom'* report (2014) states that 100% of SANEF survey participants encouraged social media use. (2014, 49) It is interesting to research how this presence on social media platforms is beneficial to investigations and whether the presence of investigative journalists on these platforms is enhancing their investigations and how.

For the purpose of this research, below are the definitions of both Facebook and Twitter with an explanation on the functions of each.

What is Facebook?

Facebook is a popular, free, social networking website that allows registered users to create profiles, upload photos and videos, send messages and keep in touch with friends or contacts, family and colleagues. (http://whatis.techtarget.com/definition/Facebook)

Within each member's personal profile, there are several key networking functions. The most popular is called the Wall, which is a virtual bulletin board. Messages left on a member's Wall can be text, video or photos. Another popular component is the virtual Photo Album. Photos can be uploaded from the desktop or directly from a smartphone camera. There is no limitation on quantity, however Facebook staff will remove inappropriate or copyrighted images. An interactive album feature allows the member's contacts known as "friends" to comment on each other's photos and identify and tag people in the photos. Another popular profile component is "status updates", a microblogging feature that allows members to broadcast short announcements to their friends. All interactions are published in a news feed, which is distributed in real-time to the member's friends. Facebook also provides its users with a "Check in" feature from a smartphone. This allows users to post their location from where they are.

What is Twitter?

Twitter is a free, social networking micro blogging service that allows registered members to broadcast short posts in 140 characters or less. These short messages are called *tweets*. Twitter members can broadcast tweets and follow other users' tweets by using multiple platforms and devices.

The default settings for Twitter are public. Unlike Facebook or LinkedIn, where members need to approve social connections, anyone can follow anyone on public Twitter. To weave tweets into a conversation thread or connect them to a general topic, members can add hashtags to a keyword in their post. The hashtag, is expressed as #keyword. (http://whatis.techtarget.com/definition/Twitter)

1.2 Background

The Arab Spring was one of the first examples of how citizens were using social media to bring about change. In countries where press freedom is limited and restricted, journalists were following Facebook and Twitter to keep abreast of what was taking place and how the revolution was spreading. Journalists also used social media applications to generate leads and interview the key role players during the protests. Across the globe, social media applications are being used to gain information, keep abreast of news worthy stories and allowing journalists to punt their stories and promote their coverage for their news organisations. However, social media applications are also being used to further investigative journalism.

In South Africa, it is evident that most news agencies and their reporters now have a Twitter and/or Facebook presence. The University of Witwatersrand journalism department's State of the Newsroom report (2014) confirms this with the highest numbers of followers going to six of the big news agencies. These include ENCA, SABC, *The Mail&Gaurdian*, *City Press*, EWN and *Timeslive* (2014:43).

Furthermore, news agencies are incorporating the opinions of their followers in their news bulletins or stories. An example includes the national broadcaster, the SABC, which incorporates into their prime time news bulletin (SABC 3 at 6:30pm) the opinions of their Twitter followers on the top stories of the day. Reporters from various news agencies are also very active on social media networks when they are out covering their stories or breaking first hand news. One such example that drew attention worldwide was the Oscar Pistorius murder case. South African Afrikaans newspaper *Die Beeld* was the first to tweet the breaking news and EWN was the first to report on it.

Social media in relation to journalism and ethics of reporting was in the spotlight in 2014 in the lead up to and during the Oscar Pistorius trial. Journalists were granted permission by the court to report via the use of social media for the first time. This is a significant development as it means that social media cannot be ignored within the journalism profession and its value in journalism is being acknowledged outside of the profession. It has also opened the door for a change in the way news organisations now view and manage their audience.

It has also become common practice for both print and broadcast journalists to tweet when they are out on stories. This is evident from personal observation of both Twitter and Facebook and following news agencies and reporters on these platforms. The advantage of this practice is that the online community knows what stories to expect during the news bulletin or in the next day's newspapers. Twitter and Facebook have also been used for breaking news stories. Many reporters have tweeted or posted on Facebook their breaking news encouraging their listeners or viewers to tune in for more information in the news bulletin. On Twitter, Alex Eliseev of EWN broke an exclusive about Hilton Botha, the investigating officer in the Oscar Pistorius trial, being the subject himself of criminal charges and that he was accused of tampering with evidence. Eliseev then encouraged his online community to listen to the station for more information. This is an example of Twitter being

used to break news but also promote the radio station and draw listeners to the news bulletin.

Figure 1 - Alex Eliseev's tweet on Hilton Botha

From the above, we can gather that news agencies in SA are aware of the growth of social media and the interactivity it allows with their audience.

Whilst the incorporation of social media applications is changing the general newsroom, no research has been conducted into how social media applications are being incorporated into the investigative newsroom in South Africa. It is with this in mind, that the research was influenced and undertaken.

1.3 Rationale and International Examples

According to a study by the independent market research organisation, World Wide Worx, entitled, *South African Social Media Landscape 2014*, the use of social media applications in South Africa by various organisations and corporations is on the increase (2014, 2). Facebook, Twitter, Mxit and Whatsapp continue to dominate the social media scene as well as Instagram, the application that allows for the posting of photographs. With so many social media applications developing and with the increased usage, it could lead to an increase in access to information and other sources for journalists and specifically for investigative journalists.

Furthermore, investigative journalists can use social media to follow discussions and conversations and also pursue a lead or source. These conversations could also spark an investigation. Journalists and investigative journalists have an opportunity to establish profiles, contact sources directly, conduct background checks and explore and investigate people connected to the target of the investigation.

This study also aims to understand some of the advantages and disadvantages of social media. With the increase of social media applications, what are the advantages and some of the pitfalls? Furthermore, what are the ethical challenges brought about by the use of social media for investigative journalists? As investigative journalism is based on evidence, there is always the possibility that information is not authentic and information can be deleted or accounts deactivated.

Social media trainer Raymond Joseph says many journalists are very good at tweeting but not that good at Twitter itself (interview: 21 November 2014). He further adds that Twitter is a good social media platform for investigations. This can be done by following conversations and also monitoring organisations and individuals including politicians.

While social media opens the door to information, verification and accuracy of information is still pivotal. According to Izak Minnaar (interview: 27 January 2014), the head of Digital News at the SABC, South Africa's public broadcaster, there are many online tools that journalists can tap into to verify social media content and further their investigations. There are applications such as Foller.me and Topsy as well as many others that can assist investigative journalists in verifying content from Facebook, Twitter and other social media applications.

In order to effectively ascertain the extent to which investigative journalists use social media for investigative journalism, it was important to first establish which investigative journalists in South Africa are using social media applications. In follow-up interviews with those who are using social media for investigations, it would be possible to establish how it is being used and how it contributed to their investigations, as well as question any ethical concerns that may have arisen. It's important to factor in the role that social media plays in an investigation and whether or not traditional ways of investigating still apply.

This research was influenced by the way investigative journalists abroad have used social media to further their investigations. An example of the effective use of social media

internationally includes the UK newspaper, *The Guardian*, and their coverage of the UK riots of 2011 that began in one city but spread across the country. Paul Lewis, an investigative journalist with *The Guardian,* used Twitter to keep track of the riots. As they were moving swiftly, from one city to the next, Twitter enabled him and his team to be at those riots and report on the protests as they were unfolding. *The Guardian's* use of social media was effective in keeping abreast of the people involved. As a result, they put together profiles of the people involved, tracked what occurred in their court cases and also importantly, proved that the riots were linked to socio-economic issues and not criminality as the politicians were alleging. They were also able to divorce fact from fiction and rumours from truths. (http://www.theguardian.com/uk/series/reading-the-riots)
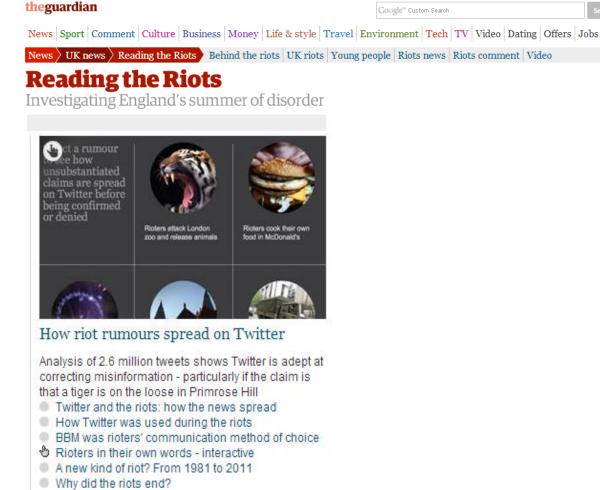

Figure 2 Snapshot of The Guardian's Reading the Riots webpage

Another example reflecting the growth of social media in investigative journalism is the *Reuters Investigates* exposé series (2013) on internationally adopted children being illegally rehomed in the United States. *Reuters* analysed 5,029 posts from a five-year period on one Internet message board, a Yahoo group. *Reuters* found that on average, a child was advertised for re-homing there once a week. Most of the children ranged in age from 6 to 14 years and had been adopted from abroad – from countries such as Russia and China, Ethiopia and Ukraine. The youngest was 10 months old. *Reuters* also found that there were also Facebook groups advertising unwanted children that were available for illegal

rehoming. Once the children were advertised as available for adoption and there were people keen to take them, the children were rehomed without the involvement of a lawyer or a social welfare worker. An unverified non-legal document is signed by both parties to say the child has been rehomed. No background checks were conducted on the people showing interest or taking the unwanted children. In one investigation the man that 'adopted' the unwanted child had a paedophile record. Another couple frequently present on the group and adopting the unwanted children had a history of neglecting and abusing their biological children who were taken away by child welfare. This investigation led to Yahoo shutting the group down for being in contravention of their policies. According to the report, the Facebook page remains active.
(http://www.reuters.com/investigates/adoption/#article/part1)

The rise of new media has also influenced media critics and commentators such as Jay Rosen to revisit the definition of the term 'audience'. In his PressThink blog, Rosen (2006), states that the definition of audience, prior to the advent of social media and the definition of 'audience' in current times, has changed due to the interaction that news agencies have with their audience because of social media applications. He says: "The people formerly known as the audience are those who *were* on the receiving end of a media system that ran one way, in a broadcasting pattern, with high entry fees and a few firms competing to speak very loudly while the rest of the population listened in isolation from one another— and who *today* are not in a situation like that *at all*." (Rosen: 2006)

The media, prior to social media, was owned by an elite few, who were able to control what information was broadcasted and decided how it would be disseminated to the audience. The audience were forced to passively listen to a particular view. With the rise of social media applications, the audience now have a platform to directly engage news agencies on the issues being broadcast or published and the way in which the information is being disseminated. Online users have an opportunity to provide alternative views, share the views of the newscaster by retweeting on Twitter or sharing with their contacts on Facebook.

The audience engagement could lead to changes in the way a newsroom operates and rethink the issues they are covering and the way they broadcast information taking into account their online community's alternative thinking or views. This relates to investigative journalism as well, as investigative journalists are able to use this "audience" for different purposes such as crowdsourcing for information, finding sources, and collaborating with other journalists on global issues.

2. Theoretical Framework and Literature Review

2.1 Theories relating to social media and investigative journalism

As social media applications are being integrated into how journalists gather news and report on it, investigative journalists are also using social media applications such as Facebook and Twitter to find sources, crowdsource for information as well as collaborate with other journalists on cross-border or transnational investigations. This has led to much discussion over the theories relevant to the field of social media use and investigative journalism. One of the main theories that applies to this particular topic includes Jurgen Habermas (1989) and his theory on the public sphere. Another theory relevant to this discussion would include social network theory by John Arundel Barnes (1954) and expanded by Charles Kadushin (2012) in his book *Understanding Social Networks*. This section will first focus on social network theory followed by Habermas's (1989) theory on the public sphere.

Kadushin (2012) defines a network as "a set of relationships. More formally, a network contains a set of objects (in mathematical terms, nodes) and a mapping or description of relations between the objects or nodes."

Networks are more than connections with people, but rather centred on building relationships. As networks increase, so does the opportunity to create relationships. Facebook is an example of a network. As a registered user, a person may begin with one connection, usually someone familiar to the user. Facebook then provides you with access to the second person's connections and the first person can connect with more people. As access is permitted to each connection's "friends", the network grows. The study of how networks operate is known as network theory.

Amanda Gearing (2014) describes network theory as "the study of nodes in networks and the connections between them." She further explains the difference between centralised networks and decentralized networks and the effect they have on investigative journalism. A centralised network has a main connection, which is at the centre of the network. Each connection is attached to the centre connection but disconnected from other people in the network. The tie to the person at the centre of the network is strong, and there is no tie to anyone else. If the centre collapses, the entire network collapses. Decentralized networks are open and involve people being connected to each other with no dependence on a main connection. Facebook is an example of a decentralized network where people are connected to each other through other people. However, should the 'mutual 'connection deactivate his or her profile, the connection between the other two still remains. The ties to the connections may be weak, however, it is available at all times.

Gearing (2014) says that the centralised network doesn't work well for investigative journalists as it is dependent on the centre connection remaining present. She adds that decentralized networks provide better opportunities to enhance investigative journalism. Gearing (2014) is one of the only media experts who has located network theory within the field of investigative journalism.

Gearing (2014) says that network theory applies to investigative journalism as "the rise of a network society and the media's changed role may hold the potential to empower investigative journalists." As journalists become more networked, connections on social

media applications provide them with more opportunities to engage with their audience but also to further their investigations. This is especially true for cross-border or transnational investigations. If journalists realise the potential of an online presence and make use of it by forming networks and relationships it would enhance their database as well as allow for more collaboration in investigations. Gearing (2014) believes that decentralised networks work better in investigative journalism because those that choose to remain within the network may still have communication with other nodes in the network. Unlike in a centralised network, if the person or node at the centre moves out of the network, the entire network collapses. It is also important to keep in mind that audience members are using social media platforms to spread news and join in news conversations. With the addition of the audience, the network has grown. For investigative journalists, this is important, because as the network grows, there could be more issues investigated, more sources found and more access to information. There is the opportunity to locate investigations from a global perspective where investigative issues are not seen in isolation, or isolated to a particular area, province or country.

The relevance of network theory in media has led to the emergence of the term "social network theory." The term social network is defined by David Knoke (2011) as " a social structure made up of individuals (or organizations) called "nodes", which are tied (connected) by one or more specific types of interdependency, such as friendship, kinship, common interest, financial exchange, dislike, sexual relationships, or relationships of beliefs, knowledge or prestige." Relationships and ties that people have with others on social media applications are regarded as a network being formed. These networks are beneficial to investigative journalists as they can communicate with other investigative journalists. Social media networks such as Facebook and Twitter enhance an investigative journalist's opportunities to access to people and information. Having access to people's profiles provides personal information needed in an investigation. Furthermore an investigative journalist is able to find sources on social media applications and investigate the sources network and who they have as social contacts.

According to Margo Anderson (2009) the phrase "social network" has been in existence for more than a century as used to describe sets of relationships between members of social systems. She adds that scholars began using it to study and explain patterns of ties that cut across categories in the 1950s. Anderson says there are many ways to study social networks. "Today online, open networks (such as Facebook) offering many weak ties are more likely to introduce new ideas and opportunities to members than closed networks with strong connections among members. While there are many applications for social network research offline, the opportunities for a more controlled look at such connections are booming online. Social network analysis is becoming precise thanks to approaches and software developed to study online communities and relationships." (2009:7)

Social media applications and the networks that are created by users can provide opportunities to investigative journalists by providing access to further information and sources. However, it also provides a different flow of information to the audience as prior to the advent of social media applications the flow of information was 'top-down' from news organization to citizen, however, with social media applications the flow of information is also horizontal from citizen to citizen (Rosen, 2006). This is true as social networking has allowed for news organisations and investigative journalists to speak with an audience rather than to their audience as was done previously.

Jurgen Habermas (1989) and his theory on the public sphere is also relevant to this discussion on the use of social media in investigative journalism. The public sphere is "made up of private people gathered together as a public and articulating the needs of society with the state" (1989:176). Through acts of meeting and communicating, the public sphere generates opinions and attitudes which serve to affirm or challenge issues affecting them. The public sphere is a source of public opinion on matters pertaining to the state and it's meant to add value to a democracy. It was mainly people belonging to the bourgeoisie that would gather at coffee-houses that would discuss matters of interest about the state. Fuchs (2013) identifies the key characteristics that relate to the theory of the public sphere:

• Formation of public opinion.

• All citizens have access.

• Conference in unrestricted fashion (freedom of assembly, freedom of association, freedom to expression and publication of opinions) about matters of general interest.

• Debate over the general rules governing relations

According to Hugo de Burgh (2008), "the key characteristic of Habermas's concept of the public sphere is guaranteed access." During the 17th and 18th centuries it was mainly the bourgeoisie that had access to these discussions. However, de Burgh (2009) argues that the rise of the internet, though not freely accessible as many do not have access, does provide a platform and "a forum within which there is equality and freedom. On accessing the internet, there are no restrictions on what can be discussed or who can take part in those discussions, and to a large extent it operates without being controlled by either politics or the market."

This is an important aspect of the public sphere theory relevant to social media applications. As investigative journalists use social media applications to crowdsource for information, they are requesting information from a diverse community of people who can join the discussion or form part of the investigation through volunteering. Furthermore, anyone who has access to the network, can contribute to the discussion or promote an investigation. De Burgh (2008) elaborates by adding "as a forum for the free exchange of information and knowledge, the internet appears to satisfy the basic criteria of a public sphere open to all citizens." In interview, Alex Eliseev from EWN says he often receives tweets from a variety of people including taxi drivers. With the rise of social media applications, more people are able to join the debates on these public platforms.

The advent of social media applications such as Twitter and Facebook has led to the rise of alternative public spheres and the digital public sphere. The 'digital public sphere' gives rise to new discussions and an array of viewpoints as networks grow. Media analyst, Jonathan Stray (2011) breaks down the term digital public sphere adding that "public sphere captures something important, something about the societal goals of the system, and 'digital' is a modifier that means we have to account for interactivity, networks, and computation." (2011: http://jonathanstray.com/what-should-the-digital-public-sphere-do)

Stray (2011) adds that there are three advantages of the digital public sphere. It provides us with information, empathy and collective action. He says that the digital public sphere now provides more information and a platform for information to reach people. On the advantage of empathy, Stray adds that "there are some people we will only know through

the media" and people need to be consciously aware of other people and their plight. He further adds that public debates should lead to collective action or decision-making.

Stray's (2011) comments provide valuable insight into the work of investigative journalists. Investigative journalists have access to information through the use of social media applications but also create more and new information for other people to find. In human interest investigations, this is valuable as people can educate themselves on issues such as human trafficking, drug abuse, illegal rehoming and other issues. When investigations have a human interest angle, it can create empathy and in some cases lead to national and global campaigns. This concurs with Stray's (2011) point on collective action.

De Burgh (2009) concludes his views on investigative journalism and new media by adding that the "future of investigative journalism looks brighter because of technological advances."

Social media analyst, Christian Fuchs (2013) specifically researched Twitter as a new public sphere. Fuchs (2013) says that "the rise of blogs (e.g. Wordpress, Blogspot, Tumblr), social networking sites (e.g. Facebook, LinkedIn, Diaspora*, VK), microblogs (e.g. Twitter, Weibo), wikis (e.g. Wikipedia) and content sharing sites (e.g. YouTube, Flickr, Instagram) has resulted in public discussions on the implications of these media for the political realm." This links with Habermas's (1989) theory on public sphere as social media applications give rise to public discussions that can have an impact on the politics of a country. However, Fuchs acknowledges that not every person on Twitter enters discussions on political matters and democracy.

Fuchs (2013) quotes Clay Shirky who argued in 2008 that "the political use of social media ultimately enhances freedom. Social tools create what economists would call a positive supply-side shock to the amount of freedom in the world. To speak online is to publish, and to publish online is to connect with others. With the arrival of globally accessible publishing, freedom of speech is now freedom of the press, and freedom of the press is freedom of assembly." On social media application platforms, users have the choice to connect with whomever they choose regardless of political or economic affiliation. Citizens have the ability to publish and to exercise their right of freedom of speech. Twitter is a powerful tool in investigative journalism as journalists have used it as a crowdsourcing tool for information, to locate sources and to promote their investigations.

Fuchs (2013) further elaborates that the use of social media by ordinary citizens relates to the concept of the digital public sphere as it does lead to the generation of public opinion on matters of general interest. It is also important to highlight that many more have access to issues of general interest as well as to publish their opinion. Twitter in particular promotes freedom of assembly (anyone can follow and be followed) as well as freedom of expression. The critical aspect is the fact that not all citizens have access to social media applications and the public sphere platform that it represents. This is due to what is called the digital divide.

It is evident that social media is reforming and transforming the theories associated and linked to journalism and investigative journalism. The public platform that social media applications provide is also creating further networks and this is becoming increasingly useful to investigative journalists. The use of social media applications is giving rise to the term 'networked journalist'.

It is important to acknowledge that the rise of the digital public sphere is advantageous to investigative journalists as it creates another platform to engage with the audience, gain access to sources that have social media accounts as well as to follow discussions and events that could lead to investigative stories or ideas for investigations. However, it must be acknowledged that participation within the digital public sphere is dependent upon those that have access to the internet, mobile technology and social media applications.

Investigative journalists can only encourage participation with those citizens, politicians and sources that firstly have social media accounts and secondly are active on these accounts. It must also be noted that partial efficacy of social media applications for investigative purposes is reliant on ordinary citizens following journalists and news agencies from their accounts and vice versa. Whilst Facebook allows its users to send private messages to people that are not necessarily friends, Twitter is dependent on both parties following each other in order to view tweets and to send private messages. The wider the following and interaction between both the journalist/news agency and the audience, the further the number of opportunities exist for investigative journalists to crowdsource for information, search for sources and engage in discussion with pertinent people relevant to investigations domestically and across borders.

Fuchs (2013) emphasises that Habermas's (1989) public sphere theory also raises issues about capital and power. Fuchs (2013) further draws emphasis between social media and these two factors of the public sphere. Fuchs (2013) explains that "Twitter advances a class-structured attention economy that privileges economically powerful actors over everyday users. If you are a large company with a huge advertising budget, then it is easy for you to buy attention on Twitter. If you are an everyday user without an advertising budget and without much time, you will, in contrast, have a much harder time promoting your tweets and your accounts as trend on Twitter." (2013; 198)

The above highlights that social media applications, specifically Twitter in this example, are not as unbiased as they are perceived to be. Preference is still given to advertising and large corporations. Searching for information on Twitter, for investigative journalists, would require much time as the journalist would have to search beyond the promoted tweets.

Fuchs (2013) questions whether Twitter is indeed a public sphere as he says the powerful are more visible on Twitter rather than everyday ordinary citizens. He adds that from his analysis "Twitter's political economy shows that Twitter's stratified economy is detrimental to the character of a public sphere. On Twitter, the powerful (especially entertainers and celebrities) enjoy an oligopoly of the publically effective and politically relevant formation of assemblies and associations. There is a limitation of freedom of association and assembly." This is in contrast to some of Habermas's (1989) key characteristics of the public sphere. Acknowledging that these factors exist, can contribute to investigative journalism, as journalists would have to regard social media applications as an information portal and search for information beyond the capital and power bias.

2.2 Literature Review

"Social media is largely defined as a group of internet-based applications built on the web, allowing the creation and exchange of content. The internet has not replaced getting out, gathering information and documents, and talking face-to-face to people during research, but in a time of information overload, the internet has made readers and viewers a part of the news gathering process"(Nazakat, 2012).

Social media applications are web based applications that allow people that have access to create online profiles to share and receive content and information. Some of the most common examples of social media applications include Facebook, Twitter, Foursquare and Instagram.

It is evident that social media applications, specifically Facebook and Twitter, are changing the newsgathering culture in South African newsrooms. According to research conducted by journalism lecturer, Marenet Jordaan (2012), social media is being used at both *Rapport* and the *Mail & Guardian* newspapers to search for stories and incorporate opinions in articles. Some journalists are also using social media applications for crowdsourcing for information. (2012:112). There is a minority among the journalists she interviewed regarding social media applications in the newsgathering process. The use of social media applications are encouraged but not forced upon by news editors at the respective publications. Jordaan (2012) further expands on this by stating that news editors themselves are on social media and keep abreast of events and news occurring outside of the newsroom. (Jordaan: 2012: 112)

However, the rise of social media applications has also raised questions about its integration into journalism and further into investigative journalism. Nazakat (2012) asks how social media applications can be integrated into investigative reporting and whether investigative journalists harness its full impact. This chapter focuses on the research and reports by investigative journalists and media analysts about the uses of social media applications in investigative journalism as well as the discussions around ethical concerns that the use of social media applications creates in investigative journalism.

"In a society that is more connected than ever, investigative journalists that were once shrouded in mystery are now taking advantage of their online community relationships to help scour documents and uncover potential wrongs. The tools and information now available to journalists are making the jobs of investigative outlets more efficient. The socialization of the web is revolutionizing the traditional story format." This is the view of Vadim Lavrusik, a digital social analyst published in his November, 24, 2010 blog post entitled: *How Investigative Journalism is Prospering in the Age of Social Media* (http://on.mash.to/1CguFdm).

In this blog post, Lavrusik (2010) identifies social media applications, particularly Facebook and Twitter as investigative tools that are enabling investigative reporters to conduct their investigations more effectively. He adds that this is done by investigative reporters forming online relationships also known as "communities" and encouraging the online community to assist in their investigations. Furthermore, the traditional ways of conducting an investigation are being enhanced as more investigative journalists begin to take advantage of the functions available on social media applications.

Lavrusik (2010) says that "investigative reporters are now capturing content shared in the social space to enrich their stories, enabling tomorrow's reporters to create contextualized social story streams that reference not only interviewed sources, but embedded tweets, Facebook postings and more. Journalists are also leveraging the vast reach of social networks in unprecedented ways. In many respects, social media is enabling watchdog journalism to prosper." Social media applications are providing investigative journalists with an added platform to search for evidence and documents which enable them to gain more content to add further value and credibility to their investigations. Lavrusik (2010) is of the opinion that the use of social media applications in investigative journalism is allowing investigative journalism to develop and assist journalists in being better positioned to expose wrongdoings in society.

Investigative journalists are also able to follow conversations taking place on these applications which could lead to further investigations. He adds that investigative journalists can add tweets and Facebook posts in their stories thus creating an online reference point for future investigations. Lavrusik (2010) identifies how social media applications can better enable investigative journalists to conduct their investigations. He cites distributive reporting and the recruiting of volunteers through social media as some of the methods to assist investigative journalists.

Journalism professor, Jay Rosen (2010) concurs on the opportunities that distributive reporting and recruitment of volunteers poses adding that "On the social web, investigative journalists are tapping citizens to take part in the process by scouring documents and doing shoe-leather reporting in the community. This is advantageous because readers often know more than journalists do about a given subject." The advantage of journalists using social media applications in their investigations is the fact that it leads to more content and the "audience" interacting with the journalist. This could lead to a different angle on an investigation as well as information from experts being more easily accessible.

Rosen's (2010) work on the changes social media applications are posing to news networks and their audiences have been repeatedly mentioned by investigative journalists such as Paul Bradshaw and Paul Lewis of *The Guardian* in the UK. Prior to the advent of social media applications the audience of a news network was a community the news network spoke to and not with. Social media applications now allow the "audience" to speak directly to the news agency and comment and add value to particular stories. On an investigative note, Rosen says that the "audience" and online community are now forming part of investigations. An investigative journalist can upload documents on their Facebook and Twitter applications and ask their online communities to assist them in looking for particular information.

An example of this was carried out by *The Guardian* in the UK. *The Guardian* asked its community to help dig through 458,832 expense documents of Members of Parliament (MP's). *The Guardian* rewarded community participants by creating a leader board based on the quantity and quality of their contributions and also highlighting some of the great finds by its members. (2010, http://www.theguardian.com/politics/mps-expenses) . In another example cited by Lavrusik (2010), Twitter and Facebook was used by investigative journalist Wendy Norris to recruit 17 volunteers in Colorado to help her investigate whether locking up condoms and keeping them stored in pharmacy shelves in Colorado was depressing purchases, especially those by younger people, who might be too embarrassed to ask a clerk

for help. Norris's example highlights how posting the right information on social media applications can assist an investigative journalist in an investigation. She adds that an investigative journalist needs to be specific about the kind of information they are looking for and the information they want the volunteers to assist in investigating.

Rosen adds that Norris's investigation was a success because of the online relationships that she had cultivated. He further adds that "there's a big difference between an audience and a community. Norris probably wouldn't have been able to convince a detached 'audience' to go out and do some reporting, but because she had built a community, she was able to get them on board. It's not just about the tools journalists use, but the community they have already established and whether that community is a genuine one or just a crowd. Is the relationship you have with the community strong enough that community members are willing to participate with information, advice, feedback?" (2010, http://on.mash.to/1CguFdm)

Another advantage of social media applications for investigative journalists highlighted in Lavrusik's (2010) post, is its ability to allow for community-source mapping. Community source mapping involves users to use Google Maps to plot a particular issue to a particular location.

Lavrusik (2010) uses the example of a newsroom in South Carolina which noticed a stench emanating in the area. They asked their readers from Facebook and Twitter to identify where the stench was coming from. The features editor created a Google Map where users could pinpoint where they felt the stench was most prominent. It transpired that the stench was coming from land owned by a former local councilman and health officials were able to investigate the next day. It's unclear what the stench was. This example further illustrates the advantage of social media applications providing newsrooms and in particular investigative newsrooms with an opportunity to interact with their audience in a different manner and getting their community involved in matters involving them.

Social media applications provide investigative journalists with opportunities to bring their online communities on board in investigations, thus also creating better relationships and receiving information in an inexpensive manner. The added value of social media applications to investigative journalists is the ability to find and receive information in an inexpensive way. Rosen suggests that with the traditional ways of investigating, investigative journalists may have to tap into budgets and resources to find information, with social media applications, the information is at an investigative journalists fingertips and the online community have a different means of providing a lead or a "tip-off".

Lavrusik (2010) emphasises the relationship investigative journalists have with their online community and adds credence to the term "networked newsroom". Social media applications create a networked newsroom where the journalists are aware of events occurring outside of the newsroom without stepping outside and the community has easy access to the newsroom. Lavrusik (2010) comments on the value of the social media applications in creating a networked newsroom by saying "What if newsrooms were open to the public, where sources could drop in to give tips to reporters who are digging for a story? Social media opens it up virtually, and by building a networked community of sources on the social web, investigative journalists can get story leads they otherwise wouldn't have, and are able to report stories more quickly." (2010, http://on.mash.to/1CguFdm)

Robert Hernandez (2010), an assistant professor at the USC Annenberg School of Journalism, agrees with Rosen and Luvrisik (2010) on the importance of cultivating online relationships by adding that "if journalists connect with their communities through the social web and encourage and engage in a dialogue, they'll be more likely to get tips for stories that are worth investigating. But it's all about the relationship. Social media has amplified our reach and network to increase the size of the crowd. Investigative reporters need to be committed to social media to build that brand, so that one day, the investment pays off."

However, Rosen (2010) identifies a challenge between investigative journalists and their online community. He suggests that the relationship between the journalist and the online community through social media applications is determined by how willing and open the journalist is toward building and enriching their presence online. He suggests that "most investigative reporters are freaked out about sharing publicly what they are working on. They are convinced that the guy from the street will steal their story. But if you can't tell people what you are working on, you cannot do any distributed reporting." (Rosen:2010)

While Lavrusik, Rosen, Bradshaw and many other journalists agree that social media applications has the ability to add value to investigative journalism, but they also warn against using social media applications for all investigations or any investigation. Bradshaw advises journalists saying "If you're dealing with sensitive material or sources you want to protect, then you might want to deal with it offline. But if you're doing a public investigation, the social web's network effect can give you a boost" (2010). This also forms part of the ethics and good practices implemented by investigative journalists. Certain information should not be published online, including certain documents as this could compromise the investigation and its credibility.

Another concern expressed by Paul Bradshaw from *The Guardian* is the use of social media applications by investigative journalists for "the sake of using it." Bradshaw discourages investigative journalists using social media applications for not pursuing their investigative goals. Bradshaw elaborates: "Don't use social media for the sake of it, it should be appropriate to the people involved and the objectives you're pursuing." Bradshaw emphasises that creating an online community takes time and effort and is necessary, but not all investigations can use the help of social media applications, there are aspects in an investigation that could be better dealt with offline. To keep your network engaged, relevant information needs to be posted, else one might lose members in the network.

Lavrusik (2010) elaborates that the rise of social media has led to newsrooms having to revisit, rethink and re-strategize how news is listened to, viewed and absorbed. With the increase of social media, more consumers of news have a platform to make the news, by being citizen journalists, publicising their opinions and thoughts and also engaging with newsmakers and news organisations. However, it also means that investigative journalists and newsrooms should have more access to people and information. Lavrusik (2010) concludes this particular blog post by adding that investigative journalists have many tools available on social media applications and networks to assist them in their investigations and increase their opportunities for further investigations. Furthermore, social media applications such as Facebook, Twitter, Foursquare and others can increase an investigative journalist's access to sources and information keeping in mind that social media applications need to be used wisely.

Lavrusik (2010) identified social media applications being useful to investigative journalists through distributed reporting and essential in creating an integrated and networked newsroom which further enhances investigative research and reporting.

Australian journalist Amanda Gearing (2014) believes that social media applications and web-based communications are useful for investigative journalists for collaboration on transnational investigations and to reach wider audiences. In her article entitled: *Investigative Journalism in a socially networked world* (2014), Gearing says that "a better understanding of the potential of social media and web-based communications for undertaking journalistic investigations can lead to the adoption of a global perspective, enriching local, regional and national stories." In other words, using social media applications and other communication applications can provide more depth to investigations and contextualise issues from a broader perspective. Gearing (2014) quotes the Centre for Investigative Reporting director, Robert Rosenthal, describing successful investigative journalism in the digital age as "journalism that captures several audiences by publishing across several platforms." Gearing (2014) elaborates that the different audiences is akin to "spokes in a wheel that represent a different audience, thus leading to increased audience coverage. Social media applications allow investigative journalists to reach varied audiences traditionally through television, newspapers and radio as well as digitally through social media applications and the Internet."

One of Gearing's (2014) essential arguments in favour of the use of social media applications for investigations is that investigative journalists belong to a networked society. Social media applications have led to people across borders being connected and hence being provided with an opportunity to research and investigate global investigative issues. Gearing (2014) states that " investigative journalists who bring their analogue reporting skills into the digital space may be able to find, or be found by, global stories, possibly by using social media platforms, by collaborating with other reporters or arranging media outlet collaborations either domestically or internationally." Social media applications are able to lead to collaboration between reporters domestically or across borders that may lead to reporters working together or sharing contacts and this could be powerful in holding people to account. It would be fair to say that through collaboration within the social media application space, journalists will be made more aware that investigations don't exist in isolation. An issue affecting one area is likely to be present in other areas or even other countries. Collaboration allows for investigative journalists to contextualise the issue within a broader sphere and this might also provide links to the common people involved. Gearing (2014) admits that whilst the general newsroom is incorporating Twitter and Facebook comments in their stories, "there is a scarcity of research into how the social media and web-based communication tools can be used to find investigative stories and to place them into the public sphere." Research into emerging technologies, Gearing adds, would provide journalists with an avenue to pursue global investigative stories or controversial issues.

One of the advantages of investigative journalists having a social media presence and on the general web includes them being more easily contactable. Gearing (2014) says that "journalists who have websites, social platform pages and blogs etc, have access not only to their personal contacts but are also contactable by contacts of contacts, interest groups and other potential news sources." This leads to better opportunities of finding investigative topics to pursue or finding sources and information.

Drawing from her own experience, Gearing (2014) used social media applications and web-based technologies to produce the first ever collaboration and transnational investigation between *The Times* in London and *The Australian*. The investigation involved a victim of sexual abuse by a pastor who had worked in churches in both England and Australia. As Gearing came into contact with the victim, she used online technologies to try and locate other articles and court cases about the pastor. She also tried to find other victims that may have been abused by the same person. The first victim was from England and the second was in Australia. Gearing contacted *The Times* and the two publications produced and published an exclusive investigation traditionally through the newspaper as well as on their online and social media platforms. Gearing (2014) says that the simultaneous publication, despite the time difference, also led to follow up stories, where another victim came forward in Britain and another in Australia. (http://bit.ly/1z9msoc)

Gearing (2014) says this example illustrates how effective collaboration between investigative journalists on various platforms can produce cross-border investigations. The effect of this particular investigation was extended coverage by radio and television news in Britain and Australia as well as robust discussion on the victimisation of children by sexually abusive clerics. Gearing (2014) concludes saying that "it seems possible that online networks could offer new ways of working for investigative journalists in the network society, to expand on the both the range and depth of the stories they cover. The use of these network connections can provide synergies that facilitate the coverage of global stories, including stories of a sensitive or controversial nature. Investigative journalists who link with online networks have the potential to expand the range of voices that can be heard and the types of stories that can be told as they call the powerful to account and give voice to the voiceless."

Gearing (2014) acknowledges that investigative reporting can be expensive. She further adds that one of the advantages of collaboration between reporters through social media applications is that journalists from different states, countries and continents are beginning to see the advantage of sharing contacts and story leads, thus saving them money in travelling. Furthermore, collaboration may enable more complex stories to be researched and published at a far lesser cost that prior to the use of social media applications.

Gearing (2014) comments that "collaboration between media outlets is beginning to emerge as a way for different media, for example newspapers and television, to share the cost and effort of investigations, to maximise their audience and enhance the political impact of the story. Stories which are then shared by engaged traditional media audiences sharing them with their social media networks can then yield breaking news stories that are then covered in the mainstream media." Traditional media partnered with social media applications can broaden the scope of an investigation, save costs and lead to increased coverage on different platforms.

Another example of how investigative journalism is thriving with the platforms provided through social media is highlighted in the book *The Social Media (R)evolution: Asian Perspectives on New Media* (2012). This book explores how investigative journalists in Asia are using social media to further their investigations despite having web restrictions in their various countries. The book further mentions how investigative journalists across the globe can use social media for investigations and retain confidentiality and discretion. It spells out why people are using social media and how it relates to news: "People use social media not

just to connect with friends, but as a source of news, information and entertainment, while broadcasting outlets and companies use social media to connect with their audience, push out content, and promote their brands across this new medium." (2012:5)

Syed Nazakat (2012), one of the contributors to the book explains why social networking via social media has become so effective in investigative journalism. He says "social networking sites like Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn, are fundamentally changing the way we discover relevant information, and have led us to discover the power of what is called "crowdsourcing". "Crowdsourcing" is a technique increasingly used by journalists to obtain information. The idea behind "crowdsourcing" journalism is that users can cooperate to generate information and find answers, which they could not find on their own. Crowdsourcing occurs when a journalist posts a question needing information regarding an investigation and asks their online community to get in touch with them should they be able to assist or provide any relevant information.

Nazakat (2012) cites two examples of crowdsourcing through Twitter by Paul Lewis from *The Guardian* newspaper. In one investigation, Lewis was investigating the sudden death of Angolan refugee, Jimmy Mubenga, on board a British Airways flight. Lewis tweeted from his account asking anyone who was on the flight and witnessed what happened to get in touch with him. Lewis received several responses, a tweet from a man saying he was on board the same flight and saw the man "begging for his life". Lewis also received a phone call from an Angolan man who also witnessed what occurred. It was later revealed that Mubenga was actually assaulted by immigration officials on board the flight and he died from his injuries.

In another breakthrough, Lewis was investigating the death of Ian Tomlinson at the G20 protests in London in 2009. Tomlinson was not part of the protests but trying to find his way home as the protest action intensified. Lewis adds that the official version of Tomlinson's death as told by the police was that he had died from natural causes. Lewis says the investigative team had their suspicions that this was an inaccurate version and tweeted to their online community asking eyewitnesses to come forward and relay what they had seen. Through Twitter, Lewis identified twenty witnesses who were there at the time of the attack on Tomlinson. Only one of the twenty witnesses was a contact in Lewis's contact book. Eyewitnesses provided Lewis with photographs and videos of the moments leading up to the attack on Tomlinson showing that he was assaulted by police and was hit with a baton that caused internal bleeding that led to his death. This disputed the police's version of how Tomlinson died and eyewitnesses also disputed the version of events by police claiming bricks were thrown at them whilst they were trying to assist Tomlinson. Lewis says that this is an example of how citizen journalism on Twitter has assisted in successful investigative journalism. This examples illustrates how Twitter has been used to hold the powerful accountable and to divorce fact from fiction. An inquest found that Tomlinson had been unlawfully killed, but the police officer responsible was acquitted of manslaughter. The police officer was dismissed from the police service for gross misconduct.

Luvrisik (2010) adds that social media is also used to hold the powerful to account but investigative journalists need to be careful "because the social web gives both citizenry and journalists' access to officials and companies at the click of a mouse, social question and answer tools can be used to collaboratively investigate issues and keep powers accountable"(2010). As the Tomlinson example illustrates, social media applications can assist in holding the powerful to account, however, Lavrusik (2010) warns journalists to be

wary about citizen journalism and the fact that people could have ulterior motives when posting.

Nazakat (2012) says that the above two examples emphasise the power of using social media applications in investigations. Social media applications such as Twitter in these examples are useful in crowdsourcing for information and particularly locating sources. Nazakat (2012) emphasises that at the "heart of crowdsourcing is a shared understanding that journalists need to be more interactive with their readers/viewers." It is evident that the relationship and interaction a journalist has with their online community can determine the amount of assistance they would receive.

A Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism report by journalist Johanna Vehkoo (2013) entitled *Crowdsourcing in Investigative Journalism*, also details how the use of crowdsourcing on social media has assisted and impacted on investigative journalism. The report defines crowdsourcing as "the act of taking a job traditionally performed by employees and outsourcing it to an undefined, generally large group of people in the form of an open call." Vehkoo states that in crowdsourced journalism "someone initiates a task and invites readers to conduct deliberately defined tasks online." (2012:5) Vehkoo says that "crowdsourcing has the potential to offer journalists more insight and information as they can ask for help directly from people who are in a position to know about the topic." The report also provides examples of where crowdsourcing was used as an investigative tool and provided breakthroughs in investigations. She uses examples from *The Guardian* and the *Helsingin Sanomat* in Finland.

The Guardian, according to Vehkoo (2013), has the most successful examples of using crowdsourcing as an investigative tool. She quotes Alan Rusbridger, former editor at *The Guardian* who strongly believes in crowdsourcing as he says it encourages audience participation. Rusbridger attributes *The Guardian's* success in crowdsourcing to acknowledging "that a good part of your readership knows more about a certain subject than you do, and if you can harness that information, then it's going to be better because you get access to a larger pool of information. It's richer." Crowdsourcing by investigative journalists acknowledges that the audience often knows more about a given topic than the investigative journalist. By placing the information request, investigative journalists have access to a wider variety of information that adds to an investigation making it more richer. Crowdsourcing allows an investigative journalist to cast their net for information wider.

In countries where Twitter has been banned and blocked, investigative journalists have found other similar applications to further their investigations. A report by journalist Jiao Bei entitled: *How Chinese journalists are Weibo Microblogging for investigative reporting* (2012) examines how Chinese investigative journalists are using the Weibo application as an investigative tool. Weibo is a Twitter-like microblogging service developed after Facebook and Twitter were blocked by the Chinese government. Bei (2012) examines how the tool has changed and advanced investigative journalism methods in a society where media freedom is restricted. Much like Twitter, Chinese investigative journalists have used Weibo in collaboration with their traditional investigative methods. Bei (2012) says that "Collaboration between Weibo users and traditional media has helped investigative journalists uncover social problems, illuminated societal unrest, bypassed party media controls and even helped to hold governments accountable." (2012:8) Weibo has been used to expose corrupt officials, with a wave of online whistleblowers providing evidence of

misconduct or corruption. Bei (2012) further adds that in some cases, an outcry by citizens on Weibo has spurred government to apologize or sack officials.

Nazakat (2012) adds that social media applications have assisted him in his own investigations. Facebook assisted him in 2010 in his investigation into the CIA's covert operations in India by helping him to locate a former spy who worked within the US intelligence and had served in Pakistan and India. The Facebook alert from one of his friends led to one of the first times an Indian publication had an exclusive interview with a top CIA official.

In another investigation, Nazakat (2012) was trying to locate a source to speak to that had been part of Al Qaeda and then attended a rehabilitation camp in Saudi Arabia. After weeks of trying to locate a source though his many contacts, Nazakat received the name of a source through a Facebook friend. The source was on both Facebook and Twitter. Nazakat interviewed him on his days fighting alongside Osama Bin Laden which enriched his major "insider" report on Al-Qaeda.

An added advantage of social media applications in investigations is that it allows an investigative journalist to track an individual, or a story and also build profiles of people being investigated. Nazakat (2012) adds that "the information on people's Facebook and Twitter accounts about their educational background, family, circle of friends, professional associations, their likes and dislikes, and even their travel records can add to the public knowledge of an individual's private activities." He further suggests that comments that people make about newsworthy stories can also provide breakthroughs or direction to a story. Nazakat (2012) suggests that social media applications are also being used to promote investigative stories and to reach varied audiences. He adds that the role of social media does not end with the completion of a story, rather social media applications are being used to promote investigations after the investigation is completed.

Ethical concerns

Using social media for journalism and investigative journalism also raises some ethical concerns. Despite all the advantages social media applications provide to investigative journalists, media analyst, Jonathan Stray (2011) fears, the incorrect use of social media applications can threaten the credibility of investigative journalism. Stray (2011) emphasises that verification is key, and with all the information on social media applications freely available, investigative journalists need to go through an intense verifying process before publishing. Stray (2011) states that "verification is necessarily contextual. Both the costs of verification and the consequences of being in error vary widely with circumstance, so journalists must make situational choices. How sure do we have to be before we say something is true, how do we measure that certainty, and what would it take to be more sure?"

Stray (2011) further suggests that newsrooms need to have guidelines and answers to these questions before bringing the online community on board in investigations. He adds "until this sort of nuanced guidance is made public, and the public is provided with experienced support to encourage good calls in complex or borderline cases, it won't be possible to bring enthusiastic outsiders fully into the reporting process. They simply won't know what's expected of them, to be able to participate in the production of a product to certain standards." Stray (2011) adds that in order for the public to be able to assist in an

investigation fully, they need to be made aware of what information is being sought and that the information needs to be accurate and reliable.

Stray (2011) warns against publicising every part of the investigation. "Traditionally, a big investigative story is kept completely secret until it's published. This is shifting, as some journalists begin to view investigation as more of a process than a product. However, you may not want the subject of an investigation to know what you already know. It might, for example, make your interview with a bank CEO tricky if they know you've already got the goods on them from a former employee. There are also off-the-record interviews, embargoed material, documents which cannot legally be published, and a multitude of concerns around the privacy rights of individuals. I agree with Jay Rosen when he says that 'everything a journalist learns that he cannot tell the public alienates him from the public,' but that doesn't mean that complete openness is the solution in all cases. There are complex trade-offs here." Investigative journalists need to be wary about sharing every aspect of an investigation and all information online. This could compromise the investigation as sources or targets of the investigation may not want to be interviewed and sources may not want to come forward for fear of being exposed. Certain aspects of an investigation need to be kept offline.

Media and ethics expert, Stephen A Ward (2013), says the media landscape is changing as "the means to publish is now in the hands of citizens, while the internet encourages new forms of journalism that are interactive and immediate." (2013: http://mediamorals.org/digital-media-ethics/). This alludes to gatekeeping, as prior to the advent of social media applications information disseminated was in the hands of politicians and newscasters. With social media applications, citizens now have the opportunity to publish information they consider relevant.

Whilst Ward's (2013) blog focuses on ethics in mainstream journalism, it is clear that the same issues of impartiality, verification, accuracy and transparency apply to investigative journalism. Ward (2013) believes that there is a tension between traditional methods of journalism and online journalism. He says that "the culture of traditional journalism, with its values of accuracy, pre-publication verification, balance, impartiality, and gate-keeping, rubs up against the culture of online journalism which emphasizes immediacy, transparency, partiality, non-professional journalists and post-publication correction." In the age of social media and the internet, the retrieval of information is instantaneous and often from users that are not necessarily journalists.

Ward (2013) raises pertinent questions regarding ethics, with the most basic questioning the definition of a journalist in the world of new and social media applications. Anyone can call themselves a journalist. Citizens who regularly comment or write on issues are labelled as journalists and this could discredit the profession as they may not be aware of the ethics of journalism. "In the previous century, journalists were a clearly defined group. For the most part, they were professionals who wrote for major mainstream newspapers and broadcasters. The public had no great difficulty in identifying members of the "press." Today, citizens without journalistic training and who do not work for mainstream media call themselves journalists, or write in ways that fall under the general description of a journalist as someone who regularly writes on public issues for a public or audience."

In 2006, Josh Wolf's legitimacy as a journalist was questioned. Wolf, an American freelance journalist and documentary filmmaker, was jailed by a Federal district court for refusing to turn over to the police, a collection of videotapes he recorded during a July 2005 demonstration in San Francisco, California. Questions of Wolf's legitimacy as a journalist were answered by support from a number of important journalist groups and the media.

Another important issue is the question of anonymity. Social media applications allow for greater anonymity by both journalists and the online community. Ward (2013) asks the question: "When is anonymity ethically permissible and is it inconsistent for media to enforce different rules on anonymity for different media platforms? What should be the ethical guidelines for anonymity offline and online?" (Ward: 2013). It is evident that newsrooms need to have their own social media policies outlined so that journalists and investigative journalists alike know their limitations and boundaries. Furthermore, investigative journalists need to also bear in mind that social media applications allow for anonymity to be exercised more easily, as well as the deactivation of online profiles. Ward (2013) is of the opinion that anonymity is accepted more readily online than in mainstream news media. Editorial policies of many mainstream media internationally such as *The Guardian* caution journalists to use anonymous sources sparingly and only if certain rules are followed. Journalists need to be mindful that people may use anonymity to level unfair or untrue accusations at other people, for self-interested reasons.

Ward (2013) emphasises the need for accuracy and verification especially with online content that sees more citizens posting content online. He adds that "audiences are said to be attracted to strong opinion and conflicts of opinion." In other words, audiences are attracted to debates and discussions that depict strong opinions and impartial views. This poses ethical concerns as the publication can lose credibility as it may be viewed as partial to certain views and perspectives and promoting a particular agenda. Ward further expresses concern over "some citizens and groups complaining that newsroom restraints on what analysts and reporters can say about the groups they cover is censorship."

Digital Transformation editor, Steve Buttry in his blog, the *Buttry Diary*, states that "the most simple and important advice I can give is that Twitter is like any other information source — documents, anonymous tips, news releases, press conferences, interviews, databases — it can provide valuable information or deliberate lies or innocent errors. Your job is to verify the information that looks useful. As with all the other information you gather, you can verify through lots of different ways, and no single technique works for everything." (January 21, 2013)

Being able to verify and authenticate information on social media platforms is of paramount importance as illustrated by Andy Carvin. Carvin (2013), a network analyst, was one of the many followers of the '*Gay girl in Damascus*' blog. The blog belonged to Amina Arraf, who identified herself as being a lesbian in Syria. Her blog became popular not only because of her sexual orientation but also because of her anti-regime stance in a country seen as repressive. Carvin (2013) received a Facebook message from a friend in Syria casting doubt on the legitimacy of Arraf. This led to Carvin tweeting to his online community about whether anyone had ever met Arraf or personally interacted with her. Arraf's blog later suggested that she had been abducted by armed men. This prompted an international campaign with many tweeting under the hashtag #freeAmina. After an exhaustive

investigation that began on Twitter, Carvin helped to uncover that Amina Arraf did not exist and she was fabricated entirely by an American named Tom McMaster.

The above investigative example demonstrates the need to verify not just information on social media platforms but the true identity of accounts on social media applications. Accounts can be created under pseudonyms or fabricated entirely. Investigative journalism often uses evidence from different sources including people and documents as well as continuous fact-checking. It remains imperative that information sourced from one platform needs to be corroborated through another method as information taken from social media applications cannot instantly be regarded as truth.

Whilst this is not specific to investigative journalism but journalism in general, Buttry provides a number of tips and useful checklists for journalists and investigative journalists to verify online content. This is particularly important for investigative journalists in the sense that investigative journalism is about concrete evidence as well as facts and links between those facts and evidence.

While the ethical concerns mentioned pertain to mainstream journalism they are true for investigative journalism. The investigative journalist needs to ascertain whether information obtained from social media corroborates with evidence received from other sources or documents gained elsewhere. Furthermore, can the information provided by a follower, who may be a lead or a source, be used if that source deactivates their account and disappears? It would be good practice for investigative journalists to find more sources willing to be identified in person rather than anonymously on social media applications and to save information by conducting screengrabs or snapshots in the event the information disappears due to an account being deactivated or the post being deleted so as to prevent discredit.

Ethical questions also arise about sources and the access to sources. As one online source may provide "evidence", can an investigative journalist ascertain whether or not there is another "source" that can provide alternative evidence?

Social media analyst, Mandy Jenkins runs a website called http://zombiejournalism.com and she further stresses the importance of checking facts and accuracy on social media platforms. "In the rapid-fire world of social media, it's easy for a journalist or news organization to make mistakes. Sometimes, these things happen in the heat of the moment, but more often than not the errors seem to stem from a widespread belief amongst journalists that Twitter carries less need for accuracy and accountability than the full-story medium. I believe there is an ever-increasing need for accuracy and accountability in how we as journalists use social media." (Jenkins: 2011).

Social media does open an array of avenues for investigative journalists to operate from. As stated from various researchers and media analysts, social media is being used in the field of investigative journalism for various reasons including finding sources, eye-witnesses, crowdsourcing for information, to enhance cross-border investigations and investigate issues from a global perspective as well as creating profiles of people involved in the investigated topic. Social media applications are forming part of a networked newsroom and are being used in investigations from the beginning to the end, including promoting the completed investigation thus promoting investigative journalism.

However, it poses its own risks and advantages. Investigative journalists still have to keep in mind the basics of journalism and continuously check and re-check their facts and verify the online content as ethical issues are a serious concern. What is said on social media applications cannot be regarded as truth. More verification has to be done to ensure the credibility of the investigation is not compromised. Furthermore, citizen journalism is not always a true account as people have their own agenda's and motives. This reinforces the fact that journalists need to constantly verify the information received on social media applications. However, the efficacy of social media in investigations is also dependant on the online communities that investigative journalists build. It is one element to have an audience, and another to have a community. The difference between the two is that a community is more likely to assist an investigative journalist, whereas an audience may just be interested in what an investigative newsroom is publishing. Investigative newsrooms need to keep ethical concerns and good practices in mind at all times. The credibility of their investigation would be compromised if they fail to do so.

3. Methodology

3.1 Introduction

New Age Publishers (2004) define the term research as a "search for knowledge" and research methodology "as a way to systematically solve a research problem." Cohen and Manion (1985) further describe methodology as a "means of understanding the process of research" (1985: 43). Research methodology seeks to understand the way research was conducted to solve a particular research problem. It focuses on the design of the research. Cohen and Manion (1985) add that methodology assists in analysing research conducted focusing on the "limitations, consequences and presuppositions" of the research. Researchers often have an idea or presupposition about the topic they are investigating. In this particular investigation, my presupposition was that investigative journalists are using social media applications. This was evident from the network that I have on social media, such as Facebook and Twitter, where some of my contacts include journalists and investigative journalists. However, I was unaware of how they use their online presence and their knowledge of social media applications in their investigations if at all.

There are two approaches to conducting research: the quantitative and the qualitative methods.

Nikita Burton (2011) describes quantitative research as "research that is collected and data that is absolute." This method of research is said to involve the collection of data thus being more specific and accurate. Data is gathered through questionnaires or surveys and is more numeric. The information is usually displayed in graphs and tallies. Burton (2011) states that an advantage of the quantitative method is that the research gathered is unable to be biased.

Burton (2011) describes the qualitative research method as "research that requires a more in-depth response, it allows you to ask personal questions and collect more data on people," usually from people. The qualitative research method is one that often requires interviews with people, sometimes in-depth interviews depending on the type of research. The purpose of the research interview is to explore the views and experiences of individuals on specific matters. Qualitative methods, such as interviews, are believed to provide a 'deeper' understanding of a particular topic compared to information gathered from purely quantitative methods, such as questionnaires. Interviews are most appropriate where little is already known about the study or where detailed insights are required from individual participants.

In this particular study of understanding how investigative journalists are using social media to further their investigations data was gathered through both quantitative and qualitative methods. The process began with the quantitative method in the form of a questionnaire and was taken further using the qualitative method in the form of in –depth interviews.

3.2 The Quantitative Method

This study aimed at researching the use of social media by investigative journalists is the first of its kind in South Africa. Across the globe and in South Africa, much has been written about social media and its role in mainstream journalism. However, the nature of

investigative journalism is such that it is based on sources and evidence. When reading an investigative article in the newspaper or viewing an investigative piece on television, the process of the investigation is often not publicised. The fact that a source was tracked through Facebook or Twitter is rarely mentioned as the exposé is more important. What the investigation is about is of more value to the reader than much of the process behind it.

Nonetheless, I wanted to ascertain the value of social media to investigative journalism and whether or not investigative journalists are embracing social media applications in their investigations. Before that, I had to find out which investigative journalists are using social media and if they could provide links to stories where social media was used in their investigations.

In order to determine my sample, I sent out a questionnaire via e-mail to a list of 44 investigative journalists that entered into the Taco Kuiper Award for Investigative Journalism in 2013. The questionnaire was my first point of departure in conducting this research as I needed to determine which investigative journalists I could approach for an interview. The questionnaire was appropriate because it was short and succinct. (See Appendix A)

From the 44, I received eleven responses. From the eleven, there were six investigative journalists that said they use social media in their investigations. I chose four from the six to interview as they had indicated on their questionnaire a more in-depth use of social media applications in their investigations. I was looking for investigative journalists that didn't just monitor conversations or occasionally tweet but who made use of the functions on social media applications for investigative purposes. Investigative journalists were asked to provide examples or links to the investigations they had conducted where they had used social media applications.

The four investigative journalists were:

- Hazel Friedman from SABC's *Special Assignment*

- Jeanne van de Merwe from *Media24 Investigations*

- Jonathan Erasmus from *The Witness*

- Fred Kockott from Roving Reporters

As a journalist and senior producer for SABC news at the time, I was also aware of investigative journalists that I knew who were using social media and were active on a daily basis. These included Lionel Faull from the *Mail&Guardian*, Athandiwa Saba from *City Press*, Alex Eliseev from *EyeWitness News* and Andrew Trench as former head of Media24 *Investigations*. From following them on Facebook and Twitter and meeting them as media functions, I approached them directly to take part in this research.

The outcome of the quantitative research method established which investigative journalists would be appropriate to interview. Furthermore, it also provided a sample of investigative journalists whose investigative work is often mentioned in media circles. It also showed which social media applications are most commonly used and provided links to the investigations the journalists had conducted where they had used social media applications. These links proved useful as I was able to listen to or read the investigative pieces before the interview and have a better understanding of the investigation.

3.3   The Qualitative Method

The qualitative research method was essential to this investigation as interviews with the selected investigative journalists would provide the information required to determine how investigative journalists were using social media applications to further investigative work. Cohen and Manion (1985) add that the qualitative research method "aims to collect as much data as possible relevant to a particular topic regardless of where it occurs in the interview material. The method is exacting because it requires very detailed knowledge of content and may entail going through taped interviews several times."

The interviews were semi structured meaning that some questions were predetermined, however some of the questions in the interview were dependent on the interviewees responses. Burton (2011) describes the semi-structured interview as consisting of several key questions that help to define the areas to be explored, but also allows the interviewer or interviewee to diverge in order to pursue an idea or response in more detail. Furthermore, the "flexibility of this approach, particularly compared to structured interviews, also allows for the discovery or elaboration of information that is important to participants but may not have previously been thought of as pertinent by the research team." (Burton:2011)

As the interviews were focused on specific investigations identified by the journalists themselves, there were key questions that each investigative journalist was asked, however, questions were also based on each investigation and the personal experience of each investigative journalist.

The in-depth interview process was essential to this research as it could only be conducted by speaking to investigative journalists who do use social media applications and their personal experiences as well as their attitude toward using social media applications. This research could not have been conducted with just a questionnaire as it was dependent on experience and not numeric data and analysis.

3.4 The Interview Process

Cohen and Manion (1985) define the research interview as "a two person conversation initiated by the interviewer for the specific purpose of obtaining research-relevant information…" This is especially true in this particular research. Each investigative journalist was interviewed on a one-to-one basis. This was done deliberately for two reasons. First the investigative journalists identified were based at different media houses in different geographical locations. I travelled to Johannesburg, Durban and Cape Town to conduct the interviews. Secondly, each investigative journalist had a different investigation specific to their use of social media applications. As social media applications are used for different purposes in investigations as mentioned in the literature review, it was important to have each journalist relay their experience and the way they had used social media applications. Athandiwa Saba's interview was done telephonically as she was often called out of the office on stories. All the interview's, including Saba's, were recorded. Recording of the interviews was essential as it allowed me to be more attentive to what the interviewee was saying.

The interviews focused on the following points:

•   How social media is used in their investigations

- Which social media applications are most commonly used for their investigations and why

- Examples where they used social media in their investigations

- Some of the ethical issues that it raises

- The presence of a social media policy in the investigative newsroom

- Advantages and disadvantages of the use of social media applications in their investigations

The interview process yields more in-depth information as compared to the questionnaire. Interviewees have the opportunity to interact with the researcher and also gain a clearer understanding of what the research entails. It also provides the respondents with the opportunity to elaborate on the investigation verbally rather than typing or filling in a questionnaire which some people may find cumbersome and time consuming.

The interview process provided me with a clearer understanding of how social media applications are incorporated into investigative work and the reasons it is being used more frequently. The investigative journalists interviewed said they used social media applications for crowdsourcing for information, finding sources, collaboration with other reporters on cross-border investigations as well as a means to go undercover. Furthermore, social media applications and the functions they have, such as users uploading photographs or tagging their locations, are being used to gain evidence for investigative purposes either as a source of information or to enhance evidence already in the investigative journalist's possession.

In conclusion, this research would have been difficult without using quantitative and qualitative research methods. Had there been no qualitative method used, it would have been a challenge to interview all 44 investigative journalists in a short time span. Furthermore, the questionnaire provided me with the relevant information which allowed me to adequately research the information gathered more thoroughly. An example of this was the use of Facebook and Twitter being used most by investigative journalists. This led me to find more readings on Facebook and Twitter specifically that would enable me to know more about their functions and also ask more relevant and pertinent questions in the interview process.

But the qualitative method of the interview process was crucial. As this research is focused on personal experience, the interviews were essential to answering the research problems and concluding the ways in which South African investigative journalists are making use of social media applications. As there were no documents to analyse, this research was dependent on the interview to provide the relevant information needed.

3.5 Research Questions

The interview process was semi-structured. Below are the questions that each investigative journalist interviewed was asked.

1. How has the use of social media in investigations led to issues being exposed as compared to prior to the advent of social media?

2. What are the attitudes of investigative journalists in SA towards social media?
3. What are the ethical challenges faced when using social media for investigations?
4. Has social media applications enabled better investigative reporting?
5. What are the editorial challenges in investigative newsrooms/teams with the rise of social media applications, is there a social media policy?

3.6 Research Limitations

While the research aims to provide an overview on how social media is used to assist in investigations, it is impossible to interview every single investigative journalist in South Africa. Hence, the research was limited to those investigative journalists that had responded positively to the survey sent out and to those investigative journalists I was able to contact directly. Together with those that responded and those I had contacted, I was able to include investigative journalists/teams that have a credible reputation in South Africa.

There was one omission. The investigative team at Carte Blanche, was approached but declined to take part in the research as they said that they did not want to share their research methods. This posed a limitation in the sense that they are known for their credible investigations and I had hoped they could add value to the research from a television perspective.

Another limitation was that I included only investigative journalists who use social media for investigations and beyond the everyday monitoring, tweeting and posting. I was looking for specific ways in which social media applications are used for investigations. Many investigative journalists said they were aware of social media and did monitor it infrequently, however, the ones interviewed were the ones that seemed to really tap into it and unpack its uses such as crowdsourcing for information, locating sources and searching profiles for useful information.

Social media applications have certain limitations. How much can be yielded from social media applications that can be useful to investigative journalists? More importantly, investigative journalism is dependent on evidence; can social media applications provide that much-needed evidence?

The use of social media applications in investigative journalism, according to this research, is also mostly confined to investigations exposing specific social issues or politicians. Some financial investigative journalists have said that their type of investigations involves a lot of data for which social media applications is of no great assistance. Social media in investigations may be limited to particular kinds of investigations.

4. Findings

4.1 Introduction

This chapter explains how investigative journalists in South Africa are using social media applications to further their investigations by exploring Facebook and Twitter specifically as investigative tools. Facebook and Twitter are discussed extensively as these are the two social media applications identified as the most commonly used social media applications by investigative journalists as revealed by them.

While it is evident that social media applications play a role in news gathering and dissemination of information, the role of social media applications in investigative journalism, particularly in South Africa is less clear. Due to the nature of investigative journalism, which involves information and evidence gathering through documents and sources and verification, the question arises as to what role social media plays in assisting investigative journalists and is it a useful tool.

Furthermore, this chapter reveals specific investigations where these tools have been used to provide evidence, sources and connect elements of an investigation which is essential in investigative journalism.

This chapter also discusses the ethical implications or concerns that may arise from the use of social media in investigative journalism. South African journalists are bound by the South African Press Code (2015). However, with the advent of social media applications and their increased use in investigations, the questions that arise include whether the same rules continue to apply and what are some of the challenges that may arise.

This chapter concludes by providing a comprehensive view of the role of social media applications in investigative journalism in South Africa, specifically with regards to the most frequently used applications, the attitudes of investigative journalists towards using social media applications, ethical implications and limitations of social media as well as the presence and enforcement of editorial policies in the investigative newsroom.

4.2 Facebook and Twitter as Investigative Tools

4.2.1 Facebook

According to this study, Facebook is the most frequently used and effective social media application for investigative journalists in South Africa. Lionel Faull from the *Mail&Guardian*, Alex Eliseev from *EyeWitness News*, Jonathan Erasmus and Andrew Trench from *The Witness,* Jeanne Van Der Merwe from *Media24 Investigations* and Hazel Friedman from the SABC's *Special Assignment* have used Facebook predominantly in their respective investigations albeit in different ways. From the research conducted, Facebook is being used to:

- Conduct background checks on whistle-blowers or people that have provided tip-off's

- Search for sources and to view their authenticity and credibility

- Find and link connections to the target of an investigation

- Build a profile of the target of an investigation and those possibly involved in the issue being investigated

- Look for evidence linking suspects to the chronology of events in an investigation such as photographs or tagged locations.

- Gain access to people who would otherwise be difficult or impossible to find offline.

- Crowdsource for information (interacting with an audience to assist in an investigation)

While the above outlines the ways in which Facebook is being used as an investigative tool, it must be noted that Facebook is being used as a complementary tool to the traditional ways of investigative reporting and it is not relied upon exclusively in investigative reporting. Furthermore, there are limitations and ethical questions that arise from the use of Facebook in an investigation which will be discussed later. Below are the investigative experiences that these investigative reporters had using Facebook to further their investigations.

Lionel Faull - *The Mail&Guardian*

Lionel Faull is part of team AmaBhungane who provide material for the weekly newspaper *The Mail&Guardian*.

Faull says AmaBhungane now routinely uses Facebook in their investigations. It began sporadically in 2011 and has since been incorporated as part of the investigative process. Faull has attributed the incorporation of Facebook into the investigative process to the successes they have had with Facebook each time they have used it in an investigation. Faull says "every time we have a win with social media then it reinforces its use for us." This indicates that each time social media applications such as Facebook are able to move an investigation forward, there is a greater likelihood that it would be used in the next investigation. Faull further adds that since 2011 "it's been a process of getting comfortable with the use of social media."

The process of "getting comfortable" started in September 2011 when the AmaBhungane team needed their online readers and social media followers to assist them in identifying people from photographs in their possession. The photographs were provided by a source who had accessed and downloaded them from the Facebook profile of 24 year old Tariq Yusuf. Tariq is the son of Ibrahim Yusuf "a man alleged to being a drug dealer and peddler of dodgy medical equipment who is very well known in South Africa" (*M&G*, 21 October 2011). Faull and the team were familiar with Ibrahim Yusuf (the father) as AmaBhungane had run a series of exposés on him the previous year. "His company, Intratrek, holds exclusive distribution rights to the Tara KLamp, a questionable male circumcision device which the KwaZulu-Natal health department has procured for its mass campaign to prevent HIV transmission. The Malaysian-manufactured device is not approved by the World Health Organisation and fared poorly in the only independent clinical trial in South Africa. The KwaZulu-Natal health department did not consider other devices and chose the Tara KLamp without issuing a tender." (*M&G*, 21 October 2011)

Due to the father's notoriety, *M&G* was curious about Tariq and his friend's association to the President. The photographs showed Tariq and his friend shaking the hand of a very "relaxed and clearly off-duty" President Zuma. AmaBhungane was unable to identify the other persons in the photograph except Tariq. They attached the photographs to an article on their website and used Facebook and Twitter to direct readers to the photographs asking them to help identify the men.

"The feedback we received was enormous, about 85% of it was rubbish but there were clearly some nuggets there." Faull says they began the task of verifying the feedback and eventually they were able to identify the men. One of the men identified from three of the photographs was businessman Pascal Garrioch. Garrioch was phoned and questioned about the function attended, what function it was, the President's presence and Tariq's involvement there. The identification provided from crowdsourcing on social media was followed up using traditional methods of investigating which moved the investigation forward. Faull explains that "this was a very interesting example to them of how social media applications, in this case Facebook, is used as a source (photographs) but also using social media applications to gain information."

This information appeared on the *M&G's* website on 21 October 2011

"Tariq was photographed hobnobbing with Zuma at a glitzy evening function last month. In one photograph he is seen shaking Zuma's hand; in another, he stands shoulder to shoulder with him. A source, who provided the five photographs taken at the function, said that four were dated September 4 and that one dated September 5 was possibly taken shortly after midnight. Pascal Garrioch, a businessman identified in three of the photographs, said the function was linked to a charitable foundation with ties to Zuma. On the morning of September 4, Zuma addressed a Commemoration Day event at the Union Buildings for police killed in the line of duty. There is no record of him attending any other official functions on that day. Garrioch declined to answer further questions but confirmed that he knew Tariq. Like Tariq, Garrioch appears to be involved in business with the government."

The identification of the men in the photograph via the public through social media applications provided AmaBhungane with Pascal Garrioch as a source. From that source, the *M&G* were able to use traditional methods of investigation to verify that the photographs were legitimate and the function did indeed take place by interviewing Garrioch. He also provided confirmation that the President did attend and associated with Tariq Yusuf amongst other people. It also exposed that the President has dubious acquaintances and that he engages with them during his free time. Furthermore, it provided evidence that both father and son have access to people in high places including the President.

This is an example of how Facebook was used as an investigative tool: to gain a source of evidence, the photographs, that aided in an investigation which was the photographs as well as crowdsourcing for information which led to the identification of the people in the photographs. Furthermore, the associations confirmed by Garrioch would not have come to light so soon had it not been for the photographs and the identification from the public.

According to AmaBhungane, this experience proved that Facebook is a useful tool in advancing investigations, however, verification remains essential before using the information it may provide. The AmaBhungane team could not just use the photographs and

make false allegations, but rather use the photographs as source of information and find evidence to verify the photographs and the implications of it.

Another investigation in which Facebook played a role in advancing an AmaBhungane investigation involved the government parastatal, Eskom. This investigation took place in August 2014.

According to the company website, Eskom generates approximately 95% of the electricity used in South Africa and approximately 45% of the electricity used in Africa. Eskom generates, transmits and distributes electricity to industrial, mining, commercial, agricultural and residential customers and redistributors. However, since 2007, Eskom has been struggling to cater for the increasing demand for electricity. They have been forced to implement load shedding. There have also been interventions by government to expand Eskom's operations by building two new power stations in order to meet the increasing demand for electricity. With the inability to provide electricity to consumers, *The Mail&Guardian* as well as other media have reported on various crises at the parastatal. This includes corruption, major salary and bonus pay-outs to management as well as concerns about Eskom's finances.

This particular investigation into Eskom revolved around the replacement and refurbishment of two steam generators at Eskom's Koeburg power station near Cape Town in 2014. The steam generators are for maintenance purposes. Two companies were bidding for the four billion rand tender, Westinghouse, which is based in the US but now part of the Japanese conglomerate, Toshiba and a French company called Areva. The tender has been on and off for four years having started in 2010.

This investigation was prompted by Westinghouse filing urgent court papers against Eskom's board tender committee chairperson after the announcement that the tender was awarded to Areva in August 2014. Westinghouse maintained that inside sources at Eskom had informed them that they were to win the bid but a last minute decision by the board tender committee chairperson favoured Areva.

Faull says that he used Facebook to build a profile of the chairperson of the board tender committee, Neo Lesela. He noticed that she was very active on Facebook at the time that they stumbled across her role and as they viewed her profile they noticed she had posted some interesting things on Facebook. One of the Facebook posts read, "What a week, what a day, what an evening. My threshold for stress was put to the ultimate test, and just for good measure, was taken to hell and back this afternoon just as I was coming up for air. I am grateful for my health and positive outlook on life. It is these two things that kept a threatening breakdown at bay". This was posted on the 15th August 2014, the same day that Westinghouse filed the court papers and the announcement was made that evening that Areva had won the tender.

Faull says the post was important as it "tied to the chronology of events of that day." Facebook allows investigative journalists to "date people's Facebook posts and run that parallel to the chronology of stories and sometimes they can be revealing but the lesson is you have to be careful, the chronology has to be right." With Facebook posts, a journalist can view the date and time a person posted a status. This is important for investigative journalists who are trying to link social media application posts to the sequence and chronology of events in an investigation. This particular post, Faull acknowledges, wasn't a

breakthrough post but it did tie in with all that was taking place involving Lesela on that particular day. Whilst much of the investigation was dependent on what was contained in the court papers from Westinghouse and comments from the board tender committee, the Facebook post was included in the first article published on the 28th August 2014. The post coincidentally was a reflection of a day involving court papers, announcements and disputes.

Following the first article and the Facebook post, Lesela had deleted that post from her Facebook profile a few days later but did not set her privacy settings on maximum nor did she deactivate her Facebook account. This means that the AmaBhungane team could still access her profile. Faull says that the team "had moved very quickly to save snapshots of everything on her profile knowing full well that Lesela could turn her security settings on maximum at any time." Should her privacy settings have been on maximum, the team would no longer have had access to her profile and online posts.

This is important as it reflects that information on social media applications can be fleeting and deleted at any time.

AmaBhungane conducted a follow up investigation on Lesela and had more time to analyse her Facebook profile the following week. One of the tools on Facebook is a page called "Your Places" which allows its users to tag themselves at the places they are visiting. Apart from South Africa, the only other place Lesela had tagged as having visited, was France. This raised suspicion as Areva was a French bidder. This prompted him to look more closely into why she had been to France. After clicking on the "Your Places" function, Faull discovered that she had visited France twice and both times, photographs on her Facebook profile indicated she had enjoyed her stay visiting different places and eating French specialities. One of the photographs dated 2 December 2013 showed French patisseries and delicacies; however, Faull says that from the corner of his eye he spotted an Eskom nuclear document at the back of the picture. This proved to him that Lesela was there on Eskom nuclear business and the visit was at a time that was actually not appropriate as they were adjudicating this tender. Furthermore, at the time of the visit she was a member of Eskom's board and its tender subcommittee and in April 2014 was promoted to chairperson having more authority to make tender decisions.

In the article published on the 5 September 2014, AmaBhungane wrote "*The document Lesela unwittingly photographed that night reveals that Eskom's board tender committee were on a four-day nuclear training trip to France. The problem with Lesela and the board tender committee's trip to France last December is that it made them potentially vulnerable to French lobbying while the multibillion-rand tender process was still under way.*"

Faull adds that "this was an interesting breakthrough of using social media almost as a tip off, that was our point of departure, why was she in France, at this time, on these dates, at these hotels and knowing the French hospitality, they have a way of lobbying."

AmaBhungane then went on to verify the "tip-off" traditionally by phoning the hotels, confirming that Lesela had indeed stayed there and discovered that a group of Eskom people had actually accompanied her. He also discovered that whilst Areva did not directly pay for the stay, a sister company of Areva's did. Faull adds that Lesela's stay in France points to conflict of interest because the board tender committee should not have been hosted at a time when the decision on the tender was still pending.

Following the publication of this investigation, Lesela set her privacy settings to maximum.

This particular investigation illustrates how AmaBhungane have used Facebook as an investigative tool to gain a lead. They used Facebook to tie Lesela's posts to the chronology of events in their investigation. They analysed her profile to find evidence from postings and photographs that link her to possible 'impropriety". Furthermore, the team was aware of the risk that they may not have access to the information on her profile should she delete her posts or change her settings and hence ensured that they saved any information on social media that was available to them. This investigation also reflects how they have advanced from the way AmaBhungane used Facebook in 2011, using a photograph from a source taken from Facebook, compared to currently in 2014 where they are now analysing photographs, profiles and functions on Facebook such as 'Your Places'.

This investigation has also reinforced the fact that social media is a complementary tool and cannot be divorced from verification and the traditional methods of investigating. As a tool it provided access to a link that otherwise would not have been discovered. Furthermore, Facebook provided evidence in the form of a photograph and this proved vital in the investigation. It must also be noted that this investigation also highlights one of the pitfalls of social media applications to investigative journalists: information can be removed and accounts can be made private at any time. It is in an investigative journalist's interest to implement good practice of saving information at all times.

Alex Eliseev – *EyeWitness News*

Alex Eliseev is a reporter for *EyeWitness News*, the news department of Primedia's talk stations Radio 702, 94.7 Highveld Stereo and 567 Cape Talk. Elsieev is currently writing a book on his investigation into the murder of waitress Betty Ketani. The following is his experience using both Facebook and Twitter in that investigation.

In May 2012, Eliseev was a reporter for the daily newspaper, *The Star*. It was during this time that he broke the story of a bundle of letters found beneath a carpet in a house in Kenilworth, south of Johannesburg. On his website, Eliseev writes that "one of the letters relates to a mysterious robbery, another is a neatly typed confession of how a woman named Betty Ketani was abducted and murdered over 13 years ago. It starts with the chilling words: 'If you are reading this then I am dead…'"

It is this confession letter that sparked the investigation during which Eliseev would use social media to better understand what happened to Ketani and also identify those allegedly involved in her mysterious disappearance and subsequent death. The letter details her death and the number of people involved.

Ketani, a mother of three, worked as a chef at a Thai restaurant. In May 1999, she disappeared without a trace. That is until the letter was found. According to Eliseev, the author of the letter detailed "how the first attempt on Betty's life failed and she managed to get to a nearby hospital, debilitated by brain damage and trauma. He then explains how she was kidnapped from hospital – with the help of two policemen brothers – and eventually killed. The letter also claims three other people were kidnapped and tortured in the process. It gives names, telephone and identity document numbers, addresses and instructions on

how to find evidence ranging from secret tape recordings to black masks used to blindfold victims."

The case is centred in South Africa but over thirteen years later stretches over four different continents. The people involved were in Australia, England, New Zealand and Thailand. Eliseev wanted to investigate why Ketani was killed, who is responsible for her killing and also put together the pieces of the puzzle of her mysterious disappearance and death. However, an obstacle to his investigation was the fact that he had limited access to those countries and to people there.

In an attempt to gain more information and access to those countries and the people involved, Eliseev set up a website, www.alexeliseev.co.za. On this website, he posted the story he broke about the murder of Betty Ketani. He also posted a video, pictures and blogs that he had written. He used the multimedia platforms to urge anyone with information to leave him a message via e-mail or text. People could also leave anonymous messages if they felt they needed to conceal their identity. There was a link to his Facebook followers.

Eliseev says he has spent the last five years building up his Twitter account adding "it has a lot of followers, and it's powerful. I was using that to drive people to the website, in order for people to give me tip-off's about the people that I was investigating." He describes the feedback from that initiative as "amazing", and adds that "all kinds of information came in, people from literally across the world were able to log on to somewhere and contact me." Eliseev further adds that he "was using social media to drive the investigation to get people to give me information which is primarily what social media is about; crowdsourcing – sharing information and getting information."

Social media applications such as Facebook and Twitter were used here as investigative tools to firstly gain access to people that he would not ordinarily have access to due to physical boundaries and circumstances. Secondly it was used as a tool to gain information about those involved from people who had dealings with them or knew them.

Eliseev says that "There were certainly great leads that came through from the social media drive to the website. It allowed us primarily to explore the history and background of the characters/people involved. Especially with a story like this, which is a very old story, a lot of people were lying." Eliseev affirms this point by stating that the judge in court "described this case as a mosaic, as a picture puzzle, my job was to collect those different pieces of the puzzle and people came forward and primarily what we found is that it was people who knew the characters of the story. I didn't know them, I came in cold. I give a name such as Conrad Brown and Carrington Laughton and it means nothing to me but to someone else it may mean something different. The information from the leads helped me build profiles of people involved, from their school-going days, army days, what kind of things they did, to court cases that they were involved in, scandals and businesses they were linked to."

Eliseev says that verification comes in through the traditional investigative techniques where for example, he accessed court papers and approached the South African Defence Force to verify the information that was coming through about the people involved in the murder.

An important point relevant to this particular investigation is that reporters do come in cold, knowing very little, as Eliseev states. Journalists report on stories unaware of the

background or history of those involved. Social media applications as tools in investigative journalism provide the much needed information to build profiles of those involved, and to gain a better idea of who the characters are.

Eliseev explains the importance of crowdsourcing via Facebook and Twitter and its usefulness in collating information. "Getting the information is the biggest part of the actual story, because without that you are powerless; you don't have access into the organisations, into the political parties, into the circles of friends and so forth. But once somebody becomes an invisible guide for you into that, suddenly it opens doors and you can go through it. Yes, not all of the information checks out but in my case a lot of the information actually was accurate."

Social media applications also allow for the collaboration of investigative journalists in different countries. With this particular investigation, Eliseev says because he had tweeted and posted on Facebook to his online community that he was seeking information about the people allegedly involved, it generated interest amongst investigative journalists in different countries, especially in the countries the people allegedly involved were thought to be living in. Elissev adds that "I don't think that those journalists would have had the faintest idea that the story happened in South Africa if social media wasn't around. Some would have followed it on my Facebook or Twitter feed. Social media helps us connect the whole world, it pulls together all the continents, I was getting phone calls and e-mails from journalists in Australia who thought this is an amazing story, asking can you help us tell this story. I needed information from them because there were characters living in Australia and they needed information from me because I understand the legal system here and I have connections with the police and the family of the victim and other useful connections to them to enrich their story. It becomes a trade-off as there is no competition as we report in different mediums in different countries. It becomes a collaboration of information and would never have happened if technology didn't allow to us to connect."

In this investigation, social media applications served as a useful tool in crowdsourcing for sources across borders, gathering information about people regarding a murder that happened over a decade ago and in collaborating with journalists overseas in trying to piece together the "picture puzzle". It also linked what would be seen as a local South African investigation to a global investigation that found relevance with a global audience.

Andrew Trench: *Media24*

Andrew Trench was the editor of the daily newspaper *The Witness* based in Pietermaritzburg in Kwazulu Natal. *The Witness* is owned by *Media24*. Trench was previously the head of *Media24 Investigations* and is now editor-in-chief at *News24*.

Trench says that he realised the power of online social networks such as Facebook, during the investigation of ANC Member of Parliament, Tony Yengeni in October 2010. Yengeni is known in South Africa as a member of the ruling ANC and for his contribution to the anti-apartheid struggle. However, he is also known for living extravagantly. In 2006, Yengeni was sentenced to four years in jail after being convicted for fraud for accepting a discount on a Mercedes Benz. He served just four months in jail.

In 2010, an observation by a friend on Facebook sparked curiosity once again into Yengeni's lavish lifestyle. Herman Lategan, a Facebook friend of Trench's, posted on his Facebook profile that he had "spotted Yengeni driving in his R1.7m Maserati." Lategan also observed that Yengeni was seen "swanning about a luxury Greenpoint apartment complex."

Trench says that the update got him wondering "how Yengeni could afford such a car? As far as I knew his only salary was from the ANC as head of its soon-to-be-established political school" Trench added that this is how investigative journalism begins "with a simple question, a bit of curiosity and then some old-fashioned digging. But we would never have asked that first question had it not been for that Facebook update."

Trench and Media24 investigative reporter, Julian Rademeyer, began a four week long investigation and discovered that Yengeni "had more than one luxury car and was a director of six companies. This was in contravention of the Companies Act in terms of which it is a criminal offense to be a company director if you have a conviction for a crime of dishonesty. Using online social networks we were even able to source a picture of the Yengeni Maserati."

Trench says: "I think this is a good example of how online social networks can extend a journalist's contact base in ways that we could never imagine before. This is the potential power of crowdsourcing when you have tens of thousands of citizens out there, keeping the powerful on their toes."

This investigation was a front page exposé for *City Press* and *Rapport*, both *Media24* publications.

Trench's experience with Facebook from this investigation highlights the importance of Facebook. In this example, Facebook spurred the investigation or was a stimulus to the investigation. With the digital age, the media has encouraged citizen journalism – asking ordinary citizens to be the eyes and ears on the ground and to provide tip-off's should the need arise. This is an example of citizen journalism in which a citizen made an observation and indirectly tipped off an investigative journalist. In addition, this example encourages investigative journalists to monitor their own accounts on social media applications. Trench would never have made the observation of the post had he not, firstly had a Facebook account and secondly had he not monitored his circle of friends on this particular social media application.

Jonathan Erasmus: *The Witness*

Jonathan Erasmus is an investigative reporter with *The Witness* newspaper.

In November 2013, *The Witness* was covering news of the collapse of the Tongaat mall. On the 19th November, the three storey mall had suddenly collapsed trapping 30 construction workers. The development was linked to a businessman named Jay Singh. Erasmus says the investigation followed traditional methods in the sense that they had court papers on Singh about previous controversial construction work. However, Facebook played a role in providing "images for the construction workers that were trapped and also to gain access to speak to family members." Furthermore, Erasmus adds that "Facebook assisted in providing

some personal information about the people involved which assisted in building profiles of people." The personal information included their ages and their role in the company.

Erasmus says that it was important to have access to those images from Facebook as a few weeks later many of the Facebook pages were closed or deactivated. He adds that with social media applications there is always a possibility that information could disappear and accounts could be deactivated.

The information from Facebook was used to provide images to his investigation after it was published. It also added to his contact base throughout the investigation. Despite the Facebook pages being deactivated he had the families' numbers from the interaction they had on Facebook.

In an investigation in May 2014, Erasmus exposed a fake real estate agency run by husband and wife Ashley and Lerlin Goss. The story actually came from the finance department at *The Witness* over an account that was not paid. "The first place that I did check was Facebook to find out who Ashley and Lerlin Goss were. I looked at their Facebook profiles and it was clear that that these people were perpetual liars. I knew this from the information I had on them and the information posted on Facebook were very different. It also gave me insight into their relationship as there were posts relating to fights that had taken place." Erasmus says that "looking at their Facebook profiles provided an idea of who they were, what they looked like and insight into their relationship and character." It was later exposed that the two were running a fake estate agency and were not selling property to anyone, as they were not registered, but were creating debt for purchasing services.

Erasmus describes himself as not being "a massive social media fan" but admits that social media applications are a useful search tool. One of the advantages of Facebook, Erasmus says is the fact that "there are local communities that have group pages." Because he is at *The Witness* dealing with local issues, it is important for him to monitor those groups so that he can follow the conversations and stay abreast of what is happening within the community. "It hasn't as yet generated an investigative piece" but Erasmus says "it is a possibility that one day it could."

Facebook in this investigation, provided assistance in terms of research. Facebook assisted Erasmus in putting together a profile of the construction workers and of the duo scamming people. What is important to note, especially with print media is that images are important, and in that instance, Facebook provided Erasmus with images that he needed for his story. Another interesting point with regards to Erasmus is the community groups on Facebook. As communities are more active on social media applications such as Facebook, it also allows journalists and investigative journalists to investigate community stories and also provides access to a contact base. For an investigative journalist such as Erasmus working for a local paper, it is important to have access to the community and be aware of the conversations taking place within that particular community. Facebook provides an entry into that community for journalists but could also provide an opportunity for investigative journalists tackling issues within communities.

Jeanne Van Der Merwe - *Media24 Investigations*

Jeanne Van Der Merwe is an investigative journalist with *Media24 Investigations*. She writes for both the Afrikaans and English publications of the media group.

In March 2013, Van Der Merwe and Pieter Louis Myburgh were investigating a story about school boys testing positive for steroid use at Craven Week rugby tournament in Cape Town. After speaking to the five boys about how they were able to access steroids, Van Der Merwe and Myburgh were led to Facebook. Van Der Merwe says that it "transpired that Facebook was the predominant market places for these steroids."

Myburgh and Van Der Merwe, wanted to investigate the ease with which they would be able to access steroids on Facebook. As the steroid market is aimed at a much younger clientele of teenagers, they began their investigation by creating fake Facebook profiles. Van Der Merwe says that they were aware that revealing their ages and professions would compromise their investigation as the dealers would be suspicious of dealing with 30 year old journalists. It wouldn't make sense to the dealers why people aged 30 would want steroids and also as journalists because the steroid dealers wouldn't talk to journalists and risk their identities or trade being known and exposed.

Van Der Merwe decided on the name Leslie Williamson as she thought it was unisex and would minimise some of the risk to her personal life should the dealers ever decide to track her down or uncover her identity. Van Der Merwe elaborates on this by saying that dealers of illegal substances are often ruthless and well-connected. Dealing with them by revealing her identity would have placed her safety at risk.

The images they placed as profile pictures were taken off the internet or computer games and tied in with what they perceived as the image of a steroid user, someone bulky, muscular and a person who enjoyed action and Marshall Arts. Myburgh and Van Der Merwe also made contact with the steroid dealers identified by the boys interviewed but access was even easier than they anticipated because after sending out friend requests and them accepting the request, Facebook begins to suggest similar people one should befriend. Van Der Merwe says that "once you start friending these people, on the Facebook likes tool you get a lot of suggestions and there we found a lot of steroid pages popping up and as Facebook search engines get better it's just going to become a more effective way to market these things because it picks up on your interests and feeds you more of this stuff."

Once a person has a Facebook account and enters some personal information such as school attended or profession and location, Facebook automatically starts suggesting adding other people that you may know. As Van Der Merwe and Myburgh were "liking" steroid pages and particular kinds of people on their fake profiles, Facebook picked up on their interests and began suggesting they befriend other people who share the same interests.

Van Der Merwe says that it soon became clear that the dealers are "very free with their steroids and very cagey about their identities. They were also very well organised and had price-lists of what they were selling." Whatever Van der Merwe and Mybhurg requested such as pricelists and particular steroids, they dealers responded quickly.

The investigation ran for six weeks, in which Myburgh and Van Der Merwe together bought steroids twice on Facebook and once from a website. Van Der Merwe says that "not at any time were we ever asked our ages, whether we were over 18 or not or whether we had a

prescription for what we were purchasing." She adds that they purchased "substances that were not just illegal for humans but illegal for veterinary use as well."

Van Der Merwe notes that while she and Myburgh had created fake profiles and concealed their identities, "the dealers also concealed their identities. The account numbers provided to pay the amount into for the steroids purchased were different from the people that sold the steroids." One account was registered to a Mrs A Fourie but the people Van der Merwe bought from were male. Furthermore, Van Der Merwe adds that when the steroids were collected from the Post Office, there was no return-to address. Following the purchase, Myburgh and Van Der Merwe wrote their stories for *City Press* and *Rapport* as well as for *Men's Health* magazine. They never reported the page or took the investigation further by reporting it to the police. The use of Facebook in this investigation came to a halt once the steroids were purchased. Van Der Merwe and Myburgh did not take the information they had, such as the details of the bank accounts, to the police to trace the people involved.

The above is an example of how Facebook becomes a direct tool in an investigation. It also demonstrates that whilst social media applications are used in useful ways, it can also become the focus of an investigation when illegal activities are taking place. This investigation also demonstrates how Facebook is used to somewhat mitigate the risk to investigative journalists. It provided investigative journalists with an opportunity to uncover or expose an issue without revealing their true identity. It's somewhat different from going undercover in a traditional way as people still see the investigative journalists face. Facebook allows for complete anonymity. Precautions have to be taken when investigating a story both traditionally and with social media applications, however, in this particular investigation, Facebook provided a useful way for Van Der Merwe and Myburgh to conceal their identities and their physical appearances as well the possibility of being followed or traced.

This investigation also raises ethical issues about journalists going undercover when using social media applications, which will be discussed later in this report.

Hazel Friedman - SABC's *Special Assignment*

Hazel Friedman is a Senior Producer with the investigative television programme, *Special Assignment* on SABC 3.

Friedman began her investigation into South Africans incarcerated in Thailand for drug trafficking in 2008. This investigation was sparked by Shani Krebs, one of the South Africans incarcerated in jail in Thailand. While serving his sentence, Kreb's artwork had flourished. Through a letter to his sister, he asked Friedman to travel to Thailand and interview him.

Friedman travelled to Bangkok in January 2009, and conducted the interview with Krebs about his involvement in drug trafficking, serving time in jail and what he knew about other South Africans serving jail time in Thailand for the same crime. Krebs also talked about the human rights violations that the jailed South Africans faced which included not having access to an English speaking lawyer, signing documents in a foreign language, which he later learnt was a confession to his crime and the poor conditions in the jail.

Friedman continued interviewing several other jailed South Africans. Krebs admitted that he was dealing in drugs at the time of his arrest; however, the stories from some of the other incarcerated South Africans prompted an investigation into drug and human trafficking.

Friedman interviewed 23- year- old Thando Pendu. Thando revealed that she was lured by a lady in her township named Thembi into believing there was employment for her in Thailand. The job, she was told, involved driving ambulances. Thembi was trusted because she had befriended Thando's mother. Upon arriving in Thailand, Thando was told her job entailed trafficking drugs. After interviewing Thando and two other young girls with similar stories, Friedman says that it was evident that these girls were victims of human trafficking. Freidman says "the elements or components of human trafficking were there from coercion, transportation, lured under false pretexts, not highly educated and finally exploitation."

The girls were set up as decoys or in drug-syndicate terminology, referred to as "dead cows". A dead cow is the term used by the syndicate referring to a person who is of no use to their operation. Because Thando could not swallow the drugs, she was meaningless in their drug operations. Her set up was deliberate as her being caught would lead to larger consignments of drugs passing through as the airport officials and police officers would be focused on her.

Thando wasn't the only drug mule that relayed a similar story. There were stories from other South Africans including 23- year- old Nolubabalo Nobanda, also known as Babsie. Babsie's case was famous in South Africa after print and broadcast media reported on her being caught in Thailand by airport officials with drugs in her dreadlocks. Her case was similar to Thando's as she said she had been set up as a decoy and was lured under the pretext of a different job.

To investigate this story, Friedman used traditional investigative techniques, such as interviewing the ladies and recording their conversations. She recorded the stories and produced her findings for *Special Assignment* and print media.

Friedman wrote a piece in the *Mail&Guardian* in March 2012 about her findings that the young girls were victims of human trafficking coerced into drug trafficking. The article received a lot of responses especially on Shani Krebs Facebook page. One of the responses was from a lady named Louis, and she provided Friedman with a name of a person who was not South African but who visited the male and female prisons in Thailand often and interacted with the prisoners.

Friedman refers to him as Al. Friedman says that their initial conversations took place via Skype, BBM and Facebook. Al would visit the South African women regularly and shared Friedman's view that some of those incarcerated were victims of human trafficking more than drug trafficking.

Another person concerned about South Africans incarcerated abroad is Patricia Gerber. Her son, Johann was serving time in prison in Mauritius for alleged drug trafficking. Friedman notes in her book on this investigation that "Gerber created a website called Locked Up in a Foreign Country. She had assembled her own database. Her informants included professional mules who under the cloak of anonymity, wanted to expose the syndicates – either out of remorse or revenge. They had directed her to Facebook, where some of the

less discreet syndicate members had set up profiles, and downloaded pictures of themselves and a vast network of 'friends'."

Friedman downloaded the five photographs from Facebook. The photographs were of the men whom Gerber thought were the main recruiters of young girls into drug trafficking. Babsie positively identified one of the men from the photographs. It was a person she claimed was John and at one time had mysteriously visited her in prison. His Facebook name was Oge Nwebuisi.

Friedman used the positive identification of Nwebuisi to continue searching his profile for more clues. "Patricia (Gerber), Al and I were able to begin making the connections, one Facebook profile at a time. This entailed the onerous and sometimes voyeuristic task of perusing Oge's list of friends (he boasted hundreds). We would type in a name mentioned by a mule on a friend page, if it came up positive, it would provide a portal to another list. Al's surveillance of the South African-sourced Nigerian narcotics network stretched as far as Mexico, where a certain Kingsley appeared to be the big fish. He posted photos on separate Facebook accounts under two pseudonyms."

Friedman says that from both Facebook accounts you could positively identify him as being the same person. She further adds that his photo albums on Facebook were quite revealing as many of the dates on the photographs suggested he had been to South Africa "regularly." He also had photographs of "nubile young things, principally of African and Mediterranean origin, to whom he referred to as his little fishes."

One of the girls in prison provided Al with her Facebook username and password, Al downloaded the photographs from her Facebook profile and showed it to the other girls in prison to identify if any of the men were familiar. Freidman adds that every time they had a positive identity, they would continue searching on Facebook.

However, Friedman says that the identity of one person remained elusive and this particular person named Nonse Okeke had been the one to force Thando into drug trafficking. Friedman says she had searched the internet in search of articles or reports but it was futile.

"Late one night, I logged onto Oge Nwebuisi's page. In the blank line above the friends list, I typed 'Nonso'. A photograph appeared: Joshua Nonso (Bangkok). I clicked onto it and discovered a very brief friends list, some of whom I recognised from the photographs we had already identified." Friedman then saw on Facebook that Nonso was friends with Thembi, the lady that had recruited Thando. After e-mailing Al, Thando positively identified Nonso in the photograph a week later.

The above investigation illustrates how Facebook can be used,

• When working with other people who are not necessarily journalists but have information on the topic a journalist is investigating (Patricia Gerber and "Al").

• To assist in a cross-border investigations (speaking to Al and communicating on positive identification of photographs).

• Access to images that would otherwise be difficult to find as the criminals in this investigation had different names and pseudonyms.

•   Access to some members of the syndicate that otherwise would have been difficult to locate.

In the interview with Friedman, she reveals that investigating drug cartels is often difficult as there are many characters involved. Investigations into drug trafficking is not isolated to one country but is often part of a global operation. Facebook had provided Friedman as an investigative journalist with another platform to dig deeper and find sources, images and link people to the information received. Not all members of the drug syndicate are on Facebook, Friedman notes, but some members are and it provides an opportunity to find other members and verify information as told by the girls.

4.2.2 Twitter

From this research, it has been established that Twitter is the second-most used social media tool for investigative journalists in South Africa. Alex Eliseev from *EyeWitness* News, Athandiwa Saba from *City Press* and Andrew Trench from *Media24* have used Twitter to investigate issues of water supply, rhino poaching and expose a person for having fake credentials, respectively. As with Facebook, Twitter is being used as a complementary tool during an investigation.

While Twitter may not be used as widely and predominantly as Facebook, it is being used for the following reasons:

•   To locate sources for investigations

•   To build profiles of people being investigated

•   To gain evidence

•   For interaction with an audience on a particular investigation

Below are the experiences, investigative journalists in South Africa have had using Twitter during their investigations.

Alex Eliseev – *EyeWitness News*

In our interview, Eliseev notes that he has had positive experiences using Twitter for investigative purposes. One of his experiences relates to his investigation into the murder of Betty Ketani which was discussed extensively under the Facebook section. Eliseev used Twitter to tweet on the investigation he was conducting and to drive people toward his website. Twitter was used in this instance to gain sources and information.

The second positive experience, Eliseev highlights is with regards to an investigation into the state of water supply in South Africa. This was an *EyeWitness News* investigation conducted in 2014. The concept of the investigation came from listeners calling in on different occasions to complain about the quality of the water they were receiving and the lack of access to clean water.

The *EyeWitness News* team sent out over a dozen journalists to all nine provinces in South Africa. Eliseev says "We were going out into communities and investigating what problems

people were having with water supply and the quality of water they were receiving. We used Twitter to find the topics and to provide us with tip-off's about the communities that were being affected so we could get our journalists there. Twitter was used here as a tool to harvest information in real time, which is what is important in investigations - information." Eliseev notes that some of the information was about areas they had never heard of, particularly rural areas. As South Africa is vast and made up of many rural areas, it is possible that some rural communities would have been overlooked. Twitter provided the team with a lead to delve specifically into those communities and have a more accurate investigation into the state of water in South Africa.

With regards to the power of social media applications and Twitter, Eliseev says Twitter is powerful as he once received a tweet from a taxi driver complaining about an issue. Because more people have access to these platforms, it is likely that more investigations will be generated.

Eliseev states that "people have an effective way of giving us that information (via social media applications), that's where the power of social media lies for us as investigative journalists."

From the above example, it can be said that Twitter has been used as a tool to interact with an audience during an investigation. Furthermore, the interaction with the audience also provided information but importantly provided the team with the locations of the communities deeply affected by water issues, places they would likely have missed completely.

Athandiwa Saba – *City Press*

Athandiwa Saba is an investigative reporter with *City Press* which forms part of *Media 24* publications.

At the time of conducting this research, Saba was running an investigation into rhino poaching in South Africa. Saba's investigation focused specifically in the Mpumalanga province, in the Kruger National Park area, where there has been a high number of rhino poaching cases reported. However, Saba says that there were people who had shocking stories to tell about rhino poaching but there was no one that could provide her with evidence. "Twitter provides me with dates and times of incidents that were not necessarily reported to the police or picked up by the newspapers. For example, I can go back to a tweet that was sent out three years ago provided it has not been deleted and form my own chronology of events or incidents." Saba indicates that in this particular on-going investigation, Twitter is useful in tracking unreported incidents of rhino poaching, also gaining background information on the story, tracking the people involved and providing some understanding on what the story is about and the angle she would like to take forward.

Saba adds that she hasn't as yet got all the information she is looking for, however, Twitter is a useful tool in investigative journalism as it provides a further platform to search for information, people and evidence which is essential to investigative journalism.

Andrew Trench – *Media24* newspapers

In early 2011, there were a number of newspapers that ran articles about 25 –year- old Mandla Lamba. Lamba was supposedly the country's youngest mining tycoon. He boasted having made mining deals in South Africa, Zambia and other African countries. He also alleged that he was mentored by ANC member Cyril Ramaphosa and his wife and had struck deals with businessman Patrice Motsepe. In addition, he boasted doctorate degrees from the University of South Africa and Liverpool University in the UK.

Trench says that at the time, the *Media24* investigations team were curious about Lamba and how he had risen to success so quickly.

Using online databases, the team searched for company records which showed them where they should start looking to track down people connected to his past. Trench says the team "began sending out tweets on Twitter asking if anyone had, or knew anyone, who had worked at any of these now defunct companies. Within a day we had been contacted by people who had worked with Lamba and who were willing to talk about his business activities." Trench says that they had located people who were willing to talk about having worked or associated with Lamba. The use of Twitter provided the team with leads and a number of sources to talk to in a much shorter time span. Trench says that had this been done traditionally, it would have taken weeks, if not months to track people down and speak with them. Twitter accelerated the investigative time frame. Trench adds that it is still important to interview people directly; however, Twitter is not a primary tool in an investigation but a complementary one. This is further enforced by the fact that Trench and the team also searched online databases and documents for verification and to search for people to talk to.

In this particular investigation, Twitter was able to generate sources and leads quickly. This is important in investigative journalism for two reasons. Firstly, without Twitter, Trench admits it would have taken much longer to find people and without the people there would be other evidence but it would likely have taken much longer to verify all the other evidence. Secondly, in investigative journalism it is important to act on information as quickly as possible as people and information can "disappear". With the quick leads and sources, *Media 24* investigations were able to piece the investigation together and act swiftly in exposing Lamba as a fraud. Lamba was later arrested and charged with fraud.

4.3 Ethical Concerns of the use of social media in Investigative Journalism

Investigative journalists in South Africa agree that the same ethics that apply to traditional investigative journalism apply to the digital world. South African journalists are bound by the South African Press Code (2015) when conducting their investigations which mainly reaffirms that news should be accurate and fair and journalists should gather news in an honest manner "unless public interest or their safety dictates otherwise."(South African Press Code: 2015)

While the South African Press Code (2015) does not make mention of the use of social media applications, it does stress the importance of ethical standards that journalists need to adhere to. This includes accurate reporting on issues of public interest and the protection of children, victims of rape and HIV-infected persons.

From the above investigations mentioned, the use of social media applications in investigative journalism does raise ethical issues. These include:

• Invasion of privacy by viewing profiles

• Deleting material

• The use of photographs from Facebook and Twitter

• Creating fake Facebook and Twitter profiles

• Verification

The investigative journalists maintain that information posted on social media applications can be used. If the account is not restricted by privacy settings, then it is not an invasion of privacy as the account is open and accessible to the public. However, if an account is closed, hacking is not regarded as an option. South African investigative journalists share the opinion that it is unethical and illegal to hack into an account. Eliseev says that "if an account is set on maximum privacy settings, you leave it, it is closed." Faull choruses this and adds that as an investigative journalist one should find another method of retrieving information as Facebook is not and shouldn't be the only source in an investigation.

During the interview process, investigative journalists were asked about their limitations when viewing people's profiles and if it was considered an invasion of privacy. The investigative journalists share the opinion that a person's Facebook or Twitter profile is viewed if the person is linked to an investigation, either by having provided a tip-off or the person is a possible source or the target of the investigation. In other words, only the profiles of the people that are linked to an investigation are viewed. Facebook and Twitter does provide its users with the option of setting their privacy settings on maximum to limit access to that particular user's profile. In the case of Lionel Faull's investigation into Neo Lesela from Eskom, he says "her account was open, and if you put information out there it can be used."

Faull further adds that after the publication of the first article, Lesela deleted that post that was published and did not change her privacy settings, which allowed AmaBhungane to further study her profile. It was during this period that the photograph was found and scrutinised showing Eskom documents in its background. Following the publication of the second article, Lesela had then set her privacy settings on maximum. Following this, the team was unable to view her account further. Investigative journalists have to be constantly aware that information on social media applications can be deleted by the user at any time; hence information needs to be saved. This is not so much an ethical challenge as it is good practice when dealing with information on social media applications.

However, should an investigative journalist not save that information and it is deleted, the credibility of the investigation could be compromised. A target of an investigation could claim that his/her Facebook or Twitter post referred to in the published article was fictitious after deleting the post. It would be regarded as unethical to publish information that is not true or deemed fictitious and if an investigative journalist cannot prove that the post existed, it would place the credibility of the investigation in doubt.

Investigative journalists in this research stress the importance of always saving the social media profiles of their targets by taking snapshots of the user's profile. This is especially

encouraged in the *Mail&Guardian's* social media policy which states: "The internet is home to much disinformation and false data. Be very aware of this, and make sure you are thoroughly conversant with your subject and source before accepting the validity of information received online. As with traditional reporting, take notes. Take a screenshot of any page you are using in your research -- pages can be removed from sites, and then you have no proof. This is especially important when using information sourced via social media. Take a screenshot of Twitter conversations or social network pages. As these are private accounts, they can be deleted by their owners."

Investigative journalists, especially in print media, regard social media applications as particularly useful when images are required. However, investigative journalists in South Africa maintain that the South African Press Code (2015) is foremost in mind when deciding on images that can be used. As people upload many personal photographs on social media applications, this could often include their spouses or children and other family members. The Bill of rights quoted in the Press Code stipulates that "A child's best interests are of paramount importance in every matter concerning the child." Investigative journalists have to keep in mind the protection of children and the dignity and reputation of other people before publishing a photograph. They have to bear in mind that the image they use should not unnecessarily implicate or defame other people that are innocent.

Investigating a drug cartel and steroid network is often dangerous and Jeanne Van der Merwe felt she had no option but to disguise her persona in order to make the audience aware of the potential danger that in this case, children, may become involved in through social media applications such as Facebook.

Van Der Merwe admits that creating a fake Facebook profile to investigate the ease of access to purchasing steroids was the only way in which the story could be investigated. Many of the children interviewed after testing positive for using steroids had confessed that they had purchased steroids from Facebook and the internet. Van Der Merwe says that steroid use is most commonly used by male teenagers who want to excel in sport or who want to have bigger muscles and 'bulk up'. It would have been difficult to convince the dealers to sell steroids to a thirty – year old journalist. The South African Press Code (2015) does state that "Press representatives shall identify themselves as such, unless public interest or their safety dictates otherwise."

Van Der Merwe did feel that the best way to investigate this issue would be to go undercover. She also felt that it was in the public's best interest for her audience to be aware of the potential wrongdoings that children are becoming involved in. she also felt that her safety may be compromised as she says that "you are dealing with people who don't even ask how old a person is when they purchase from them, with people who are selling illegal steroids for horses that are not even approved for horses, and they are allowing people to take these substances without so much as a warning, so they don't have a conscience." Furthermore, as Van Der Merwe had a fake profile, so did the steroid dealers. This could place an investigative journalist in further danger as she did not know who the actual person was or their background. Due to the anonymity on the steroid dealer's side, there is uncertainty about the legitimacy of the person.

It was ethically acceptable in this particular investigation for the journalist to create a fake Facebook profile as it would have been difficult to prove the claims made by the children

through any other method and by revealing their identity and profession. Revealing a journalists identity in some investigations may not lead to the issue being exposed and it is sometimes necessary, if there is no other alternative, for investigative journalists to go undercover. Ethical issues arise when journalists use undercover means for most of their investigations rather than only when the need arises.

As an investigation is often an intensive process based on evidence, verification remains of paramount importance. Investigative journalists in South Africa are aware that information posted on social media applications cannot be regarded as truth or fact and still requires verification. The process of verification should be regarded as good practice, as every journalist needs to verify information before publishing. The ethical issues arise when information posted is published as truth without verification. The South African Press Code (2015) is firm in its stance that "only what may reasonably be true, having regard to the sources of the news, may be presented as fact, and such facts shall be published fairly with due regard to context and importance. Where a report is not based on facts or is founded on opinion, allegation, rumour or supposition, it shall be presented in such manner as to indicate this clearly." Investigative journalists have to be honest when publishing information and clearly state that the information was taken from social media applications and was or could not be verified.

Ethical issues also arise when relying on third party information. In the investigation by Hazel Friedman into South African's incarcerated overseas, she had to take into account information that came from strangers. People have different motives and agenda's and Friedman emphasises that verification of the information and conducting background checks on the people involved needs to be a priority. Furthermore, one cannot depend on and use third-party information unless it has been verified.

Furthermore, journalists and investigative journalists alike need to be cautious regarding online sources. As with Van Der Merwe's investigation, people can create fictitious profiles. Information posted could also be false. Investigative journalism is dependent on a number of sources and evidence, information that appears on social media applications needs to be verified and proven from other evidence found.

In conclusion, there is a fine line between good practice and ethical issues. When investigative journalists fail to adhere to good practice, ethical issues arise that can weaken and threaten the credibility of the investigation, investigative journalist and the news agency. Ethical issues also surface when the digital world is seen differently to the traditional world and the same standards are not applied. Investigative journalists maintain that the same rules and ethics apply when using social media applications as when conducting an investigation using traditional ways. Journalists need to be aware of the South African Press Code (2015), despite not mentioning social media applications specifically; journalists remain bound by those guidelines and the guidelines by their news agencies.

4.4 Emerging themes

Are investigative journalists in South Africa using social media applications and which are the most popular or commonly used?

This research has shown that investigative journalists in South Africa are using social media applications for various reasons including furthering their investigative work and also to expose dangerous activities on social media applications.

The most commonly used applications are Facebook and Twitter with LinkedIn mostly being used to view a person's profile and connections. Investigative journalists use these applications most because of the versatility they provide to an investigation. An investigative journalist can access photographs, personal information, places a person has been to and who their connections are. The investigation into Neo Lesela of Eskom is an example of how a photograph can be used as a source of information, that a person visited a particular place, and as evidence, as Lesela was on official Eskom business hosted by the French sister company that applied for an Eskom tender.

The investigation into Tony Yengeni shows that investigative journalists are using social media applications and observing what is being posted. This indicates that investigative journalists have a social presence on various social media applications. Apart from using social media for investigative purposes, they have personal Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn accounts.

Facebook, particularly, is regarded as the most popular social media application and in Van Der Merwe's investigation, the illegal activity of selling steroids to any person regardless of age, was exposed. Facebook became the investigation and it was also the platform used to investigate this issue. It also provided the investigative journalists with an opportunity to conceal their identities and experience how easy it would be to purchase illegal substances as children were doing.

Social media applications are being used for crowdsourcing for information, to find sources and locate people and also to find evidence linking them to investigations. It is important to note that having a social media account doesn't make one social media savvy, however, having the social media accounts has afforded investigative journalists the opportunity to explore the advantages it presents when conducting their investigations.

What are the attitudes of investigative journalists in SA towards social media?

It is evident that investigative journalists in South Africa are not just tapping into social media for investigative purposes but are actually embracing it and using it to further their investigative work. The investigations mentioned in this research prove that investigative journalists are using it to expose issues and also to probe deeper into previously inaccessible networks such as Friedman's investigation into the drug trafficking industry. Friedman's investigation clearly depicts that Facebook can provide an opportunity to probe deeper and find members of a drug syndicate which is traditionally difficult to tap into. Friedman says that prior to social media "one wouldn't know where to start looking for the people mentioned by the mules, Facebook provides a link, and one link led to another. We may not have reached the highest person, but we got further than we would have got because of Facebook."

Facebook and Twitter both proved useful to Eliseev in his investigation into the murder of Betty Ketani. He used Facebook and Twitter to drive people to his website where he clearly stated he was looking for information. Furthermore, it afforded Eliseev the opportunity to conduct this cross-border investigation as he came into contact with journalists overseas who could provide him with information on the people involved in Ketani's murder who were living in those respective countries. From this example, it is evident that Facebook and Twitter, in this case, and social media applications provide investigative journalists with an avenue to conduct investigations that transcend local boundaries.

It is important to note that social media applications have accelerated the time taken to conduct some investigations. Andrew Trench says this was the case when investigating the fake mining tycoon, Mandla Lamba. After tweeting on Twitter asking people who have worked with Lamba to come forward, Trench says he was amazed at how quickly, "in one afternoon, we had people who knew him, had worked with him and were willing to talk. Ordinarily it would have taken us weeks to find so many people."

Has social media enabled better investigative reporting?

Social media may have its limitations, but what is important to note is that it has complemented the traditional ways of investigating. All interviewees have said that one cannot rely on social media completely to conduct an investigation. However, social media is used in conjunction with traditional ways of investigating. One of the important aspects of investigative journalism is verification and accuracy. Investigative journalists know that social media applications may not be the primary source but verification remains paramount and accuracy is vital. What is posted on social media is not accepted as truth.

It must also be noted that for investigations there is access to much more information. There may be more to verify, but there is more "possible evidence" or information to work with and probe and link to documents found. Profiles on LinkedIn and Facebook specifically can reveal a lot about a person and this information is available for investigative journalists to use and investigate. Ordinarily it would take much more time to put together what is now a "click away" on someone's profile.

What are the challenges in investigative newsrooms/teams with the rise of social media is there a social media policy?

The *Mail&Guardian, Media24 and EyeWitness News* have social media policies. This is important as it provides a guideline within which investigative journalists can work from. However, investigative journalists also maintain that the South African Press Code (2015) is useful in determining the boundaries within which to work in. The rule is simple and that is: verification. One cannot publish or broadcast something found on social media applications without verification. The South African Press Code (2015) still applies. If an account is closed, hacking is not allowed; however, if it is an open account, what is posted or tweeted can be used.

Investigative journalists did not raise many challenges that arose from the use of social media applications. They do share the concern that as much as these networks create a platform for investigative journalists to be used in different ways, caution must be exercised. Foremost in mind is the fact that social media applications are complementary tools and traditional methods of investigating still apply. Social media applications do not

make investigations easier or less strenuous, it may enhance the time spent on an investigation but verification, searching for information and ensuring that what is published is fact and not fiction, still remains.

How does the use of social media applications for investigations contribute to the theories outlined?

It is evident that social network theory applies as all investigative journalists interviewed are active participants of social networks. As the examples illustrate, the use of social networks and being part of a network have been useful in crowdsourcing for information, searching for information by looking at previous tweets and posts, and most importantly finding sources and tracking people such as those alleged to be involved in drug trafficking.

The research, however, raises questions about whether Twitter and Facebook can be regarded as public spheres. As indicated in the theoretical framework of this report, the public sphere is dependent on certain characteristics which include:

- Freedom of expression on issues of general interest

- Freedom of association and,

- Freedom of assembly

Facebook, specifically, does not necessarily allow for freedom of assembly and association as it is dependent on a friend request being accepted and one can set their privacy settings to maximum thus preventing "unaccepted" friends from viewing, reading and commenting on posts. However, a person is able to direct message another person without befriending them. The opinion of the ordinary citizen may not necessarily be heard unless it is viewed by a person in power namely, a journalist or politician. The opinion of the ordinary citizen needs to be broadcast on Facebook to gain attention. Facebook has proved useful in investigative journalism as illustrated, particularly for finding people and crowdsourcing for information but no investigation was prompted by the views of an ordinary citizen.

Twitter is also restrictive and questionable as a public sphere as it is reliant on people following each other. An ordinary citizen can follow a journalist on Twitter but in order for the journalist to view the tweets of the citizen, the journalist has to follow the citizen. Thus the view of the ordinary citizen is restricted to whether he/she is being followed by a person in a position in power. In this research, Twitter has been used to search for people and to look for information related to a particular investigation. It has also been used to crowdsource for information. The research shows how aspects of Twitter have been used for investigative purposes; however, no investigation mentioned was prompted from following a conversation or from the opinion of ordinary citizens.

5. Conclusion

This research shows that investigative journalists in South Africa are using social media applications to further their investigations. It reflects that Facebook and Twitter are the most commonly used social media applications for investigative purposes.

Furthermore, this research shows that much of the uses of social media applications mentioned in the literature review correspond with the ways in which investigative journalists in South Africa are using social media applications in their investigations and that includes crowdsourcing, finding sources, building networks, collaboration with other investigative journalists, and searching online profiles and photographs.

Profiles and Photographs

Most registered users of social media applications provide personal information on their profiles. Investigative journalists in South Africa are using this personal information to build profiles of the people they are investigating. Jonathan Erasmus from *The Witness* used the online information to build a profile of the construction workers affected by the Tongaat mall collapse. He used their friends list to find relatives of the construction workers and their contact details so he could contact them as his investigation continued.

Lionel Faull of *The Mail&Guardian* used Facebook to build a profile of Neo Lesela from Eskom's board tender committee. He also used a Facebook post of a particular day hat reflected her anxiety as Areva won the tender bid and Westinghouse filed court papers against this decision. He used the Facebook post to tie in with the chronology of events of the day. He further used a photograph from Lesela's Facebook album's on her trip to France as evidence to suggest conflict of interest as the tender bid decision was still to be concluded.

Hazel Freidman used Facebook to find information on the members of the drug cartel alleged to be involved in the incarceration of South Africans abroad. Her continuous searches on Facebook yielded personal information and photographs of the alleged people involved. Her interviews with the girls incarcerated for drug trafficking, provided her with names of the alleged people involved. Facebook provided her with the links between the people mentioned by the girls. She found photographs and personal information that matched the information provided by the girls. Some of the girls were the Facebook "friends" of the alleged dealers.

Cultivating communities and networks

Investigative journalists are using social media applications to build online communities and to network. Furthermore, the online community or audience is contributing to the investigations in a positive way. This is reflected in the investigation about the access to clean water in South Africa by Alex Eliseev from EWN. Eliseev talked about how the online community assisted the EWN investigative team on this story by providing specific rural areas where access to clean water is a problem. Eliseev emphasises that some of the rural areas were unheard of and would not have been on the investigative team list had it not been for the online community and their participation. This example reflects the dialectical relationship that newscasters are having with their audience. The audience is providing information and feedback on issues covered by the newscaster, and the newscaster in turn

is acknowledging the information provided by the audience and reflecting the input through their investigations.

Faull of *The Mail&Guardian* used the online community to assist him in identifying people in a photograph that were seen at a function which included the President. The identification from the online community provided the *M&G* with a crucial source that added to the investigation they were working on involving the developer and son of the male circumcision device, the Tara Klamp.

Andrew Trench and his investigation team used Twitter to expose fraudster Mandla Lamba. Trench had his suspicions around Lamba acquiring so much wealth at such a young age and asked his online community to come forward with information about him. The information sought involved his dealings and his claims that he had connections in the mining industry and was mentored by Deputy President, Cyril Ramaphosa and businessman Patrice Motsepe.

The online community is seen as valuable by investigative journalists as they are using social media applications to inform their followers not only about investigative stories already concluded but to also encourage interaction between the investigative journalists and their followers in on-going investigations. This adds to Rosen's (2006) thinking that the idea of the audience has evolved. It is evident from this research that investigative newsrooms are talking with their audience and not to their audience. There is now a two-way communication flow.

Crowdsourcing for information

Social media applications are increasingly being used by investigative journalists for crowdsourcing purposes.

Eliseev used crowdsourcing through Facebook and Twitter to encourage people with information into the murder of Betty Ketani to come forward. He used crowdsourcing to drive people to his website that had his contact details and explained more about the investigation. Through crowdsourcing, Eliseev received feedback from a number of people but also from people in the countries where the suspects were allegedly living. Crowdsourcing provided him with vital information about the history of the suspects and the court cases that the alleged were previously involved in. Through crowdsourcing and the people that came forward with information, Eliseev was able to build a better profile of the alleged suspects. It was after crowdsourcing that he came to know of the court cases that the alleged were involved in and historical information about the schools they had attended and business deals they may have been involved in.

EWN's other investigation into the access of clean water in South Africa also involved crowdsourcing. The investigative team tweeted that they were embarking on this investigation that would take them across the country to investigate communities' access to clean water and to assess the quality of water. Crowdsourcing provided the investigative team with locations of specific rural areas where the quality of water was an issue. Eliseev says that this information was crucial because some of the places were unheard of. The team then followed the traditional method of investigating by going to the areas, speaking to the community and taking samples of the water they were using and drinking. This investigation won an award at the Vodacom Journalist of the Year competition in 2014.

Crowdsourcing was used as an investigative tool by Andrew Trench to expose fraudster Mandla Lamba. Trench and his team tweeted to their online community that they were looking for people that had done business deals and knew Mandla Lamba. Trench acknowledges that in one afternoon they had "loads of people coming forward" which they followed up through traditional methods of investigating by interviewing each one. The power of crowdsourcing, Trench emphasises, is that it yields vital information in a short time span. Trench says this is an important advantage because often finding sources and people to talk to can take months.

Collaboration with people and journalists across borders

Investigative journalists in South Africa are using social media applications to collaborate with other journalists overseas and to collaborate with other people that assist in investigations. This is true for two investigations including Eliseev's investigation into the murder of Betty Ketani and Friedman's investigation into the incarcerated South African women abroad.

Eliseev used crowdsourcing as an investigative tool to encourage people with information to come forward relating to the murder of Betty Ketani. His tweets and Facebook posts also attracted the interest of journalists overseas. Some of these journalists were based in the countries where the alleged suspects were said to be residing. Eliseev notes that this story gained an international audience through Twitter and Facebook. He further adds that had it not been for the social media applications that he used, "many people would think that this was just a South African story, however, it has people from four continents involved."

He also adds that the interest from those journalists led to collaboration between him and them. The journalists overseas did not have much knowledge about this story, and did not have access to Ketani's family nor were they familiar with the legal system in South Africa. Eliseev maintains that that was where he could provide assistance to them. In return, he now had contacts in those countries which he desperately needed and these journalists were able to help him find information on the people alleged to be involved in Ketani's murder who were residing in the countries where the journalists were broadcasting from.

Both h aend the overseas journalists benefitted from this collaboration as both sides needed information and assistance from each other. Furthermore, collaboration during this investigation led to this investigation receiving attention beyond South African borders.

Friedman from *Special Assignment* used Facebook and mobile technologies to communicate with her source in Thailand. Her investigation was a cross-border one involving South African's in jail in Thailand for drug trafficking. After travelling to Thailand and interviewing the girls, Friedman recorded the interviews and searched Facebook for the names of the people the girls had mentioned in interview who allegedly duped them into drug trafficking.

Back in South Africa, she remained in contact with a man named Al who also visited the prisons regularly. Each time Friedman found one of the people on Facebook who were mentioned by the girls, she would download the picture and e-mail it to Al and ask him to show it to the girls to see if they could positively identify the person they claimed involved them in drug trafficking. This is an example of collaboration, not with a journalist but with a third party source. Unfortunately, Friedman says her investigation has not yielded much

success as the South African government maintains they do not get involved with the laws of other countries.

Exposing challenging issues

Hazel Friedman and Jeanne Van Der Merwe both agree that social media applications now provide investigative journalists with an additional tool to uncover and expose challenging issues such as drug cartels and the steroid industry. From their experience, both say that the drug industry is hierarchical as the people on the street dealing in drugs are at the bottom of the cartel.

Friedman says that some members of the drug cartel are now on Facebook and using Facebook to boast about their affiliations and connections to people in higher places while posting photographs, sometimes of the young girls they use to traffic drugs. Facebook provided her as an investigative journalist to put faces and study the profiles of some of the members that were mentioned by the girls accused of drug trafficking. Some of the girls claimed that they were lured to Thailand under the pretext of a job and upon arrival discovered they would be trafficking drugs. When questioned during a recorded interview with Friedman, names of the members were mentioned. Friedman found some of the members on Facebook, downloaded their photographs, showed it to the girls and asked if it was the same person that they claimed lured them. Friedman adds that in some cases, the names the girls were told were nicknames or a surname of the actual person. This made it difficult to find the alleged dealers.

Friedman says that without Facebook, the names that the girls provided would have remained "names in the air" without a face. Facebook now provides a way to break through the drug cartel and find some of the members. Her investigation did not yield any arrests nor have any of the girls had their cases reopened, however, Friedman has published the photographs in the book she has written about this investigation.

Jeanne Van Der Merwe interviewed boys that were found guilty of using steroids to further themselves in sports at school. The boys indicated that they had purchased the steroids from Facebook. Van Der Merwe created a fake Facebook profile to illegally purchase steroids from the social media application. She created her fake identity to correspond to the interests of a steroid user such as liking action computer games and approving of celebrities and people that are muscular. Van Der Merwe purchased the illegal steroids from Facebook on two occasions without ever being asked her age or being warned that some of the steroids on sale were banned substances for animals let alone humans.

Van Der Merwe says that Facebook in this particular investigation allowed her the opportunity to uncover this story which would have been riskier to do traditionally. She says that steroid users are often school children in their teenage years or young men that want to "bulk up". Traditionally it would have been difficult to convince a steroid dealer to sell to her due to the fact that she may not look a school going age. Furthermore, it would have placed her at risk as the steroid dealer could identify her. Facebook provided her with anonymity in age and profession and reduced the risk of being identified and placed in danger.

Van Der Merwe acknowledges that while she had created a fake identity, the dealers also create fake identities. When purchasing the steroids and depositing the amount into the

dealers accounts, she noticed that the Facebook names and account holders names were different. The dealers also work under a cloud of anonymity and investigative journalists have to be cognisant of this.

It is evident that with the use of social media applications, investigative newsrooms are becoming more integrated by incorporating both social media applications and traditional investigative methods. Investigative journalists are using social media applications to complement their traditional methods of investigating. Social media applications are another tool to assist investigative journalists in their investigations. It breaks down barriers in some investigations such as Friedman's but also allows investigative journalists to create barriers to minimise the risk to themselves such as the investigation into steroid purchasing.

Ethical issues

Using social media applications in investigations also raises ethical issues. In Friedman's investigation some of the ethical issues arise around the use of a non-journalist in Thailand to assist in her investigation. Ethical questions surface around the information he may have provided and whether it is true and credible. Despite Friedman's background check on him, investigative journalists need to be sure about the sources they use online and offline. Van Der Merwe's investigation raises ethical concerns around her decision to go undercover on Facebook. Investigative journalists need to be cautious as anonymity can be on both sides. It may reduce the risk of identification; however, undercover operations should only be considered when there is no other way of exposing the story and going undercover is used to expose issues that are in the public's interest.

This research shows that with the advantages of using social media applications in investigative journalism there are concerns regarding good practice implemented by investigative journalists and the possible ethical issues that may arise. Investigative journalists have not become complacent about the information available to them on social media platforms but maintain that verification and cross – checking is pivotal. Furthermore, investigative journalists in this research emphasise that with information obtained from social media application, verification is more vital.

There is a positive attitude about using social media to further investigative work. The advantages and limitations as well as ethics remain at the core of all investigations. Not all information is useful, but filtering and distilling that which is most useful to the investigation is important. All the investigative journalists interviewed maintain that the rules that apply to the real world apply to the digital world. This includes verification, making sure of sources and having more than one source, document analysis and cross- checking Facebook posts, tweets and any online information.

This research shows that investigative journalists in South Africa are using social media applications for a variety of investigations and for different purposes in their investigations. Investigative journalists are using the functions available on the different social media applications, especially Facebook and Twitter to, find evidence from posts and photographs, build profiles and search for useful information as well as to collaborate with other journalists beyond South African borders. Investigative journalists in this research agree that the use of social media applications is now becoming more common and frequent because of the successes they are encountering. Investigative journalists have realised that the evolvement of the 'audience' can be beneficial as the input can add value to an investigation

by providing new information. The interaction between an investigative journalist and his/her audience is beneficial for the newscaster as it has the power to uplift an investigation and add credibility amongst its audience as the online community also feel a part of the investigation.

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Appendix A – The Survey

Dear Colleague

Could you please take a couple of minutes to complete this questionnaire.

It forms part of a Masters project aimed at researching how investigative journalists in South Africa are using social media to further their investigative work.

Name:

News organisation:

Tel:

1. How would you define social media? _____

   _____

2. Do you use social media during your investigations? _____

   _____

3. Which social media do you use frequently in investigations? _____

   _____

4. How are social media tools used to further your investigations? _____

   _____

5. Can you provide examples or links to stories where you have used social media to assist your investigation? _____

   _____

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