The Internet and professional journalism: content, practice and values in Irish online news

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Abstract

Journalism's encounter with the Internet has engendered a multi-layered debate concerning the place of established news media and its practitioners in public communication.

The Internet and its affordances re-animate familiar themes in discussions of journalism, not least concerning power relations, gate-keeping and objectivity claims. In many popular and some academic analyses, so-called 'traditional' journalism is under examination because of economic forces driving the development of digital networked media, but also because the univocal nature of older media, with its enclosed culture, is considered at odds with the potential of a reconstituted public sphere founded in the open, interactive system of emerging spaces.

This study, related to a wider European research project, investigates the inter-meshing of Irish journalism's professional output, practices and normative values, as materialized online and as expressed in the opinions and attitudes of practising journalists as expert respondents, with the potentialities of the Internet.

Where much of the discourse to date is framed in a narrative of progress or, similarly, posits a research timeline maturing from examination of outputs to constructivist investigation of news work processes, this study seeks to find commonalities between professional journalism, as expressed in print, and the evolving online information ecology, and to critically examine claims of advancement.

To Emer, Jack and Sally

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Introduction

Over the course of several decades, in a by-now familiar narrative, the Internet has developed from its beginnings as an exclusive domain of computing academics and the US military into a network of networks that touches on every part of life in late modern societies. The Internet, with its uses, affordances and effects, has itself become a news meme, which the media by and large continue to construct in terms of transformation of politics, commerce, and culture, with dominant sub-themes in pornography, gambling, piracy, protest and democratization in repressive regimes and in modern democracies.

One of the root themes most present in media is the story of the growth in adoption of the Internet itself, and of the ever-diversifying technologies that form its component systems. Whether it is citing the latest explosive growth figures, or hailing the use of social media in emerging movements that challenge established orders, the Internet makes for strong, declarative news copy, and journalists have adapted readily to cover online phenomena just as they report on events in what heretofore may have been considered the 'real' world. Such media coverage, whether motivated by fear or by hopes of change, resonates happily with a primarily but not exclusively US-centric, Enlightenment discourse around the progressive potential of the Internet, in which exponentially expanding network technologies are seen as revolutionizing society or economies, bringing fundamental change to the daily lives and promising individual and collective freedoms or, conversely, presenting fresh dangers.

While much thinking around emerging networked communication is founded to a large degree on easy assumptions which, as I shall later discuss, tend to ignore underlying social, economic and political conditions, the concept of a transformative technoculture nevertheless holds powerful valence, not only in the popular imagination but also in the considerations of policy makers, as expressed not least in the rhetoric of the Information Society or, latterly, the smart economy, reflecting a largely economic, competitiveness-driven perspective of the role of ICTs.

A core concern in speculations is the flattening of authority by dint of the many-to-many nature of network systems, in opposition to traditional hierarchies and, in particular, to top-down, broadcast model communication. While, in this view of the Internet, it is seen as challenging power structures and relations through the 'wired', or connected, heterarchical wisdom of crowds, in others it conversely conforms with conventional neo-liberal views of the freedom of the individual as a consumer and market agent. If the standard-bearer for this movement in thinking has been the highly influential *Wired* magazine, this seemingly irresistible ethos certainly is common to and underpins much of the public commentary on new media.

Central to the debate on non-hierarchical, disintermediated communication is the role of news media themselves. Journalists are also part of the story, which has often been framed as one of an encounter, if not outright opposition, between old, traditional, corporate, top-down, compromised mainstream media (or MSM) and new, democratic, inclusive media enabled by the affordances of network technologies, with varying degrees of co-operation and complementarity. In the words of the slogan of the early weblog platform, Blogger, 'Push-button publishing for the people' presents a new challenge to establishment media privilege, just as new media herald an end to the Gutenberg era, with the advent of the Internet compared, in millennial rhetoric, to the invention of movable type. On one side, it is tempting to characterize professional journalism's response simply as dismissively defensive, as, infamously, in the case of CBS news executive Jonathan Klein referring to bloggers as 'guys in pyjamas' (Hume 2004); at the other extreme, the view that journalism inevitably must change fundamentally, as a consequence of the emergence of new media, also has a powerful allure, not only in abstract considerations of the wider Internet, but in its articulation by those in leading positions in professional digital news publishing, such as Peter Horrocks, director of BBC Global News and previously the organization's multimedia head:

> 'If you don't like it, if you think that level of change or that different way of working isn't right for me, then go and do something else, because it's going to happen. You're not going to be able to stop it' (Bunz 2010a).

If such positions, articulated by media executives and by a virtual swarm of online media gurus, represent simplistic, sound-bite oppositions, it nevertheless has become

clear that, at least potentially, the Internet is profoundly relevant to journalism, and print journalism in particular, beyond its use as a source of stories or as a set of researching tools and opportunities. Perhaps inevitably, much of the debate around online journalism has been played out with reference to media in elite nations, and within this perspective on the 'impact' of the Internet on news media, with an overwhelming concentration on implications for the survival of newspapers as commercial concerns (Anonymous 2006, Meyer 2005). While such deliberations necessarily touch on professional and normative issues facing journalism, their foregrounding of business and market rationales reflects an instrumental and often strongly technicist perspective. The purpose of this thesis, however, is to explore and problematize in a considered manner, in the Irish context, the interplay of domestic print journalism and news publishing with the diverse set of potentialities thrown up by the emergence of new media in a wider networked society with an altered news ecology.

One revealing exchange between two senior Irish journalists and a leading British news industry pundit offers some sense of the rough contours of the discussion. Where Roy Greenslade, the prominent British former editor and media commentator, argued that newspapers were dying, with their demise hastened by the advent of the Internet, Gerry O'Regan, Editor of the *Irish Independent*, is quoted as telling a public meeting with the theme 'Will Newspapers Survive?' that print media's attempts to ape broadcast media on their websites had been 'puny, laughable and idiotic'. The phenomenon of online publishing had crept in by stealth, he said, and newspapers should not see the Internet as the solution to declining sales. More damningly, much of what was published online was not news, but recycled 'dross'.

> 'Stuff is getting on the web and on newspaper websites which wouldn't get two paragraphs in print' (Kelly 2008).

Irish Times columnist Fintan O'Toole, however, said that, faced with the Internet, newspapers had lost confidence, and their response had been to cut costs and fill the gaps with trash, celebrity gossip and advertorial:

> 'If we continue along those lines we will make ourselves entirely redundant, and deservedly so' (ibid.).

Beyond the commercially orchestrated chorus of acclaim for all things digital, it is relatively rare to find publicly questioning voices give considered expression to what may be lost in the move online (even if it is not difficult to hear private utterances to this effect). In one eloquent expression of dissent, with a much-admired champion of the new news paradigm as his target, Christophe Harvie decries the diminution of regional diversity of coverage in the race for new readership demographics, but also less tangible cultural losses by comparison with journalism embedded in Fordist, hot metal newspapers, in the case of *guardian.co.uk*, historically descended from the *Manchester Guardian*, founded in 1821, and now a global online brand and a frequent subject of academic interest:

> 'The 1970s generation of *Open University* staff and students is ageing while the kid(ult)s are into twittering, gaming, and fashioning ignorance into the art-form of postmodern irony … And apparently it only sells 6,000 copies in Manchester. Certainly its website is a deterrent: a couple of news stories and it's straight into footie and "Guardian Soulmates". The quality press, at once hip and desperate, eagerly follows the new generation – almost certainly downmarket …' (2010).

The author's experience in a number of journalism roles at the *Irish Independent,* over a period of 15 years, and lesser periods in several other newspapers, combined with my journalistic and professional interest in new communication technologies and new media, has influenced strongly the conceptualization of the topic under review.[1] While, as shall be explored later, not least in the context of the critiques of Noam Chomsky and Pierre Bourdieu, journalism culture and professional roles are the subject of much discussion in the academic and scientific literature, to a great extent the workings of a large editorial organization are opaque to outsiders, even as journalism ultimately finds expression in the public domain. It is therefore of some relevance to have had professional, or 'coal face' experience in this field, though it is important to emphasize here, first, that such exposure should not be considered by any means a prerequisite for such research and, second, that one must be cautious to ensure that narrow personal involvement does not adversely colour insight or analysis. This is not a matter of anecdote, nor does such experience necessarily serve to provide superior access to specific items of information or a privileged sensibility. Rather, it

affords an additional and informed nuancing lens in the conceptualization, framing, conduct and interpretation of research.

In keeping with popular imagination, staff journalists in daily newspapers work under intense professional and economic pressure in tightly organized structures and processes, but this daily experience is complemented by a similarly intense sense of worth in news work and of loyalty, at least expressed, and certainly demanded, to the institution.[2] In print, such sentiments are linked to an appreciation of a privileged 'ink in the veins' excitement, or rarefied 'buzz' that comes with news production. I have endeavoured in this work to avoid the traps of cliché and professional mystique so readily associated with journalism, not least in self-aggrandizing accounts of the 'craft'. However, a background insider, or ex-insider, identification is relevant to this research, especially insofar as it relates to the roles of professional mainstream media, and furnishes an informed scepticism on some of the grander claims for online news emanating from its commercial and professional promoters and, as shall be apparent in the literature review and subsequent discussions, from sections of the academy.

Economic and industrial background

The Irish media environment was changing rapidly when data were being collected for this study. From a position of primitive and restricted television provision in the 1970s, by 2005, the Irish were leading adopters in Europe of mobile phones, with 96% penetration, although this was seen as at least partly in consequence of the poor provision of fixed broadband connectivity, blamed on state policy (Shaw 2005, Kerr 2005). At the end of 2004, 46% of Irish households had Internet access, although with wide divergences across socio-economic and age groups, and with 73% of users still confined to low-performance dial-up services (Kerr 2005). This slow development occurred, paradoxically, in an economic environment in which ICT loomed large, with Amazon, Google and eBay locating in Ireland in the footsteps of older digital technology leaders such as Microsoft, Apple and Dell. However, beyond these marquee multinationals, the performance of other initiatives focused on new media was more problematic, and the much-trumpeted MIT Media Lab Europe project closed in 2005, demonstrating the fragility of this nascent sector, and perhaps more

faithfully reflecting native commercial and cultural circumstances in the absence of government subsidy (ibid.).

The Irish news industry was in a reasonably healthy state in the period immediately prior to the conducting of the various phases of this study. Although overall daily newspaper circulations dropped in 2003 (World Association of Newspapers 2004) the underlying trend since 1999 had been positive (Truetzschler 2002, Media Live 2005), reversing, if only temporarily, a longer-term decline that had seen the demise of the Irish Press Group, whose daily *Irish Press* was highly regarded for its news reporting, in 1995. Newspapers benefited strongly from the gathering 'Celtic Tiger' boom, with unprecedented growth in Irish production, wealth, employment and consumption reflected in positive trends in advertising. Reinforcing the then benign environment for newspapers was the relatively high ranking, in European comparisons, of Irish newspaper readership. In 2004, almost 92% of adults read a newspaper, whereas the reach of morning newspapers (including tabloids) stood at almost 54%. Within this, reach for the *Irish Independent* stood at 19%, for *The Irish Times* 10.9%, and for the *Irish Examiner* 6.5% (Media Live 2005). While Irish readership rates are surpassed by several northern European countries, and newspapers took a greater share of advertising than the norm (van der Wurff 2005, p.9), the depth of newspaper reading culture in Ireland, beyond the first tier of analysis, is evidenced by the fact that Irish people have been recorded as spending more time reading newspapers than any other European nationality, at a mean of 53.4 minutes per reader, almost 10 minutes more than second-placed Norway (Elvestad and Blekesaune 2008).

Markets and titles

The Irish national newspaper industry comprises principally native Sunday and daily titles, with a strong presence of British publications, especially in the Sunday and tabloid markets, and a historically vibrant regional sector. The focus of this study is on national dailies, in part because the author's experience relates primarily to this sector, but principally because in general terms the mix of content in these newspapers most closely equates to conventional forms of news reporting, with, for example, Sunday newspapers carrying higher levels of entertainment and leisure material. In this sense, the daily newspaper is viewed for the purpose of the study as representing an evolved standard. The *Irish Independent,* the biggest-selling daily, had

a circulation of 181,000 in 2004, up significantly on the previous year. *The Irish Times* sold 116,000 and the *Irish Examiner* 58,000 (JNRS, cited in O'Brien 2005). This recovery would not continue, however, beyond the economic boom, and Ireland has since joined the international decline, with the *Independent*, the *Times* and the *Examiner* registering circulation losses of 3%, 7.4% and 6.6% respectively in the second half of 2009, and with recession particularly reversing the fortunes of the regional press (Foley 2010).

The publisher of the *Independent,* Independent News and Media (INM) has been the heavily dominant actor in the Irish newspaper market throughout the first decade of the 21st century, for most of its time under the control of the O'Reilly family, with, latterly, increased ownership influence from the telecommunications tycoon Denis O'Brien, who also has significant national and local radio holdings. INM, historically with extensive international interests, including in the UK, South Africa and Australia, has for some time enjoyed a dominant place in the Irish press market. In addition to the leading positions of its national and Sunday titles, it controlled 20% of the regional press in the early decade. In 2001, some 80% of Irish newspapers purchased were reported to have been sold by companies partially or wholly owned by INM (Truetzschler 2002).[3] The boom period also saw an increase in foreign ownership in the regional sector.

Discussion of the diversity of the Irish media presents definitional problems. Outside investment and the prominent role of British publications in the Irish market have skewed somewhat the perception of competition and of diversity of control of the Irish press, with uncertainties concerning the classification of indigenous newspapers and the perceived need to support the Irish industry hampering the clarity of purpose of the 1996 Commission on the Newspaper Industry (Horgan 2001). Debate concerning the concentration of ownership and control of media has been for the most part muted in subsequent years, with relatively rare public discussion (Begg 1997, Rapple 1997).

Specific concerns around the influence of Independent News and Media were raised in 1997, when the *Irish Independent* abandoned its long-standing policy of support for Fine Gael in favour of Fianna Fáil, urging voters to support the latter, in an infamous front page editorial titled 'It's payback time'. The switch was seen as being related to

the outgoing government's policies affecting the group's television media interests, and government documents were cited by *The Irish Times* showing that editorial support was linked to those interests (Horgan 2001). The description of the episode as a 'watershed' in Irish journalism (ibid. p.171) arguably should be seen in the context of the peculiarities of Irish party politics, reflecting divisions dating from the Civil War. In fact, the newspaper merely switched, in full view, its previously unhidden allegiance from one centre-right party to another, reflecting continuity both in the publisher's interests and in the broader political complexion of the media landscape.[4]

Some momentum toward regulation of ownership and control was evident more recently in the appointment in 2008 by the Government of an Advisory Group on Media Mergers, the report of which advocated, among other measures, statutory legal definition of media plurality, the establishment of criteria by which to assess proposed mergers, with a related diminution in the role of the Competition Authority, and the inclusion of Internet publishing in considerations of the media industry (2009). However, as yet, the report has not been acted upon, in spite of some discussion in the Dáil (Houses of the Oireachtas 2009).

Online news development

The Irish Times became an acknowledged Internet pioneer on the launch of its online edition in 1994 (Breen 1996). The *Independent* and the *Examiner* followed in 1997. The new online editions competed with the state broadcaster, RTÉ, which largely re-purposed material from teletext. Readership figures for various online entities are sporadic and recorded using varied bases of measurement, with uneven participation by publishers in surveys. While online newspaper editions display strong audience attraction, they have by no means enjoyed a monopoly in the Internet news space. In 2003, the *Times's* portal, *ireland.com*, had 115,000 users, compared with 25,000 for the *Examiner* (JNIR, cited in O'Sullivan 2005a). The *Irish Independent* did not take part in the JNIR survey, which has since been discontinued: its *unison.ie* portal (which included a variety of regional newspapers and the *Sunday Independent*) claimed in 2005 that it had in excess of 900,000 unique users.[5] Later figures from ABC Electronic provide an indication that, if the *Independent*, selling more in print, had sacrificed early advantage, it had since made up ground*: independent.ie* had 2,204,112 users in March 2009, while the *Times*, logged in October 2007, had 1,151,408. There

are no ABC figures for the *Examiner* online edition. While global brands such as Google and Yahoo! dominate Irish online user rankings, other significant native media players are the public service broadcaster, RTÉ, with 2,581,443 users in May 2009, and the bulletin board site *boards.ie,* with 1,708,718 users in September 2008 (ABC Electronic 2009). For most of their time online, the daily newspapers have provided free access to the bulk of their content. In 2002, *ireland.com* attempted to impose a subscription charge, but largely has resiled from this model in recent years, instead charging for archive material. In the same period, along with large-scale redundancies at the *Times,* its online operations were severely curtailed, with digital media activities retreating to the principal newspaper newsroom.[6] More recently, both the *Times* and the *Independent* have moved to establish online identities more distinctly separate from their respective portals, and *ireland.com* has been re-launched as a lifestyle and entertainment website. An overview of later developments in relation to the online editions of the *Examiner, Independent* and *Times*, which are the principal subjects of this research, is provided in Chapter 10.

Other competitors in online news over this period included the incumbent telecom monopoly, Eircom, via *eircom.net*, ISPs and various start-up aggregating services providing principally short-form breaking news, such as *online.ie*, now defunct along with *Local Ireland*, a high profile Internet venture that had attempted to harness local content from volunteer contributors.[7] Outside the realm of specialist financial or health publishing, with *irishhealth.com* a pioneering outlet in the latter arena, there has been little meaningful net-native development of online news (Horgan, McNamara and O'Sullivan 2007).[8] Few Irish websites have attempted deliberately to break existing boundaries of news coverage. For a brief period in the late 1990s, *Cogair*, hosted outside Ireland and said to be run by journalism and politics insiders, gained some notoriety by making allegations against prominent public figures, while *rateyoursolicitors.com* and *ratemyteachers.com* have also elicited criticism and legal attention (Collins 2006). More recently, there have been signs of renewed momentum linked principally to the growth of social media, not least in the arrival of *thejournal.ie*, which acts principally as an aggregator, *Storyful*, a Web 2.0[9] 'curation' site which at the time of writing appears to be in a beta or development stage but which has won significant financial backing, and *politico.ie*, a left-wing site associated with the current affairs TV programme of journalist Vincent Browne,

which offers subscription to back issues of *Magill* and *Village* magazines, among others. These journalism-centred sites have begun to appear in tandem with an outcropping of specialist sites, not least by economists, as in the cases of *irisheconomy.ie* or *tasc.net*, and focused message boards such as *politics.ie* or *askaboutmoney.com.*

Journalism in Irish public life

The largely *laissez faire* approach towards media ownership and control in Ireland has, it can be argued, given rise to a narrow media agenda, with, for example, the recorded invisibility in news coverage of social exclusion, and attendant stereotyping of disadvantaged groups, (Integra National Support Structure 2000).

While the official posture of RTÉ is one of neutrality and plurality (Department of Communications, Marine and Natural Resources 2004), its news agenda arguably converges with that of the printed media. The newspaper sector, historically active in providing coverage of reform in respect of individual liberty, particularly in relation to contraception and divorce, has been, from the European perspective of Wolfgang Truetzschler at least, broadly conservative and middle-class in political orientation (2002) and can be considered as forming a hegemony of centre-right concerns framed around the consensus politics associated with decades of prosperity. With industry retrenchment in the wake of the economic collapse of recent years, it is unlikely that there will be development to change this pattern, as the media generally contracts even as a fearful public seeks out more news (Foley 2010). In spite of the left-oriented self-perceptions of their mostly middle-class journalists (Corcoran 2004), individual newspaper titles in Ireland broadly reflect their commercial integration with market economics, along with roots in the power elites of the 19th and early 20th centuries. If the origins of *The Irish Times* lie in establishment unionism and, if, similarly the *Independent* and *Examiner* have early historical associations with mercantile conservatism, with recently shifting party affiliations (Horgan 2001), it can be argued they have converged in recent decades towards a hegemonic, market-driven, liberal consensus of Ireland as an open, low-tax economy, with competitiveness a key component of survival and prosperity in the context of globalization.[10] Nor have

journalists been immune from new flexibilities in the labour market: newspapers and RTÉ alike have seen shifts away from permanent posts to casualized employment and outsourced production, along with demands for extraordinary productivity with consequent impacts on quality (Brady 2004, cited in Horgan, McNamara and O'Sullivan 2007).

Through their development, media studies in Ireland have focused little on professional values, matters of political economy, or other criticial perspectives of the news sphere. They have been characterized to a large extent by an extended narrative of an increasingly liberal press emerging towards modernity in heroic opposition to an old authoritarian order dominated by religion and by the Catholic Church, and to a culture of censorship. The emphasis on censorship and control was reinforced by the 1970s outbreak of conflict in Northern Ireland, with the introduction of sweeping broadcasting controls until the mid-1990s (Preston and Horgan 2006, Woodman 1985). More recently, a draconian libel regime and its debilitating effect on journalism, only marginally lessened by legal reforms, have been to the fore in public debate (Foley 2010, Bourke 2004). A press campaign culminated in the passing of progressive legislation in a Freedom of Information Act in 1997, but this was severely curtailed in amendments in 2003 (Foley 2010). Linked to the discussion on defamation, journalism standards, in particular as they relate to privacy, have been the subject of some attention, with the establishment of a Press Council and the appointment of a Press Ombudsman in 2008.

Beyond this well-aired narrative of progressive modernization towards liberal norms, converging as it does with commercial publishing interests, the political role of the Irish news media, and with it the professional values and culture of journalism, have received little research attention, and certainly there has not been the same breadth of discussion and criticism of media that has occurred in the UK. A summary by Paul McNamara of Irish news management identifies the raising of concerns by some commentators of the rise of commercial PR and professional political spin-doctors, themselves subject to occasional but far from sustained press commentary (2005). The top-down, controlled nature of Irish news journalism is starkly evidenced, if not by systematic analysis of content, values and processes, in the relatively rare flashpoints of public journalistic conflict with political and commercial interests, such as the

notorious punishment of the *Sunday Independent's* Joe McAnthony for his exposé of the corrupt activities of the Irish Hospital Sweepstakes, or the sacking in 1972 of the RTÉ Authority and the subsequent prosecution of journalist Kevin O'Kelly over a report of an interview with an IRA leader (Horgan 2001). Later, the *Irish Independent* was accused of penalizing journalists Justine McCarthy and Gerald Flynn for their reporting of a landmark industrial dispute in which the publisher had corporate connections with the employer (Murphy et al. 2005). Returning to the arena of church-media relations, a more systemic failing, in spite of the celebrated challenge to theocracy, has been identified in the initial paucity or absence of coverage of the clerical child sex abuse scandals, which were originally exposed in reporting not by Irish media but by UK television channels. The author, the former journalist and since-appointed Ombudsman Emily O'Reilly, explained native journalistic timidity thus:

> '(There was) a sort of cultural censorship, an unwillingness by the news media in general to give the bad news until the populace has been adequately softened up in advance … the Irish media were still hindered by a secrecy culture. There was precious little access to court or other documents. Unlike *The Boston Globe* reporters, who were able to access a mountain of church documents and records, the Irish media had to rely on the testimony of victims, most of which, naturally, was uncorroborated' (2003).

Discussion of state and church controls has been combined with similarly familiar narratives of now largely eroded direct political affiliations (O'Brien 2001), at the expense of more analytical consideration of journalism culture. The press freedom theme was further underlined in the framing of research of journalism ethics by Simon Bourke, in which questions of privacy were strongly to the fore, in the context of consideration of new legislation (Kenny and Bourke 2008). However, it is noteworthy that, even as this exhaustive research of public complaints focused on politically-motivated moves towards placing additional shackles on the press, independent participants, including practitioners, at the associated seminar responded by broadening the discussion to the rarely-raised in-house issues of source proximity and transparency in journalism.

Earlier consideration of journalistic practice also highlights the reliance on official sources and the political lobby system based around the Oireachtas press gallery, with one observer concluding succinctly:

> 'In their treatment of official information, as well as in their domestic news coverage generally, the characteristic approach of the Irish media has been responsive and reportive rather than creative' (Stapleton 1974).

Such passivity apparently has remained a feature or perhaps intensified in the first decade of the 21st century, with a large proportion of news content thought to be sourced in press releases (Galvin 2010),[11] following recently confirmed patterns of 'churnalism' elsewhere (Davis 2000, Davies 2008, Evans 1999). Beyond the marginalized alternative press (Pettit 1997), attempts to break the mould, such as the publication of the left-of-centre *Village* magazine, have proven problematic commercially, or have been otherwise frustrated by political interests, as in the case of the philanthropically funded Centre for Public Inquiry, which briefly provided in-depth, independent investigative reporting on issues such as Shell Oil's Rossport pipeline controversy (Connolly and Lynch 2005).

The approach of this research

The broad context of this study is that of a restricted news ecology in, as described above, a markedly controlled, market-driven and elite-dominated public culture, with subsequent potential limitations on the scope of journalism and with little analytic research emphasis heretofore of professional values and practice. Against this backdrop of a media hegemony that arguably is more entrenched in character than in most western democracies, the promised potential of the Internet raises, at least, the theoretical hope of a more untrammelled environment in which Irish journalism might begin to evolve towards greater independence and diversity in conformity with normative values of news, and with it news work, as a public good. Such concepts are necessarily value-laden and, as shall be apparent in the review of literature, constructed in institutional and professional processes. Therefore, rather than depending on absolutist claims for reform towards an idealized end point of journalistic purity, it has been assumed for the purposes of this study that journalism,

for all its imperfections and contested meanings, claims at a broad level a community-focused philosophy and ethos that drives towards democratic communication, as shall be discussed in Chapter 3, and that this claim can be realized and validated to a lesser or greater extent depending on supervening social, economic and political conditions.

The period 2003 to 2006, over which the research has been conducted, coincides with a moment in the development of online newspapers where mainstream journalists first meaningfully confront the opportunity, and perhaps the necessity, to engage with the Internet. At this time, newspaper online editions no longer can be said to be in a pioneering, experimental phase, typified by very simple sites, with basic layouts constructed in individual HTML pages. Instead, online editons at this point are in a more mature, content management-led phase of development. Similarly, journalists who, a some years previously, commonly viewed the Internet as exotic and vaguely relevant, now see the net as part of their everyday work. This moment, therefore, represents the cusp of the transition from journalism as practised in classic media to journalism in a networked environment, where embedded professional values and practices and first meaningfully meet online developments.

An overlapping context for the research is the wider consideration in the US, Europe and elsewhere of the role of the Internet in democratizing public communication and in particular a strongly developed agenda of research into news media and the Internet. Specifically, this study has been undertaken in tandem with participation in a wider EU Commission-funded research project, '*The Impact of the Internet on Mass Media'*, and in particular a sub-strand of the research focusing on newspapers and on newspaper professional practice (O'Sullivan 2005b, Fortunati, et al. 2009, Fortunati, et al. 2010, O'Sullivan and Heinonen 2008). In addition to bringing a closer focus on Ireland within the European context, and blending methods in a deeper study of the Irish context, the research builds upon a previous study by the author, conducted in 2000, observing Irish newspaper websites and capturing in interviews the opinions of Irish working journalists on the implications of the movement of news online (2005a).

Outline of chapters

Chapters Two, Three and Four review the relevant literature, moving from the backdrop of the Internet and online cultures through considerations of news media

and professional journalism, to focus on the ways in which online journalism re-operationalizes a matrix of questions concerning journalism professional values, roles and practices. Chapter Two traces a path between the fervently articulated ideas of transformation associated with the emergence of the Internet, on one hand, and, on the other, the view of continuity of social relations, emphasizing the importance of neither technological nor hard social determinism, but tracing a path towards an approach that recognizes the potential of co-construction of new patterns in media production and consumption. Chapter Three highlights and examines relevant threads in the many-faceted discussion, for the most part deeply critical, of professional journalism and news media. In particular, it draws, for the purposes of concision and for his nuanced re-interpretations of now-classic theories of journalism, on the work of Denis McQuail (1994). However, the discussion is expanded to encompass or re-emphasize some important perspectives, including propaganda theory and the concept of the public sphere, the latter being strongly represented in debates of online media. Chapter Four brings the focus, most centrally, to the nexus of digital media technologies and professional journalism, in which a multi-dimensional, multi-disciplinary array of issues is explored, once again with a view to navigating the often polarized debates of transformation set implacably in opposition to continuity. The broad, central research question explored here and in the primary research is the extent to which journalism might adapt to the potentialities, most of them democratizing, of the Internet, in pursuit of its professional values and goals. This question is played out within discussions of news formats, multimediality, interactivity and hyperlinking, citizen and participatory journalism, social media and transparency of news processes, with a view to situating the research in a context informed by actual professional practices and norms.

Chapter Five restates the research question in specific terms: to what extent can Irish newspaper journalists, in the context of their normative values, their working methods and their outputs, respond to the Internet by developing and extending journalism? It sets out the mix of methodologies – detailed content analysis augmented by thick description, an expert survey, and focused observation – which have been used to investigate this question, and explains their rationale.

Chapter Six, Seven and Eight record and present the data developed by this study over a number of phases. Chapter Six comprises summarized and structured data relating to the front (print) and home (online) pages of the published editions of the *Irish Examiner, Irish Independent* and *The Irish Times*. Chapter Seven adds thick and detailed description of the pages, providing additional and more richly-nuanced material providing context for the analysis, particularly with respect to the divergent grammars of print and web design. Chapter Eight is concerned primarily with reporting the responses of journalists who were accessed as experts in structured telephone and email interviews and whose responses were recorded using a Likert scale. This chapter also adds further detail and description to the investigation of interactivity features in the websites studied.

Chapter Nine provides an analysis of the data, integrating the patterns of expressed opinions of journalists with the materialized outputs of their work. This analysis, and with it the necessary interpretations and judgements therein, is informed by the author's experience as a news worker across a period of change when production technologies moved from hot metal and rotary press to cold setting and web offset[12] and, finally, towards nascent use of the Internet.

Chapter Ten positions the analysis in a recently expounded model of journalism, along with some of the salient current threads of thought around journalism and the public sphere, while also relating the research findings to wider concerns of a potentially emerging 'techno-society'. Attempting to isolate what are, from journalism's perspective, the most relevant developments, it suggests avenues for further research and, potentially, action in relation to journalism practice.

Endnotes

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[1] I worked as a news and features sub-editor, as well as an assistant features editor at the *Irish Independent*. In 1995, I instigated the newspaper's first ICT section, which I wrote for and edited over a number of years, and during this period I was the initial registrant of the *independent.ie* Internet domain name. This asset was claimed for the domestic newspaper subsidiary publishing the *Irish Independent* and its sister publications: however, it was subsequently transferred to the plc holding company, INM.

[2] Season Five of '*The Wire*', written by a former Baltimore Sun reporter David Simon, succeeds in capturing much of the flavour, though with some issues specific to media industry development in the US. 'Journalists too find themselves inhabiting a dark corner of the American experiment. They too find themselves in a different relation to the city from what they once had. Beset by pressures of bylines, deadlines and prizes alongside problems created by cutbacks, out-of-town ownership, buyouts of the most experienced staff and declining circulation, reporters find themselves disconnected from the city they are charged to report. Some go for the fast track to promotion and prizes, undercutting the process of building long-term knowledge of long-term situations, establishing contacts, creating trust, and understanding more of the context in which they operate' (Sheehan and Sweeney 2009). Simon has testified to the US Senate that Internet dynamics and market economics are threatening 'high end journalism' (Gonzalez and Goodman 2009).

[3] This startling and oft-cited statistic has not been revisited since, so it is not possible to gauge in which direction INM's influence has tended, although it is unlikely to have grown beyond this peak.

[4] Equally overt political association was less controversially expressed in 2002 with the appointment to the editorship of *The Irish Times* of Geraldine Kennedy, who previously had represented the neo-liberal Progressive Democrats in the Dáil. Kennedy was a respected political correspondent who had returned to reporting politics only after a sanitizing interval in other roles at the *Times*.

[5] It is most likely that this figure is drawn from hosting server statistics, a method usually considered unreliable and open to misinterpretation, with sometimes highly exaggerated statistics for 'hits'.

[6] Even as the organization reined in its ambitions in the sphere of online news, it was later prepared to take an unprecedented gamble on property, and was reported to have invested €50m in the estate agency website *myhome.ie* in August 2006.

[7] The *Local Ireland* experiment delivered a blunt lesson to those promoting the concept of amateur content producers at this time in Ireland. The site was set up in geographic segments, most of which remained devoid of contributions before it was closed.

[8] In the COST A20 research project on European news outlets, to which the present study is linked, it was intended that a net-native outlet be used for comparative purposes. However, no Irish website was suitable, once the since-defunct *online.ie* was eliminated from consideration, having been studied and coded, due to lack of original content. The site had declared plans to produce its own material.

[9] 'Web 2.0' refers to a perceived second generation of the World Wide Web, distinguished by its interactivity. The term is credited to Irish digital media entrepreneur and technology guru Bill O'Reilly, who used it as a conference title in 2004. The numeral suffix is the standard device for labelling software updates, and so it was perhaps inevitable that it would be applied to the web. This concept of advancement through discretely defined steps also was used by Esther Dyson, in advocating the application of fundamental free market ideology to the net (1998).

[10] Although there has been no formal research in the area, the notion that the media shared responsibility with bankers, economists, regulators and politicians for the Irish banking crisis and subsequent economic collapse has gained momentum in message boards, blogs and in discussions on some talk shows (Manning Undated).

[11] This finding of high reliance on press releases, constituting 'churnalism' – journalism based on churning PR material – was based on an informal study conducted by Dublin City University lecturer Martin Molony, with a mixed class of journalism and PR students participating.

[12] Changes in production technologies were stalled in an environment of adversarial industrial relations, which was not overcome until after Rupert Murdoch's defeat of the British print trades unions.

Chapter 2: Literature review – new media transformations and continuities

Introduction

The Internet has brought with it, in addition to an enormous volume of popular debate on the phenomenon, an explosion of deliberation, comment and research, across a variety of disciplines, concerning the implications for public communication of a vast, global, open access, many-to-many system (Morris and Ogan 1996) with, behind it, a global production and consumption infrastructure of critical economic relevance in late capitalism. Ideas thrown up, or revived, by the new ICTs range from the quasi-religious, such as futurologist George Gilder's description of the microchip as the Gothic cathedrals of our age (cited in Winston 2005 p.375), through a confusion of neologism-laden technophile and market-oriented understandings that have achieved a near hegemonic hold on popular but also economic, political and regulatory thinking (Stefik 2001, Freedman et al. 2008).

The aim of this chapter is to provide a focus and direction within this broad discourse (though it also might be described as a clamour) on those discussions that serve to form a conceptual backdrop to consideration of the role or roles of journalism in democratic society in the context of the development of new media. Thus, it is intended that the closer review in Chapter 4 of the literature relating to the direct intersections of journalism, public discourse, and new media is informed by a broader understanding of the theorization of social and cultural forces and their interaction with new technologies, rather than confined in a self-referential loop to the nexus of practice, ethics and professional roles as they relate to the net. This is not to assume, however, that journalism inevitably must be revolutionized, saved, swamped or otherwise necessarily transformed by the Internet acting upon it as an external agent – rather, it is precisely the interplay between professional journalism and new digital media that the current research seeks to address.

Technology, change and control

The debate as to whether technology is in itself, for better or worse, an agent of change is one which did not emerge with the Internet, and the themes and lines of argument that characterize discussion of the latter, though often couched in terms of the 'new', are well established. French religious philosopher Jacques Ellul, speaking in 1962, sees what he calls 'technique', indicating the technological order, in darkly determinist terms, according it an independent autonomy, with man unable to master and control it but instead worshipping it. Man[1], he says, 'is content passively to participate in technical progress, to accept whatever direction it takes automatically, and to admit its autonomous meaning' (1962, p.399). Neither technicians, scientists, politicians, philosophers, nor anyone as an individual can master technique. Ellul draws a most pessimistic link between technology and the ability of societies to master it for democratic ends:

> 'Only dictatorships can impose their will on technical evolution. But, on the one hand, human freedom would gain nothing thereby and, on the other, a dictatorship thirsty for power has no recourse at all but to push toward an excessive development of various techniques at its disposal' (ibid. p.400).

If Ellul, as a Christian philosopher, interprets attitudes towards powerful emerging technologies in terms of competition for religious fealty, such 'worship' is apparent both in earlier and later discourses around technology and society, and applied to pre-digital and digital technologies. The effects and potentialities of technology form a strong theme in much of the discussion around media, the press, and society, and the rhetoric of technology as a source of progress has itself become an ever-present part of our everyday media experience, through consumer advertising and other commercial platforms but also through state representations of new technologies via the 'information society', the 'knowledge' or 'smart' economy, education and IT literacy, and, latterly, so-called green enterprise. However, the technological determinist perspective of greater valence is that of positivist progress, and runs counter to Ellul's rather despairing position. From this perspective, technology itself allows us to do things that otherwise we could not, and so it is the driver and conducer of change and improvement in our collective and individual lives. This is the language

of ICT corporations and of official sponsorship of innovation, and it constitutes a frequent target for critics, not least because of its sweeping abstraction.[2]

John V. Pavlik who, as we shall see in a later phase of this study's review of literature, has written extensively on new media technologies and journalism, gives, towards the end of the 1990s, the decade which witnessed the initial wide adoption of the net, a broader account of what he calls the social and cultural 'consequences' of technology, from fears expressed in the mid-1800s by Ned Ludd through to Rod Serling's *The Twilight Zone* and claims for technology made by those such as Harold Innis and Marshall McLuhan (1998, pp.286-287). Pavik's purpose in his treatment is to provide a full overview, and includes later concerns, such as the fear that democracy may be overwhelmed by 'electronic mobs', as in the view of Charles M. Firestone (ibid., p.294). In spite of such qualification, however, his approach remains for the most part uncritically determinist, as it later does in relation to online news. It is expressed in terms of how technology is changing or will change society, and follows popularly familiar contours: he cites Anthony Smith's view, delivered in a review of digital newspaper printing technologies and frequently echoed elsewhere, that the information technology-led digital revolution is as significant as Gutenberg's invention of movable type, and he re-rehearses the views of Mitchell Kapor of the influential Electronic Frontier Foundation (and Lotus Corporation) that the 'information highway' could enable a 'Jeffersonian revolution' by allowing full direct participation in public decision-making (ibid., pp296-298).

It is precisely such de-contextualized debate for which Neil Postman, urgently warning of the dangers of technology, adapts Paul Goodman's term to accuse those who make excessive claims for computers of lacking 'technological modesty'. He says that Norbert Weiner, the founder of cybernetics, argued that such immodesty would have applied to the invention of the atom bomb: if it had been invented at a time in which computers were in common use, people would have said that it could not have been invented without them. Postman dubs the hegemonic dominance of bureaucratic, control-focused technology the *Technopoly* of his book's title, and says that Technopoly encourages such immodesty (1993). This environment, he says, entails a lack of appreciation as to what may be lost in the acquisition of new skills. It is important to remember what can be done without computers, and it is also important

to remind ourselves of what may be lost when we do lose pre-existing capabilities (ibid., p.120). However, as Misa points out, hyperbolic abstraction to Promethean fundamentals is not confined to the positivist camp. Those, whether modernist or postmodernist, despairing of the effects on humanity of technology, are also guilty of over-aggregated, reified and universalist approaches that ignore the particularities of differing technologies and their uses. Misa and his co-authors propose instead a sort of middle way, a co-construction of technology and modernity, as a methodological point of departure (2003).

In similar vein, Tony Curzon-Price instances, as an early precursor of modern techno-libertarianism, John Stuart Mill's 19th century optimism for the new communication powers of newspapers and railroads in bringing to England the ideal of the Athenian agora, and sees in this a forerunner of the refrain of the later modern era. Against such vaunted hopes, however, are set yet earlier-expressed misgivings concerning the new-found freedoms of the moderns compared with those of the ancients, as put forth in 1816 by Benjamin Constant, who saw dangers in the modern mass society of complacency among citizens who delegate power to representative governments (2009). This essay offers a well-synthesized understanding of the issues thrown up around technology, responding to the one-dimensional technophile claims, and, conversely, dystopian fears, by means of a sophisticated model of hopes, freedoms and 'unfreedoms'. Even if over-archingly technicist, this represents a useful departure from the dead end of extremes of the technological determinism v. social shaping positions.

Technology and shaping forces

If print and rail are the subject of discussion on 19th century communication technologies, television, perhaps partly due to the contemporary emergence of communication studies, served as the locus for much of the establishing debate in the 20th. Two opposing paradigms occasioned by television provide the broad contours of much of the later discourse surrounding digital networked media. In Marshall McLuhan's massively influential and still popularly celebrated narrative, media forms are powerful in themselves in determining consciousness. However, dominant in media studies, and credited originally to Raymond Williams, is the view that the role of the medium is subservient to already existing social processes and power relations.

In the social shaping view, a new medium only can serve to replicate those processes and of itself will not fundamentally change those relations (Lister 2008). A very close interpretation is that put forward by Brian Winston in relation to a later bout of technology fervour concerning digital television and its convergence with computing at the end of the millennium, with Winston setting out to demonstrate the primacy of economic and political forces, rather than developments in hardware and software, in shaping platform development as well as programming in the US, Britain and Europe (Winston 2005).

But, while Williams and his successors, such as Mosco (2005) and Winston (to whom I shall return extensively later in this chapter) emphatically have won the epistemological argument against technological determinism, the appeal of McLuhan's ideas remains current; they have strong new resonances in discussions of digital media and are particularly amenable to adoption by those promoting ideas of the Internet and cyberspace as revolutionary and transformative on a societal level. McLuhan's critique of print culture, with his portrayal of the 'typographic man' of the *Gutenberg Galaxy* as narrowly rational and deprived of sensory experience, set against 'paradise regained' in the global village of electronic culture, foreshadows many of the debates around new media, which are typified by a yearning for a better, freer world, and which carry through significantly, as we shall see in Chapter 4, to discussions of the role of journalism and its contents in the Internet era.

Lister and his co-authors are critical of the sweeping, sloganizing language of McLuhan: they cite Genosko's observation that his glib aphorisms, such as 'the medium is the message' and 'the global village', 'function as globally recognized jingles' for trade in digital commodities, and point to his adoption by *Wired* magazine, champion of all things shimmeringly new and digital, as its patron saint (2008, p.79). However, in their dense and finely-balanced analysis, they are not willing totally to exclude McLuhanite perspectives in the interests of preserving a pristine social shaping purity. Arguing that Williams' view (and by extension, much of conventional media studies), falls short in dealing with the turbulent upheavals of the net, they turn to the development of science and technology studies, with its tolerance of a divide between the culturally determined and the natural world, especially through the development of actor network theory by Bruno Latour. In this understanding, social actors are not exclusively human; nor is it things that constitute actors, human and

non-human, but networks that already are technological and physical, but, crucially, also cultural (ibid., pp98-99). This more fluid and inclusive framework allows for the retention of the social constructionist basis of analysis of new media, while also leaving room for, if not fetishization, consideration of physical attributes of networks, and recognizes the concrete existence of the likes of broadband technologies, laptops, mobile phones, and the Internet itself. In the context of journalism, it means that the consideration of processes of news-making and of journalists' relationships with sources and publics need not be abstracted to fundamentals that ignore the role of new network technologies.

The partial revival of the McLuhan-prismed perspective is exemplified by Paul Levinson, a fervent disciple who sets out to map McLuhan's thinking onto a new digital landscape, thus importing a medium-focused theoretical position into a contemporary, networked setting. For Levinson and others like him, the net and its new potentials are a vindication of McLuhan's vision of advanced media technologies liberating audiences from the constraints of rigid, controlling print (Levinson 1997, Levinson 1999, Strate 2001, Meyrowitz 2001).

McLuhan's rehabilitation has come as part of a wider discussion of the relationships between technology and society that coincided with the rapid adoption of new ICTs in the 1980s and 1990s, the background to which was coloured to no small degree by the science fiction cyberspace fantasies of William Gibson's *Neuromancer*, which introduced the cyberpunk theme of connected individuals joining online networks that freed them from the constraints of their physical existence (2000). Such fantastical ideas infused, and continue to infuse, much of the debate, beyond the popular, around Internet studies (Silver 2004) From this period of the mid-90s, discussion of cyberspace, the net, and with them media and new media, are replete with themes of revolution, escape, freedom and oppression, with a focus on the individual's encounters with new technologies of the mind and body (Dery 1996, Dery 1994). For the purposes of the present study, the deep embedding of the rhetoric of cyberspace, of digital cultures, cyborgs, and decentralized computer-mediated communication (CMC) are relevant insofar as they set the often highly-charged tone of transformation which colours consideration of digital media at political and economic level, certainly in popular media discourses but also in professional online journalism and

communication more generally, and share the attachment to the new with those outlining more general treatises on transforming technology, such as Kevin Kelly (1998) and Alvin Toffler (1990, 1981).

Ideas of individual liberation and fluidly free identity in the text-based environment of online virtual communities could also be matched by dark warnings of new dangers in role-play, with the possibility of 'cyberrape' in MUDS (multi-user dungeons), negatively affecting victims in 'real life' powerfully symbolizing the dark side of the experience of life online (Turkle 1996, Dibbell 2001). While it is tempting to dismiss as ungrounded hysteria the heightened, post-human rhetoric that sometimes characterizes these discussions, it must also be recognized that, even, or perhaps because of its fictional cyberpunk elements, the cyberculture meme, as an idea and set of values around abstract but powerful notions of inter-connectedness and community, appear to have been implanted in and to form an unignorable and enduring component of the discussion of the Internet, not least from a cultural studies perspective (Dery 1996, Gibson and Oviedo 2000, Bell 2001, Bell 2007). This applies even if, at the contrasting level of gritty social reality, attempts to deploy ICTs for progressive social purposes outside of the conventional information society paradigm have proven problematic (Trench and O'Donnell 1997, Cavanagh 2009, Ó Siochrú 2005).

In tandem with neophile notions of separate existences, the net also has lent itself to the spirit of libertarianism influenced not least by the culture in which is first emerged. At this remove, a reading of Internet and rock music celebrity John Perry Barlow's 1996 techno-libertarian charter, *Declaration of the Independence of Cyberspace,* must elicit wonderment at the naïveté of such disconnected, virtual aspiration as expressed thus:

> 'Your legal concepts of property, expression, identity, movement, and context do not apply to us. They are all based on matter, and there is no matter here' .

Nevertheless, however tempting it is to dismiss them as fantastic, it is often ideas relating to cyberculture, premised on a notion of a separate, virtual space, that have framed, at the point of emergence in a media setting of online technologies, a debate based on apparent rejection of the old ways of the modernist, physical, rigidly-

governed, industrial world of flesh and steel. Such notions of a new virtuality connect with ideas of individual liberty and choice in the face of top-down institutional structures (including democratic structures) that characterize much of the more economically-oriented, post-Fordist discussion of the net and society (Dyson et al. 1994). While the agenda has moved on, with the development of more substantial and measured appraisals of what is happening to communication and the Internet, ideas of digitally networked community have persisted. Howard Rheingold's vision of a revival of community online reflects a common popular longing (and media sound bite), and, rather than being dismissed as merely quaint, remains as a powerful theme in discussion of new media (Tavani 2004). At the same time, for much of what is seen in cyberculture, an irrational, devotional impulse is served: Bolter and Grusin, in their seminal text showing how new media remediate older ones, label sentiments related to the transcending of human experience as the 'theology' of cyberspace (1999). While their theory firmly rejects positivist ideas of a linear progress in media development, they are equally hostile to notions of cyberspace as a separate realm, and they take to task Michael Benedikt's idea of dematerialization of 'real reality' towards virtual reality, offering for mocking observation his preacher-like millennial vision:

> 'The design of cyberspace is, after all, the design of another life-world, a parallel universe, offering the intoxicating prospect of actually fulfilling – with a technology very nearly achieved – a dream thousands of years old: the dream of transcending the physical world, fully alive, at will, to dwell in some Beyond – to be empowered or enlightened there, alone or with others, and to return' (Benedikt, cited in Bolter and Grusin 1999, p.182).

Benedikt's incantation is a perhaps extreme instance of media theorizing that is far removed from the professional experience and values of those working in news media, where, as discussed in Chapter 3, rational objectivity, accuracy and truth-telling are normative values that are held sacred.[3] Bolter and Grusin, however, resist the temptation to indulge in parody and ridicule, and foreground the fact that, within feminist and cultural studies, scholars such as Donna Haraway, Anne Balsamo, and Allucquere Rosanne Stone, have levelled serious criticism at such musings. For them, cyberspace is a more complex place, with echoes of a past that includes elements that most would consider essential to journalism and the press in the 'real' world.

'We do not believe that cyberspace is an immaterial world, but that it is very much part of our contemporary world and that it is constituted through a series of remediations. As a digital network, cyberspace remediates the electric communications networks of the past 150 years, the telegraph and the telephone; as virtual reality, it remediates the visual spaces of painting, film and television; and as a social space, it remediates such historical places as cities and parks and such nonplaces as theme parks and shopping malls. Like other contemporary mediated spaces, cyberspace refashions and extends earlier media, which are themselves embedded in material and social environments' (ibid., pp.182-183).

But this is not to say that everything remains the same. The World Wide Web, they observe, refashions the printed page, both in its text element and in graphic design, as well as the CD-ROM or DVD multimedia, radio, television and film. Indeed, they see the impulse to pin a singular media analogy on the web as a fundamental barrier to attempts to understand and regulate it, and they cite the US Supreme Court's striking down of the infamous 1997 Communications Decency Act as reflecting the view that the net deserved the same safeguards of freedom of expression as those accorded to print. If the Internet had been interpreted as a televisual medium, the outcome might have been less favourable, as television, because of the immediacy of visual content, is denied the freedom accorded to 'verbal' media.

With the web's emphasis on immediacy (the opposite to escape), however, comes hypermediacy, Bolter and Grusin observe. As, increasingly, sites offer visual offerings, such as webcams, which strive to provide quotidian experience, so the web becomes hypermediated, with experiences of the ordinary represented within elaborately constructed settings. Thus, there is no reality separate from the world in which we already find ourselves. Such an approach, much more grounded in theoretical knowledge should, says Stephen Graham, form the basis for research, especially in the context of the developing reality of urban life (2004).

Political economy and lessons from history

The concept of continuity, emanating largely from within the postmodernist camp, has echoes from more historically-focused quarters. Writing from a political-economic

perspective, as part of their wider critique of the representation of ICTs as unproblematically representing progress, Robins and Webster single out for particularly cutting dissection the cyberculture agenda of enhanced communication and participation. They focus on Pierre Levy's claims for a transformed collective intelligence formed around global networks in a revolution of knowledge. Such radical techno-rhetoric, they say, is accompanied by a self-referential social and communitarian vision which is conventional and even conservative, and which equates with so-called 'third way' politics in which idealism is counter-balanced with 'a worldly accommodation to existing realities' (1999, p223).

The deterritorialization, in Levy's term, of knowledge, freeing it from spatial and temporal limits in the real world, is claimed to provide better knowledge of that world, even as, in this complacent view, it leaves it behind. For Robins and Webster, underpinning the technocultural agenda, with all its seductive appeal of freedom and transcendence, is, in fact, the logic of global political communication as it pertains to the world which we have been invited to abandon. Rather than a breaching of the constraints of that world, the cyber-discourse around community serves to provide the purified utopian articulation of the corporate ideology of global communication. The separate world that is being constructed and legitimized is the global communication space in which Bill Gates's 'friction-free' capitalism thrives, outside of place and beyond the increasingly obsolete nation state, and inhabited by absentee cybercultural elites, remote from the realities of life in the world's cities.

A curious side-twist on this theme of revolution and old-fashioned commerce emerges in the frequent comparison of the effects of digital networked technologies to the upheaval accredited to the invention of moveable type (Eisenstein 1979, 2002), so that, even as it is deemed now overthrown, there is no more dramatic metaphor for new media revolution than the advent of print. In one such interpretation, this recognition of continuity with print leads confusedly to a market-liberal call for non-intervention and regulation of the Internet in order to encourage its 'upside' (Dewar 2000). The revolution hailed here can be seen to be one that is deeply consistent with the established economic order.

Perhaps Robins and Webster's most strikingly impressive achievement in clarity about these matters is their squaring of the circle between nostalgic conservatism,

modernism, and what they disparagingly refer to as 'self-consciously' postmodernist perspectives such as those of Mark Poster, whose theory of a second media age forms an important pillar of the postmodernist view, advancing from Baudrillard and Lyotard (1995). Robins and Webster draw out the argument that if communicating by computer is a panacea for societies' ills then the fundamental problem facing societies is communication deficit. Thus Poster is categorized in the same camp as Al Gore, with his vision of an electronic agora enabled by the information highway, and Britain's New Labour and its easy solutions. And, in reference to Rheingold's homesteading metaphor in his 'fat book', they cite Cristina Odone's concise articulation of that oft-repeated, conservative longing for community in her claim that the net has been cast over the collective space often filled 'by the family hearth, the churchyard, the village market space' (op. cit., p.230).

This attack on the simultaneously escapist assumptions and market-friendly comforts of cyberculture comes as part of a wider critical, historically grounded treatment of understandings of media technology, unashamedly rooted in the English Luddism that struggled, not merely to fight technology or block progress, but to prevent the Enclosures bringing previously exempt realms of public life into the realm of the market. Thus the agenda of exhilarating advancement set out by the likes of Gates's *The Road Ahead* (1995) – as an antidote to which Robins and Webster explicitly position their work – and echoed in the pages of *Wired* and in the advertising and promotion-laden technology supplements of newspapers, is seen as part of an older and wider turn, concerning social relations and the mobilization of society toward a new, global enclosure marketizing around principles of profit, property and commercial competition.[4]

This information revolution, say Robins and Webster, is not something which began with silicon chips and microelectronics in the 1970s, before progressing through the IT and ICT prisms of the 1980s, with, later, the perspectives of Daniel Bell's information society, Manual Castells' network society, or the information society/knowledge economy held dear by western politicians and education policy-makers. Nor is it purely the result of a movement to post-Fordist economic organization. Here, it is seen to have deeper historical linkages with information processes and systems of organization that predate digital technologies. These relate

to access to and power over information resources, including surveillance, as means of social control, as theorized by Foucoult and Giddens, and as seen in the application of Frederick Taylor's scientific management from the latter part of the 19th century, followed by the extension of Taylorist principles into the sphere of mass consumption. For Robins and Webster, far from providing an ethereal cure-all for the problems of late modern existence, the so-called information revolution is no more or less than an extension and intensification of this continuum, which is built around state and large-scale, transnational corporate organization.

Potential suppressed

Approaching the 'Information Revolution' from the perspective of a detailed and highly specific history of communication technology, Brian Winston, writing in the mid-90s, at a time when cyber-hype was gathering momentum, and ahead of the dot.com crash, also questions the notion that the emerging digital technologies represent the latest step forward in the inevitable march of progress (1998). Winston's is perhaps the most developed of the theories that addresses directly and in its own terms the agenda of progress embodied in technological development, and for that reason it is worth exploring here in some depth.

He expresses himself painfully aware that his view of fundamental continuity in western civilization over the past three centuries is in opposition to the tide of opinion, to the extent that it cannot but be doubted by people of reason:

> 'The popular literature on these matters and the media resound with visions of techno-glory or apocalypse, the same set of phenomena being the source for both styles of pontificating. Curiously, more than a few supposedly scholarly works, again both the technophiliac and the jeremiad, exhibit the same traits – fervid but purblind imagination, unbalanced judgements and unidimensional insights' (ibid., p.2).

Winston's direct, polemical style perhaps fosters the view that all others considering technology evolution with regard to communication and democracy see no complexity or dangers, even though this is not his primary message. As outlined above, commentators such as Pavlik (2008), the more frequent focus of whose work is journalism and news media, are also capable of perceiving dangers in digital systems:

those reviewing technological 'progress' do not necessarily always offer straightforwardly celebratory accounts of changes taking place. However, Winston offers a more fundamental understanding of technological progress to that encountered in the voluminous but frequently inchoate 'birth of the Internet' literature in this area, which often sits between academic, business-academic, and popular (Naughton 2000). Instead, Winston demonstrates that the historical record reveals a slower pace of change than usually appreciated. More importantly, his view reveals regularities in patterns of innovation, in the relationship between science and technology, in how ideas occur, in the development of prototypes, and in the balance of forces driving and inhibiting technologies.

For all his impressive mastery of the arcane nuts and bolts of technology, both metal and silicon, analogue and digital, in Winston's model it is the social sphere, lying between science on one side and technology on the other, that conditions and determines developments. Borrowing from Saussure and Chomsky, he applies a linguistic metaphor to characterize a technology as the performance, through ideation, of a pre-existing scientific competence. The humans involved in this process are acting in a social context, and supervening social necessities, sometimes relating in turn to already implemented technologies, determine the progress of particular developments from prototype to invention, labelled, in this model, technological performance. Winston shows that it is because of this social determination that new technologies, or, at least, the ideas for them, can be seen to emerge at similar times, as in the cases of the telegraph, the telephone (subject of protracted legal battles), television, and the transistor, forerunner of the microchip. It is at this stage of invention that the legendary heroes of technology are located and subsequently celebrated. But, however much it is needed, the technology must win acceptance in the marketplace, and it is here that it must confront existing institutional and business conditions, in a process that necessitates conflict with established interests. Thus, there is an internal contradiction in the promotion of innovation:

> 'As a society we are schizophrenic about machines. On the one hand, although perhaps with an increasingly jaundiced eye, we still believe in the inevitability of progress. On the other hand we control every advance by conforming it so that it "fits" to pre-existing social patterns' (Winston 1998, p.11).

If social necessity is the accelerator that transforms the prototype into a diffused invention, then there is also a brake which limits the potential of the technology to disrupt social formations. This is what Winston calls the 'law' of the suppression of radical potential. It is difficult to invent something that will put other concerns out of business, and this difficulty increases with the scale of the threatened business. Winston is circumspect about his 'law', carefully drawing attention to its placement in inverted commas and emphasizing that the word 'suppression' should not be taken, as in its hardest sense, to mean overt prohibition or conspiracy. However, he also insists that this 'law' does not refer solely to the concept of development cycles confined to business; he asserts that it also works to ensure the survival of social institutions, such as family, home and workplace, and 'above all, the great corporation as the primary institution of our society' (ibid., p.13).

The outcome of the struggle between supervening necessity and the 'law' of suppression is production – that is, the straightforward success of the innovation – spin-offs, or redundancy. Perhaps the most interesting category here is the spin-off, which occurs when a technology is adopted for purposes other than that of the core intent of its inventor, or grows out of another technology developed with different aims. Winston cites video games as a spin-off from the computer microchip; audio CDs, he points out, were originally developed to serve as computer memory, then failed as a video format, only to emerge successfully as an audio medium, before reverting to their original intended purpose as the CD-ROM. His history is replete with such telling instances of adoption and suppression, in which social forces, including those relating to existing uses of technologies, shape the eventual adoption and reception of technologies. However, it is in relation to the Internet that he makes some of his most strongly-termed observations.

The birth-of-the-Internet narrative

Winston's model maps well onto the emergence and development of the net. It is not difficult to see how MUDs (multi-user dungeons), search engines, forums, blogs, YouTube and Twitter – Internet phenomena that variously predate and post-date his history – can be classified as spin-off technologies that were not foreseen, much less intended, by the feted pioneers of the net, and it is his thesis that the history of the net, in spite of claims of radical exceptionalism, differs little from accounts of other

networks or technologies more generally. Looking at a compressed narrative of the development of the Internet, it is striking how Winston succeeds in mapping his theory onto the social, political and commercial forces in play, in opposition to more traditional – here dubbed technicist – tales of magical conjurings (Hafner 1996, Hafner and Lyon 1996). Norbert Weiner's information theory commoditizes information, 'draining it of semantic content', says Winston (op. cit., p.322). Timesharing of computers was first promoted by those with interests in mainframe computing, in opposition to mini computers, then by promoters of mini computer companies against PCs. Vannevar Bush's famous 1945 article, *'As we may think',* describing the memex, a machine in which could be accessed by associate means rather than by indexing, all of human knowledge, represented the first published expression of the ideation of the web, and came ahead of ENIAC, the first electronic computer, which dates from 1946. Similar ideas for the breaking up of information into small 'distributed' chunks or 'packets' were developed simultaneously in the early 1960s in the US and in Britain, the supervening social necessity being protection from nuclear attack, just as the accelerator for the development of mainframes was military.

Joseph Licklider's famed promotion of an integrated network though ARPANET was based on the distancing of the technology from the idea of time-sharing mainframes owned by mutually jealous institutions, and interposing instead mini computers as 'Interface Message Processors', communicating in a common language. Its adoption of packet switching came after the re-discovery of the concept, which had been suppressed following its rejection by AT&T. Although the lavishly-funded scheme was located in academic institutions, heightening in almost all subsequent accounts the sense of its association with enlightenment and knowledge, it served an essentially non-academic or computer science agenda, being emphatically a project of the then much politically and financially favoured US military which, says Winston, 'hovered like Banquo's ghost over the feast' (ibid., p.327).

In 1973, with several networks in operation, Vint Cerf, now popularly dubbed the 'father of the Internet', presented proposals for what was to become Transmission Control Protocol, the essential software at the heart of the net and, at the same conference in England, the birth of Cerf's child was relayed via email. It was this technology, combined with the international dimension, that boosted the network's

appeal in a PR campaign, after a fallow initial period. As the number of elite users of the network grew, so also did the idea that they were independent of the network's military origins 'to a degree unique in the history of telecommunications systems, in the hands of its users'. But, says Winston, at least until the collapse of the Soviet Union, it was still maintained for its original defensive purpose:

> 'The noisier network users were, the louder they proclaimed their power, the better hidden this real purpose remained' (ibid., p.331).

When ARPANET's cheaper, more practical successor, allowing wider access among non-computer science academics, was subsequently developed, it was inevitable, says Winston, that it would be handed over by the American National Science Foundation to the private sector, with the commercialization of online services heralding the arrival of Compuserve, America Online, Prodigy and millions of online users by the mid-90s. Those users became customers for content providers Time Warner, Bertelsmann and the French group, Hachette.[5] The physical network backbone, similarly, was surrendered by the NSF to the telecoms giants Sprint, Ameritech and Pacific Bell. For Winston, the arrival of Microsoft represents the final phase in the suppression of the net's radical potential, in which the technology is shared among established interests, minimizing its business threat. The entry of Microsoft and others[6] into the world of media publishing can be viewed as an action borne out of fear.

Winston makes relatively little of the invention by Tim Berners Lee of hypertext transfer protocol at CERN, other than to mark this as a development that would pave the way for the opening for business of the World Wide Web. It is, of course, by Berners Lee's own account, a most striking example of the emergence of a technological application as a spin-off, since the system was originally conceived as a means for sharing information among physicists, although Berners Lee subsequently has argued for its freedom from commercial and other influences (1999). It is this seemingly recurrent and naive impulse towards breaking the shackles of political and commercial power that Winston identifies as emerging in the movement from ARPANET to Internet, but he has little time for it. Those who believed they were in a brave new world of democratic communication were, says Winston, 'simply ignoring the reality of their situation'; those in the corporate world who indulged in similar

rhetoric, (sometimes in opposition to Microsoft's late entry to the fray, in a curious eddy current), were engaged in selling 'silicon snake oil', a reference to Clifford Stoll's hypocrisy-busting popular work (1996).[7]

Winston pushes his theory too far, however, when he extrapolates riskily into the domain of the futurist. Surprisingly, given his impressive grasp of technology history, he falls prey to a commonly-expressed fear of the time, speaking of the net lumbering under its own weight. He focuses on the Internet's technical inadequacies as more users come online, on the information clutter that he predicts will frustrate Vannevar Bush's vision, and, in particular, on what he sees as vain hopes for the development of e-commerce, and so he fails to anticipate broadband, Google algorithms, eBay, Amazon, iTunes and, more recently, Facebook 'Likes'. If paradoxically, he falls into the crystal ball trap that was the occupational hazard of many of those engaged in hyping the net in the 1990s, it is also easy to be wise at this remove. More importantly, regardless of these particular misfirings, Winston's theory provides a valuably balanced model of the factors and influences at work in the adoption of media technologies that chimes with wider analyses seeking to restore the balance towards, if not an exclusively social shaping interpretation, one that recognizes a more complex narrative.

In a later discussion expressing scepticism at the new bout of excitement over social networking, Winston engages in repair of his earlier pronouncements, updating to apply the 'law' of the suppression of radical potential to social networking sites, instancing the deal between YouTube and the music industry as evidence of its operation (2008). And, in the setting of a wider history of media and communication technologies, Winston sounds the alarm for freedom of expression which, he argues, in spite of an apparent growth of liberal tolerance, for example, with regard to pornography or the portrayal of violence, is under threat from market forces, as new media are accorded lesser privileges and as people are distracted, if not bamboozled, by the rhetoric of technological progress in media technologies over the past 50 years (2005).

The refined model of innovation and suppression outlined in Winston's work reaches far beyond the perhaps more widely-recognized and applied diffusion of innovations approach of Rogers (1995), which confines itself to the more familiar area of product

adoption by consumers; perhaps more significantly, it sits complementarily with Fidler's more developed concept of mediamorphosis (1997), which also foregrounds continuities between converging media forms, in particular in relation to propagation, which is said to occur when new media formats perpetuate valued traits of existing forms, and survival, which refers to the necessity for adaptation of existing media faced with new, possibly superior rivals. A parallel, earlier instance of a broader-based approach is that of Hugh Mackay and Tim O'Sullivan, who, in the introduction to their eclectically edited volume of disparate perspectives (ranging from Rheingold to Raymond Williams), argue for the importance of a distinction between 'old media in new times' and 'new media' (1999, p.4). There is, they say, no simple, or simplistic answer to the question of technological determinism: an exclusive focus on new media transformations is to be avoided, yet, although press, film, television and radio embody and reflect deep continuities, they also can experience radical change. Applying this understanding to news media, this analysis would integrate the changes seen in social media and in transnational news sites with the continuation of existing media forms.

The market meets the postmodern

Paschal Preston (2001) builds on Winston's critique of the seductive appeal of technological progress with a deeply-layered analysis of the assumptions surrounding current pronouncements concerning the digital realm. In particular, he sets up for attack those fashionable voices emerging in the 90s, preaching transformation of the social, economic, political, and cultural arenas of late modernity. Among the most influential of these still in the early 21st century, such is the appeal of their blend of techno-utopianism and neo-liberalism, are Gates (1995), Negroponte (1996), founder of the MIT Media Lab, and Esther Dyson (1994, 1998).

Many of the ideas expounded in this genre echo and elaborate Alvin Toffler's Third Wave theory which, in essence, posits the notion that new ICTs have heralded a transformation on the scale and significance of those of the agricultural and industrial revolutions (1981). In an overview of this school of thought, Preston identifies as being at its core Toffler's contention that existing left v. right, worker v. capital formations in society are now redundant – replaced with a new struggle between digital technology-based third wave interests and those of the second wave, industrial

legacy and their associated cultures.[8] Preston dismisses the third wave view as 'hegemonic hype' (op. cit., p.32), basing his objections on its blindness towards historical considerations of the roles of previous major technology systems in industrial capitalism, their omission of empirical grounding, and a high-tech elitist abstraction that elides the reality of social conflicts.[9] Instead, he deploys post-Fordism, and specifically the neo-Schumpeterian model as revived by Christopher Freeman, as a more valid starting point for consideration of questions concerning new ICTs. This model, based on shorter periods of development, of around 50 years, while still freighted with some elements of technological determinism, has the flexibility to include not only new technology systems but also matching institutional and organizational changes: here, socio-institutional factors are not dismissed or ignored as subordinate to the techno-economic; it does not rely on a celebration of a singular shift away from industrialized mass production; its systemic approach to interpreting change as a process of crisis and restructuring through identifiable cycles answers postmodernism's 'singular meta-narrative of the end of meta-narratives' (ibid., p.41) and remains relatively open as to the direction of future developments.

For Preston, the notion of the information society, as promoted in a variety of forms and in myriad government, EU and OECD initiatives, lacks this breadth and flexibility, primarily characterized as it is by an emphasis on the harnessing of new ICTs for the instrumental economist purpose of improving market competitiveness, accompanied by the enclosure of information behind intellectual property rights, while failing to address wider public interest issues. The revolution is conservative – 'an inversion of the progressive modernist visions of the relationship of technology to social and economic "progress"' (ibid., p.75). Where Daniel Bell's ideas provided much of the theoretical basis for later-developed expressions of the information society, the market-oriented discourse's own development and continued persistence and prevalence (Ramioul, Huws and Bollen 2005) in the face of widespread academic criticism, especially from within sociology and political economy, has served in itself to undermine Bell's concept of the theoretical knowledge production in universities as distinctive of post-industrial societies. Says Preston:

> 'This failure might be taken to indicate that, despite Bell's assertions, the
> degree of autonomy and "power" possessed by the relevant knowledge

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workers in the so-called information age is relatively minor. Alternatively, it suggests that some varieties of "theoretical knowledge" or "information" power are more autonomous, powerful, and influential among the political and economic elites who count' (op. cit., p.75).

So, contrary to one of the theses that has underpinned Bell's work, Preston argues that this continued expression of social and economic relations is far from representing an end of ideology.

Just as the information society is shown as a fatally inadequate paradigm, so he rejects also the fashionable postmodernist theories: Lyotard's dismissal of modernist metanarratives as 'terroristic' is seen, like Bells', as an essentially conservative vision, with no potential for a collective response to the dominant system and veering close to libertarian individualism. Baudrillard's death of meaning in the explosion of signs, a development of Roland Barthes' ideas on the primacy of language over external reality, the abolition of the real and the loss of events in a void of information, as expressed in the notorious assertion that the Gulf War was a media event more than it was reality, is too much, not merely because it is extreme in its nihilism and cynicism, though those charges also are levelled. Preston argues that such a media-centric vision of simulation 'dreams away' (ibid. p.90) material struggles in the real world, and in doing so squares happily, in spite of Baudrillard's celebrity iconoclast status, with the conservatism of Bell and the technology gurus.

However, postmodernism is not entirely shunned, and the more complex and historically-based version provided by Fredric Jameson is afforded greater validity, as it is seen to connect with changes in the social and economic spheres. Rather than culture being simplistically aloof, the cultural logic of late capitalism necessarily involves the infusion of culture into the social realm, with mass media emerging as significant new areas for commoditization.

The public sphere

Preston sees parallels between Jameson's rooted postmodernism and the thinking of Jurgen Habermas, whose concept of the transformation of the bourgeois public sphere has proven so influential in recent decades, and to which this review will return. This account places at its centre the undermining of ideal-type rational communication by

large-scale economic institutions, by the state, by commercialization of the mass media and cultural industries, and by information management. Here, universal concepts of reason and justice are defended against the 'irrationalist' attacks of the postmodernists, while Habermas's foregrounding of the social dimension in a communicatively structured life-world …

> '… challenges much of the 1990s techno-centred and individualistic analysis of communication processes, not least the excited celebrations of the Internet's possibilities to extend individualized connectivity' (ibid., p.97).

Preston expresses reservations about the theory's clear omissions of class and gender, as well as a sweeping approach to media consumption, and suggests that its key weakness, developed as it was in the era of post-war Keynesianism, is an assumption of progressive social evolution that no longer applies in a later era of penetration of the political and other realms by the economic core of capitalism. Nevertheless, even if he is careful to register the requirement to complement Habermas with political economy or cultural theory approaches, for Preston, the breadth of Habermas's perspective and the modernist, democratic concerns that underpin it are 'difficult to resist' (ibid., p.99), and the public sphere is a central component of his over-arching socio-technical paradigm, which attempts to incorporate the complex interplay of both technological and social factors within a long-wave framework.

While notions of the revival of the public sphere online have become a common theme (Papacharissi 2002), Peter Dahlgren's prescient pre-Internet discussion addresses at length the limitations and shortcomings of the concept, not least its problem of universal applicability (1991). At its peak in Anglo-American culture in the mid-1800s, access to debate was restricted to the property-owning literate, and liberal philosophers such as Mill and De Tocqueville even argued for limits on public opinion, which they saw as a threat to the social order. In spite of its identified shortcomings, like Preston and others after him, Dahlgren adopts the model to observe that the transformation of the modern public sphere has been brought about by industrialization, the growth of the popular press, the rise of the interventionist state, emergence of the welfare state, advertising, entertainment, and the muting by the rise of PR of journalism's 'critical' role, to the point where he endorses the view that it now recalls the representative publicness of the middle ages, where elites display

themselves for the masses.[10] However, new conditions – namely the crisis of the nation state, audience segmentation, new communication technologies (including fax) and new social movements – have seen emerge new conditions of the public sphere, a 'new nexus' set in contrast to the state and major media. A similar argument positing the fresh relevance of the concept is made a decade later by Lelia Green (2002) updated with reference to Jan Fernbeck's idea of cyberspace as a 'reconceived' public sphere.

One of the more constant concerns in this discussion of rational debate relates to the concept of overload (Shenk 1997). While concerns over propaganda arise in the context of warfare, terrorism and cyberterrorism (Conway 2006), other perspectives pertain more generally to communication in democratic societies. Douglas Rushkoff, associated with cyberpunk and with the open source movement and its application to politics (2003b), warns of information warfare involving pseudocommunication and propaganda with 'influence professionals' working to replace person-to-person communication with information. The work of futurists like Toffler has been, he says, twisted to proclaim a new information age, 'confusing a revolution in communication with an expansion of the propaganda machine' (ibid., p.357). If Rushkoff represents an evolved critical perspective from within the camp of those who see a reforming potential in a wired world, Neil Postman poses a more fundamental challenge, asking what problems cyberspace resolves that were not addressed in the 19th century, and warning of citizens becoming lost in information. The link between information and human purpose has been severed, he says, with the former commodified. Dismissing the sermons of computer gurus and corporate visionaries, he says that what is needed is not more information (or information technology), but poets, playwrights, composers, theologians, and artists, the weavers of knowledge and understanding who can liberate us from cyberspace. Significantly, perhaps, journalists are not included in this category (2003).[11]

Todd Gitlin also frames his discussion of digital media in terms of logorrhoea, or panoply, along the way tracing the evolution of news as entertainment, in the tradition of lurid novels and melodramas, to the rise of the American penny press in the 19th century. He identifies emerging aspects of the culture that go with the digital lifestyle as nomadicity – people gravitating towards portability and miniaturization as forms of

liberation; soundtracking – the constant presence of music in work and shopping environments; and speed – the progressive shortening of sound bites in public communication. Gitlin observes that individuals respond with varying navigational styles, most based on the expectation that the media flow is full of tricks. Fans are provided with feeling while, conversely, it is fashionable to deride them; critics see the media as biased and corrupt, with criticism potentially developing into paranoia; new technologies multiply points of entry for exhibitionists; and ironists take refuge in postmodernist knowingness (2003a). Abolitionists have a futile belief that unlimited media can be rolled back, says Gitlin, but he argues that the source of what he calls the saturation of speed is not in universities, research parks or dot.com startups driving the information revolution, but has long been prepared for in the media culture of the past. Media, he says, is a central condition of our life, and those who see online sharing as a remedy for corporate dominance of media will be adding more to the torrent (ibid.). In this interpretation, the notion of de-centralized communication using new online affordances, whether by blogs or later forms of social media, is fundamentally challenged. As shall be discussed in Chapter 4, professional journalists would argue that, in such an information ecology, it is their values and skills which offer a countervailing direction.

Decency in cyberspace

The same opposition is elaborated in more specific terms by Cees Hamelink, who puts the case for an ambitious, ethical governance of cyberspace aimed towards what he calls a 'decent society', with defence of human rights centred as the principle that meets the requirement of a universal (and relativism-rejecting) validity (2000).[12] Hamelink dismisses as inadequate in the modern context a deductive approach to moral choice based on general guiding principles, whether deontological or utilitarian, observing that they are less appropriate as societies become more democratic, pluralist and multicultural. Instead, he argues for ethics that evolve through dialogue, and cites Habermas's proposal that moral standards can be valid only in the context of the consent of all concerned, following common deliberation. The focus should be on the deliberative process via which arguments are made towards a solution, rather than on a single correct solution. Hamelink here is addressing the process of debate of issues relating to technology as a general principle in society, and not specifically news media's role in the public sphere, but of course such a discussion has parallel

relevance to the current study. He convincingly argues that discussions around technologies overwhelmingly are driven by deterministic notions of progress and civilization, and that moral and ethical discussion of technological choices is marginalized. Once again, simplistic interpretations of the role of technology are rejected: the post-Fordist concept of informatization, as expressed in the prevalent information society account of ICTs, elides the fact that use of such technologies is a constituent element of the existing social order, and that it is not evident that any significant change has taken place in social relations.

Hamelink touches on the by-now familiar theme of the digital divide when he observes that, as governments, including the European Commission through its information society strategy, cede to the marketplace responsibility for fundamental social choices, the dominant commercial environment in which cyberspace has developed is at odds with the standard of equal entitlement to basic services, which is the ideal of an egalitarian society. With regard to free speech and knowledge, he argues that the free market, far from encouraging diversity, has instead resulted in conglomeration on the global market in network infrastructures and in content production, and is a greater factor in censorship than the more easily-recognized state censorship. The mistaken belief in the competitive advantages of the free market has, in fact, resulted in commercial censorship, through oligopolized markets in which a limited range of economically viable content is offered. Meanwhile, competition rules such as those of the World Trade Organization focus on the dismantling of public services and the liberalization of markets, but do not address the behaviour of dominant market players. At the same time, where the Universal Declaration of Human Rights incorporates the right to knowledge and a duty on peoples and nations to share knowledge, for Hamelink, the market role in knowledge production as private property destroys knowledge as a common good, while, as with competition law, emerging global regulation of intellectual property rights, again co-ordinated by the WTO through GATT, turns common heritage into private property.

From the network society to the network in society

An individual body of work from this period that looms as an overarching influence on the information society agenda is that of Manuel Castells, who achieved academic and perhaps even popular stardom as an interpreter, on a global level, of development in ICT, principally through his Information Age trilogy (cited in Preston 2001). In

spite of the wide sweep and layered complexity of his analysis, Castells declares, in Kuhnian terms, a new information technology paradigm, with cheap information based on computing and networks driving economic, social and cultural change on a revolutionary scale. Preston places Castells outside of what he calls the more extreme theorists on the utopian/dystopian oppositional scale, citing him as representative of more grounded social analysts who become intoxicated when it comes to media matters, and are prone to adopting an apocalyptic, determinist tone in this realm.

If he is open to criticism for sometimes strident generalizations of partially developed ideas, Castells' soft technological determinism, as Preston puts it, is counter-balanced with nuanced theoretical positions that reflect a wider concern with the social, cultural and economic spheres.

Felix Stalder outlines Castells' conceptualization of the transformation of politics from a party-based system to 'informational politics', as politicians expend financial resources on gaining media access and attention, while media compete by reporting the continually-arising scandals emanated from the resulting systemic corruption. Yet Castells is seen to avoid discussion of media bias based on its own interests and those of its ownership, providing a sanguinely neutral take on 'mediacracy'. Stalder describes this analysis as, on the one hand, essentially McLuhanite. He notes that Castells' observation of the 'real virtuality' of electronic media highlights the transformation of political communication via the sound bite and the meshing of news with entertainment, but he concludes that this offers little that is new (2006). Stadler is much more convinced by Castells' concept of the 'space of flows', especially since, developed as it was in the late 1980s, as an amendment to the postmodernist Paul Virilio's notion of time/space compression, then with microelectronics technologies, financial markets and specific manufacturing sectors in mind, it can be shown to be still relevant and flexibly robust with 'the development of the Internet into a mass medium' (ibid., p.152). Castells, he says, has little difficulty correcting this model to allow for the broadening range of social activities, including social movements, shifting from physical space to the space of flows. Empirical reality still supports the basic elements of the theory: strategically dominant activities connected with financial wealth and institutional power still operate through the space of flows, and their power has increased. The global elite remains cohesive, dominating fragmented local

populations, and dominance is still concentrated in a cluster of central nodes. Even if local and resistant groups have more access to the Internet, it is only a small aspect of the space of flows, which also includes private and closed networks.

Deploying more direct terminology, Schiller (1999) places newly freed neo-liberal interests at the centre of his analysis of the factors driving the development of network technologies. Here, the emergence of the global network, in keeping with a proprietary profit agenda that deepens inequality, is juxtaposed harshly with dreams of wired bliss. Schiller sees the developing telecommunication system in the US and later in other countries given over to market-driven policies, with cyberspace deployed as a powerful, fluid new tool for the development of consumerism, not accessible on a general scale but amongst a privileged elite. He applies his analysis not to the media of public communication, but to education, tracing the penetration of this sector in an invasive commercialization process, with institutional and product marketing aimed as schoolchildren, the development of vocational training, and threats of extinction to 'traditional' universities that if they do not exploit new technologies they will be supplanted by institutions that do, in a new era of consumer sovereignty and 'student-customers' able to pick and choose from courses globally (ibid., pp.200-201).

Hopes and fears sustained

If one were to follow the pattern of much discussion of ICT, it might be tempting to view many of the analyses outlined above as vulnerable to a second paradigm shift that by definition might render them invalid, such have been the claims for the breadth and profundity of change since the advent of Web 2.0 and its ever-multiplying array of many-to-many communicative options open to individual users. The fast emergence of 'social media' in the form of Wikis, blogs, YouTube, Facebook, Twitter, Digg and the like has brought its own resurgence of transformation fever, with, again, seductively heightened rhetoric and an emphasis on technologies and market possibilities (O'Reilly 2010, Shirky 2009). In an influential 2005 essay, David Gauntlet sees media studies as catching up with the now mainstream web, where before, stuck in a 'middle-aged, stodgy period', it had been caught off guard.

Academics, he says, had been struggling to keep pace with savvy media producers, but now, with demystifying technologies, scholarly consideration of new media is more practicable (2004).

Even as a newer phase of web studies is heralded, Gauntlett passionately rehearses some of the earlier themes arising from discussion of the net, including freedom of expression, improved facility for building of communities, and enhanced possibilities of public engagement and debate. Such themes, though his discussion of them is coloured and perhaps chastened by experiences of the net, such as the dot.com bust, display marked continuity with earlier debates, to the point where the existence of the proclaimed shift may itself be called into question. Where Gauntlett does declare a fundamental difference, it is to claim that, while before it had been feared that big business would dominate the web, now the rise of peer-to-peer file sharing means that the 'panic' runs in the opposite direction, with capitalist expectations of convergence and oligopoly frustrated by lack of consumer demand for multimedia production, even if some traditional media, such as cinema and books, may be insulated for a time because of their audiences' fondness for them. This is a view which, while familiar from popular discourse around threats to music and other content industries,[13] also connects with Bolter and Grusin's concept of remediation (Bolter and Grusin 1999, Bolter, et al. 2006) and with Winston's analysis of radical potential (Winston 1998) discussed above.

The emergence of the idea of a newly transformative Web 2.0, foregrounding collective production through mass participation, has been attended by a new phase of business-oriented discussions, with yet more neologisms, which have switched the emphasis away from a heavy-weight, industrial contest between oligopolistic interests on one side and Internet freedom, or piracy, on the other. Thus, Wikipedia, Facebook, MySpace, YouTube, and the various blogging platforms and, more recently, Twitter are seen to constitute a new 'folksonomy' constituted by 'prosumers' in which the 'wisdom of crowds' and 'crowdsourcing' reign supreme (Tapscott and Williams 2008, Van Dijck and Nieborg 2009) and in which diverse niche audiences have a new viability thanks to the 'Long Tail' logic of the Internet. Here, a newly-emerging system, sophisticated beyond the static imagination of the old, web page-based Web 1.0, and founded on user participation, searches, recommendations, tagging,

bookmarking, ratings and algorithm-driven target marketing, is seen to alter the demand curve of traditional economics (Anderson 2006, Anderson 2009, Howe 2006, Leadbeater 2008).

Now, a new generation of commentators join to present us with a perhaps even more intense utopian/dystopian opposition of empowerment, choice, and profit against infringement of personal liberties and erosion of cohesion. Among the most enthusiastic in this new cycle of commentary has been legal scholar and now US information regulator Cass Sunstein, who heralds a new 'infotopia' founded on open participation in a new information system enabled by the new technologies (Sunstein 2006). Among those who point out the dangers anew is Andrew Keen, who, from a position within the technology culture commentariat, robustly attacks the 'cult' of the amateur, which he denounces as undermining traditional media (Keen 2007). Arguing from a legal perspective, Lawrence Lessig warns of an opposing hazard, of the colonization of the net by business interests, using intellectual property rights laws, at the expense of the creativity and diversity which it had been hoped the net would deliver. Sunstein, prior to his more recent endorsement of the new information order, has warned of a deterioration in public discourse sufficient to democracy, as, in a negative twist on the concept of the 'Daily Me', consumers use the freedom of choice available on the net, confining their media intake to their own narrow interests (2001).

A wider analysis that, like Gauntlett's also chimes with Winston's 'law' of suppression of radical potential is provided, also from a legal perspective, by Jonathan Zittrain, who sees the development of the net as traversing an arc between the open, flexible, programmable PC, as introduced by Steve Jobs, and the iPhone, a device intended to encapsulate closed, proprietary technology (2008).[14] The rise of such tethered, profit-driven appliances is related to an inherent need for stability, through increased regulation and surveillance, in response to growing threats from viruses, spyware and spam. Thus, the innovative, generative net, which overwhelmed early proprietary systems such as CompuServe, Prodigy and AOL, and which is based on light regulation and a spirit of open participation, ultimately is in danger of succumbing, unless regulatory authorities and government actively defend it, to renewed processes of control. Zittrain foresees this struggle being played out in Web 2.0, and points to Wikipedia as a product of the participatory net the light regulation model of which has

been the basis of its extraordinary success, and which, thus far, has defeated most attempts to commercialize it or to subject it to heavy-handed censorship. Wikipedia's idiosyncratic, self-governing system of posting and editing by netizens (akin to the Netherlands' *verkeersbordvrij* experiment, which counter-intuitively yielded better driver behaviour by dint of less directive traffic signage) relies most of all on good faith. This success demonstrates that:

> '… the naïveté of the Internet's engineers in building generative network technology can be justified not just at the technical layer of the Internet, but at the content layer as well' (ibid., p.142).

Zittrain also posits here the rather undeveloped argument that Web 2.0, while characterized by content generativity, also carries with it a momentum towards building websites that behave like applications and software that migrates away from the untethered PC to become a service made available over the Internet from which users and downstream commercial entities (e.g. companies building sites incorporating Google Maps 'mash-ups') may not be able to defect. Certainly, it is not difficult to see the likes of Facebook or LinkedIn in this light, given that, not only may it not be possible to switch from them, given their perceived importance for social and professional purposes, but individuals may feel coerced into having profiles in these seemingly public spaces. This latter concern is articulated by Jaron Lanier, who raises concerns about identity and privacy. He notes that confusing terms of use in social networking sites mean that personal information may be sold to third parties, and, rather than fostering diversity, such networks are homogenizing culture (2010).

Approaching amateur, or user-generated, content production from a perspective that meshes cultural studies and political-economic considerations, Kelli Fuery traces the relationship between interactivity in online media, such as *Second Life*, and ideology. Applying Louis Althusser's concept of interpellation, she argues that the interactive subject and new media culture are part of the same process of production and exchange. While the rhetoric of interactivity is overwhelmingly that of liberty, the very process that appears free to the user, in fact, determines and inhibits them. Thus, *Second Life* replicates the ideologies, characteristics and personas of established western culture. Interactivity utilizes interpellation, the positioning by ideology of subjects for participation within social institutions, in order to facilitate ideas of

extension and revolution in new media culture. Ultimately, however, that revolution is not as apocalyptic as imagined (2009). In similar vein, Luis de Miranda argues that Facebook reinforces Christian values for a global middle class and could not be improved upon as a system 'to opiate 21st century occidentals' (2010).

If these later analyses appear to move the debate forward, adding a new layer of scepticism to the debate around social media, it should be noted that, in spite of the welter of attention toward Web 2.0, a more systematized interpretation first emerges at an earlier point in the discussion. Tiziana Terranova places social media production activity (in a journalism context, as we shall see, variously categorized under citizen journalism, participatory journalism, and user-generated content, or UGC) on a historical continuum of social relations in late capitalism, in which the boundaries between oppressive, alienated labour, escapist leisure and artistic expression are blurred. Thus, vast hordes of Internet users contributing to email lists, moderating forums, and coding and designing websites, if at this stage they are not yet tweeting and updating their Facebook pages in new swarms, are providing free labour in the digital economy, or, as, the Italian autonomists have labelled it, the 'society-factory' (2004, though originally 2000). Terranova dismisses Richard Barbrook's notion of the high-tech 'gift economy', which he saw as challenging the opposing forces of commoditization: instead, she says, this emerging economy, part of the wider informational economy, is an inherent part of capitalism. The conditions that make this so are based in a compromise between the widespread emphasis on knowledge as the main source of added value and the 'historically rooted cultural and affective desire for creative production' (ibid., p.777).

Terranova shuns the temptation of a straightforward dismissal of managerial and deterministic views of the 'hive mind' and collective intelligence, instead connecting these with a different discourse, observing that they uncannily resemble a central concept of the autonomists, that of the 'general intellect'. In this view, the 'general intellect' does not reside in the mechanical system, as in Marx's original depiction of a living, monstrous machine, but is sustained by 'mass intellectuality', a quality of the entire post-Fordist social labour force and not merely related to employment. For Terranova, far from the cosy-sounding assumptions of 'folksonomy', the logic of the Internet is closely allied to the logic of late capitalism, and the seemingly random,

casual involvement of users is of its essence, rather than a marginal adjunct to a 'real' information economy. In this understanding, the familiar idea and experience of casualization of labour in the information industries is connected also with the free labour of thousands, and even millions, of others outside of employment. This vision dovetails with the albeit less pointed perspective of Christian Fuchs, who, from a Hegelian theoretical base, forges his analysis in an antagonism, lying at the heart of global informational capitalism, between social co-operation and self-organizing theory on one side, and the competitive information society on the other, and calls for a choice to be made for the former (2008). These themes of embedded political and economic relations persist in consideration of journalism as a profession, field or ideology, and, as shall be seen in the following chapters, are central to the discussion of journalism and the Internet.

Conclusion

If there is an established pattern of tension between concepts of transformative technologies and social relations, there is likely to be little profit in rigidly adopting one or the other as a starting point. The most useful way forward here is to take up, critically but flexibly, elements from each, as seen in the application of actor network theory which, as already noted, represents an approach in which these apparently opposed dimensions can be accommodated, with appropriate levels of caution, in analysis of media (Couldry 2008).

This chapter has explored some of the broader and deeper themes around ideologies and movements that have emerged in consideration of online media. Finding a precise point at which to settle on a scale of technological determinism versus social shaping has not been an objective, and it would be neither practicable nor desirable to attempt to do so. Nor has the aim been to capture in summary the universe of new media research, where others have already set out to do so (Poole 2009). Parts of the discourse around technology, media and publicness can be seen as extreme, taking the form of vapidly zealous technological determinism on one hand or stubbornly resistant insistence on social shaping purity on the other, frequently with thin empirical support. Where there is such evidence, often it is to establish that, as in the case of Matthew Hindman's study of so-called digital democracy, while some change

is occurring in terms of media consumption and participation based around new technologies, often the old relationships are unaffected (2008, D'Urso 2009). Just as not everything in the media is revolutionized by emerging technologies, so also it has been observed that some of the most prescient discussions of digital media occur, not in recent years, illuminated by Web 2.0 retrospective wisdom, but in earlier thinking around discussions that coincide with the rise of the net or perhaps even predate it. That said, this review supports the argument that there is a need to take account of some of the technology-oriented thinking in relation to new media, while maintaining a constant vigilance against the alluring assumptions attending them.

It is in this setting that, in the following chapters, a discussion of continuities and change relating to journalism's encounter with new media is progressed.

Endnotes

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[1] Taken to mean both genders, since Ellul was writing in 1962, in advance of explicit gender balance in language.

[2] In Ireland, the rhetoric of the 'smart economy' is now part of the standard discourse not only of news but also of politics, and arguably has engendered an enclosed language, or elite dialect, of its own.

[3] It is not difficult to source any number of examples of such sentiment, even without recourse to readings of Kevin Myers or Kelvin MacKenzie. John Humphreys, arguably regarded as a paragon of high journalistic values, expresses the views of many in a (UK) Independent article entitled '*What is the point of media studies?*'. 'When the UK's chief inspector of schools dismissed the discipline as a quasi-academic fool's paradise replete with bearded Marxists, he was cheered in newsrooms from Brighton to Inverness.' See http://www.independent.co.uk/news/media/what-is-the-point-of-media-studies-413472.html

[4] Coverage of digital technology in newspapers in the 1990s and since often has had an evangelical quality, not least because it has been undertaken by computer and Internet enthusiasts with, arguably, less detachment than specialists in other news beats. In addition to an education service agenda, it has intersected strongly with business reporting, often being situtated in that department, and in my experience has been linked closely to the advertising purchasing power of large ICT concerns, both mulitnational and domestic.

[5] Subscription rates were high but technology journalists in Ireland, and no doubt in other media markets, were provided with unlimited free access.

[6] One could include in this category telecommunication companies, including Irish concerns, which entered the content market in the mid-1990s, a time when the refrain 'content is king' resounded in the online business discourse.

[7] The market positioning in particular of Microsoft's great rival Apple Computers as a champion of freedom from corporate realities is most interesting here, given the latter's more recent history of conventional attachment to proprietary technologies, from its locked-in operating system to its successful commercialization of music downloads via iTunes. Apple's profile has been particularly strong among media workers by dint of its early development of a user-friendly graphic interface, and this attachment continues in the areas of video and print technologies, even as other providers match the performance of Apple products, which come at a higher price. Those who enjoy the hip, anti-establishment allure of the brand are happy to pay more for the privilege. Others piggy-back on this perceived 'coolness', and the media, university and cultural environment is replete with quasi-personal, professional and corporate recommendations for the exclusive use of this brand. With social media seen as being particularly amenable to this form of marketing (Constantinides 2008), it is likely that the anti-establishment meme attached to one of the world's largest corporations will continue to prosper into the future.

[8] Anyone who worked in a large-scale newspaper produced in hot metal would recognize it as an emphatically industrial-era phenomenon, with not printing and editorial processes alike organized as effcient components of a production line.

[9] Even without the benefit of content analysis, it is probably safe to say that it is the rhetoric of the third wave that most informed the outgrowth of popular press coverage of new ICTs from the mid-1990s, displacing stories, other than pornography or cyber-crime, of the wider societal ramifications of new ICTs. In Ireland, this discourse was heavily connected with inward investment of multinational corporations, one of the principal drivers of the 'Celtic Tiger' economy.

[10] One could argue that the accelerated rise of celebrity culture in intervening decades makes the concept of representative publicness yet more relevant, as mass media becomes more saturated with 'stars' and their ostentatious lifestyles.

[11] An ironic twist in the context of the positing of culture as the antidote to commodificatoin of information is provided by the current Irish state and business-led project to leverage the country's culture for economic advantage.

[12] In his preface, Hamelink says that the book is based in part on an earlier Dutch-language publication entitled Digitaal Fatsoen', which translates as 'Digital Decency'.

[13] The optimism for these selected traditional formats may not have been so confidently made in the context of the introduction of new devices such as Amazon's Kindle, Apple's iPad, or the development of fast broadband in some societies, facilitating 'piracy' of films to the point where it has been claimed DVD markets were no longer viable. See *'Spanish find that piracy is a hard habit to break'* at http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2010/mar/31/spain-film-piracy-downloading-dvds.

[14] The iPad, for which newspapers have begun to produce editions, is a more recent addition to the category of tethered devices.

Chapter 3: Literature review – journalism as a profession, its values and its failings

Introduction

The study of journalism and the press is a complex, fragmented and heavily contested field, with many perspectives and disciplines brought to bear, sometimes sporadically, on the subject. I have already outlined, in Chapter 1, some of the historical and commercial backdrop, in the Irish context, for this research. Journalism is viewed through a variety of lenses, and journalism studies comprises myriad standpoints and offers many means of attempting to reach an understanding of a phenomenon that plays a central role in late modern democratic societies (Löffelholz and Weaver 2008). An illustration of the potential scope and intricacy of such inquiry is provided in the manifesto of the Journalism Studies Section of the European Communication Research and Education Association, which aims to support research on the 'cultural, political, economic, social and professional aspects of journalism' and, within these categories, to promote the study of 'occupational, regulatory, ethical, technological, political, commercial, cultural and educational factors in journalism' (ECREA Journalism Studies Section 2009). Recent handbooks also underscore the development of the field, and serve to provide an appreciation of its scope, setting out prominent strands of thinking, not only around objectivity, professionalism and truth-seeking, but encompassing also gatekeeping, agenda-setting, source relations and journalism in society, along with ethics, convergence, and reception (Wahl-Jorgensen and Hanitzsch 2009, Franklin et al. 2005).

It is essential in the interests of the coherence of the current study to focus on the most relevant strands of knowledge, as articulated in the literature, rather than to aim at a comprehensive exegesis of the universe of thinking on journalism, or to attempt consideration of an unanswerable series of questions, of which there surely are many, as journalism and the Internet evolve, in most likely intertwined but also separate and

independent ways. Accordingly, the review offered in this chapter principally is confined to what might be termed traditional or classic aspects of journalism, as expressed in bodies of work concerning ethics, normative values and professional roles, and the public role or roles of journalism. There is, by design, no central reference here to new media and the Internet. This wider dimension and its various strands have been explored in Chapter 2, while specific themes and concepts around new media and professional journalism are developed in Chapter 4. This division, it must be stressed, is not to imply that these areas of study are to be considered capable of disconnected consideration – on the contrary, it is intended that analysis provided later will demonstrate that the opposite is the case – but the chosen organization of chapters has the advantage of reflecting historical development while providing a workable outline for the discussion.

Journalism in theory: multiple perspectives

The wider background to this study is that of mass communication scholarship, and there are several branches of theory of particular relevance to journalism, much of it critical, and which precede the Internet and digital media, such as agenda-setting and gate-keeping, framing, propaganda, and the public sphere. However, the epistemological roots of journalism studies are spread widely across inter-linking theoretical traditions, and so a brief and necessarily selective schematic of this underpinning is relevant here.

Thomas Hanitzch responds on a theoretical level to the complexity and segmentation found in journalism studies, especially reflecting regional variations, with an attempt to construct a universal theory of journalism culture, based on an exhaustively complete survey of relevant literature (2007). He sees culture as comprising 'a set of *ideas* (values, attitudes, and beliefs), *practices* (of cultural production), and *artefacts* (cultural products, texts)', while journalism's occupational ideology derives at least in part from critical, including Marxist and Gramscian, ideas of struggle over dominance and hegemony. His etic approach, i.e. one that attempts to map diverse cultures onto a universal framework while nevertheless recognizing regional disparity, results in a conceptual grid based on seven dimensions with variations between ideal-typical

poles, organized in three categories. *Institutional roles* refer to normative and functional notions of the role of journalism, and includes the dimensions of interventionism (interventionist v. passive); power distance (adversarial v. loyal); and market orientation (consumer v citizen). *Epistemologies*, relating to the philosophical underpinning of journalism, refer here to objectivism (correspondence v. subjectivity) and empiricism (empirical v. analytical). In *ethical ideologies*, citing a model proposed by psychologist Donelson R. Forsyth, relativism is seen as varying on a scale of contextual v universal, and idealism operates between means and outcome. Under Forsyth's model, opposing scales of relativism and idealism produce four ethical ideologies, those of absolutism, exceptionism, situationism, and subjectivism. These dimensions, and Hanitzch's systematized, deductive strategy, may seem removed from the routine experience of journalism and newspaper culture and the often didactic expressions of journalism's claims to validity; however the model succeeds in meaningfully integrating that culture, even in its anti-intellectual or 'common sense' manifestations, with perspectives that do not rely solely on 'in the trenches' wisdom.

If Hanitzch proposes a model that ambitiously attempts to comprise all possible permutations of journalism globally, he does so in the context of a recent stronger current questioning the universality of news culture and, with it, journalism studies, with implications for the validity of much past and contemporary research. Most influential in this regard has been the work of Hallin and Mancini, who used comparative analysis to demonstrate international social and cultural diversity and to question heretofore common assumptions of the relevance of a 'western' journalism model. Instead, they posit three media system models: the North Atlantic or Liberal Model, applying to Britain, Ireland and North America; North/Central European, or Democratic Corporatist Model, applying to northern European countries; and the Mediterranean, or Polarized Pluralist Model, applying to southern Europe. In summary, the Liberal Model is typified by strong market orientation, with primarily commercial media; the Corporatist Model is characterized by the co-existence of commercial media with media aligned to political and social groupings; whereas media in the Polarized Pluralist Model display more direct attachment to party politics, less commercial development, and a significant state presence (2004).[1] In retrospect, it is surprising that such variations have been so little recognized, and that

Hallin and Mancini's work should have been seen as ground-breaking, but the notion that media systems historically are shaped by diverse social and political systems, even as westernization proceeds, is now widely accepted. Other researchers have focused on the strong differences between news in the Anglo-American setting and northern, central and eastern Europe, with resultant variations in the rendering of a 'news paradigm' (Høyer and Pöttker 2005, Jakubowicz and Sükösd 2008).

McQuail and the many faces of journalism

Denis McQuail, in his classic text *Mass Communication Theory* (1994), provides a rigorous survey and high-level organization of the field, and covers the array of fundamental theories, concepts and models on meta-theoretical and historical levels, across all media.[2] It is a large claim to make, but it is difficult, if not impossible, to identify a component part of McQuail's treatment of communication theory generally that does not address some aspect of journalism or news media in a significant and instructive way, either directly or indirectly. Within this widest category, however, McQuail addresses issues and problems around journalism in an explicit manner, and these particular discussions, taken together, situate the study of journalism as forming a very significant, if not the largest, single component in mass communication scholarship. His direct consideration of journalism is scattered across the large volume, but a selective reading of this highly influential work extends beyond the descriptive or explanatory functions of a textbook, and successfully synthesizes a complex array of theories, models and concepts in play in current communication debates. As such, it provides a sound basis for a concise and compressed, yet theoretically integrated, review, extending beyond a simple taxonomy, of some of the most important themes as they apply to journalism. Other works, such as, especially, those of Brian McNair, with a focus on British journalism, (2003), Paul Manning (2001), who approaches journalism through its use of sources, and Paschal Preston (2008), focusing on wider societal roles in late modernism, provide historical and theoretical breadth in discussions of journalism and the news media, the latter especially in the context of digital media developments, However, it is his coherent and nuanced consideration of journalism and news media, within the widest communication framework, that makes McQuail especially relevant to an overview at this point.

Functionalism

McQuail recognizes some descriptive uses for the functionalist theory, as originated by Laswell and developed by Charles Wright, which sees media as serving societal needs such as integration, co-operation, order, mobilization and continuity. In spite of conceptual confusion over the meaning and interpretation of the term 'function', the theory, he says, offers a language for discussing relations between media and society, 'and a set of concepts which have proved hard to escape from or replace', with terminology that is shared and widely understood by mass communicators and their audiences. Certainly, the language of functionalism maps easily onto and is difficult to distinguish from commonly held perceptions and declarations of the roles of journalism, such as informing citizens, exposing corruption, and interpreting and contextualizing events. In addition, says McQuail, media function can refer to media tasks, such as producing news, or to user purposes, such as being informed or entertained. However, he stresses fundamental theoretical difficulties. An agreed version of media functions depends on an agreed version of society, and there has been much focus on the problem of circularity: functionalism starts with an assumption that any long-term established institutional activity must serve some long-term purpose, but, beyond its persistence, there is no independent way to verify the utility of any activity. Other problems are the difficulty of measuring effects, and that the focus on the institutional activity means that little account is taken of the perspective of individual users, as elaborated in uses and gratifications theory. Furthermore, functionalism apolitically conceives of media as ideologically neutral – in this, as shall be discussed later in this chapter – it echoes core journalism values – and is weak in helping to explain power and conflict (op. cit., pp.77-82).

Normative theory

In contrast, McQuail argues that more attention should be devoted to normative theory of media structure and performance, which he says has been constrained by a tendency to focus on the media institution, as well as by a 'liberal' bias in the Anglo-American tradition that has confined recognition of normative issues to that of communication freedom. His observation rings true in the context of discussion of issues in Irish journalism, as outlined in Chapter 1 of this study, where it was seen that much of the limited narrative of the press relates to an Enlightenment project of

freedom of expression in a culture historically characterized by authoritarianism and censorship. McQuail outlines the evolution of theories of the press and of codes of conduct (discussed further below), but simultaneously makes the case for an adaptation of such theories to include a wider range of media, and points to the limitations of the approach. In particular, in addition to the liberal-pluralist, public interest, professional and alternative media models (the latter in particular including digital media) he proposes a theory of development media, and a democratic-participant media theory. The latter theory he sees as encompassing work that rejects free press theory and also condemns social responsibility as either complicit with the bureaucratic state or else 'a mere self-serving by entrenched media professionals' (ibid. p132).

McQuail also proposes a more developed framework of normative principles, couched in the concept of 'public interest' in the media, in which media act according to the outcome of a process of democratic debate and decision-making, while rejecting majoritarian or absolutist approaches. This is a central consideration for the present study. It is tempting, given some of the comprehensive critiques of mainstream western journalism, to conclude that aspirations towards its improvement or reform belong with cyber-utopian visions, and thus are not worthy of serious consideration. McQuail acknowledges the difficulty in arguing from a standpoint of public interest. However, he says that although the concept of the public interest is 'slippery', and necessitates an assumption of the public role of media, without which its social-normative principles can not usefully be studied (ibid. p136).[3] His is a nuanced and consciously contingent view of the basis and purpose of media studies, and it is on this shared position that this study of online journalism is based.

McQuail puts forth a set of principles that emerge from issues of controversy and debate in and about the media. These issues include concentration of ownership, news quality, commercialism and cultural problems, with cultural dependency highlighted as a particular cause for concern, not only for poorer countries but also for Canada and for some small European countries (ibid., p.266). The principles thus developed are those of media freedom, media equality (relating to access), media diversity, information quality (relating to objectivity), social order and solidarity, and cultural order (ibid., pp.131-153) In relation to objectivity, McQuail builds on Jörgen

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Westerståhl's 1983 scheme, adding the pragmatic component of 'informativeness' to truth and relevance (ibid., p.220).

Other perspectives

If the main division in thinking is that between functional and normative theories, McQuail also examines a range of concepts and theories arising via different perspectives, many of which are relevant here. Classified along with functionalist theory as a theory of media and society are Marxist and neo-Marxist understandings of mass media, wherein media work ideologically to disseminate ideas in the interests of the ruling class, and incorporating Althusser's concept of 'ideological state apparatuses', Gramsci's idea of hegemony, and Marcuse's analysis of the stimulation and satisfaction of 'false needs' in order to assimilate disparate groups. Relatedly, critical political-economic theory places the media institution as part of an economic system, closely linked with the political system. Market processes tend towards a politically unbalanced news media, reducing independent media sources, and fostering concentration on large markets, with diminished investment in less lucrative media tasks, such as investigative journalism, and neglect of smaller and poorer audience sectors. McQuail cites Golding and Murdock's (1991) argument that the increasing share of large corporations in cultural production leads to a contraction in the public sphere and puts pressure on the autonomy of media workers (ibid., pp.61-91). Within his discussion of the media organization, McQuail draws attention again to the tension between journalistic engagement and neutrality. Beginning with Lippmann (1922), he cites a range of sources which show that the idea, associated with objectivity, of the neutral reporter is most preferred by journalists over the notion of a 'fourth estate' participant as representative of the public, critic of the government, and advocate of policy. In particular, he foregrounds the work of Weaver and Wilhoit (Weaver and Wilhoit 1986), in which surveys of US journalists showed more support for the neutral-informative role, but with a significant minority in favour of the adversary role, and with a very small (2pc) minority of journalists favouring exclusively one role.[4]

Other studies show cross-cultural variations in role perceptions and ethical standards, e.g. between British and German journalists, and Hall (1977) is cited as considering that the special requirement for neutrality and balance imposed on a public sector

broadcaster, such as the BBC, ultimately works in support of the established order (ibid., pp.194-197). Similar uncertainty is attached to the idea of journalism as a profession. McQuail, citing the seminal work of Tuchman (1978) and others, tends to the view that journalism's claim of professionalism is weak in the face of low public esteem for journalists and the power of news organizations. For Max Weber, journalists belong to 'a sort of pariah caste'; nevertheless, journalism strongly defines itself in terms of objectivity, 'key marks of which are obsessive facticity and neutrality of attitude'(ibid. p288). Echoing H.L. Mencken, Schudson (1978), describes journalism as an 'uninsulated' profession, lacking clear boundaries (ibid. pp197-198).[5] McQuail also favours the view of Herbert Gans that news journalists, though they might be less well-paid than other professions, are middle class in outlook and adhere to an ideology similar to that of the real holders of power. Their values are a mix of both liberal and conservative, and they are 'safe', rather than reactionary, as portrayed by Herman and Chomsky (ibid., p.203) (see below).

The concept of gatekeeping is articulated more deliberately in the context of the production of media culture, along with news values and source relations (ibid. pp212-214). Where earlier studies of gatekeeping such as those by White (1950) and Gieber (1956) emphasized subjectivity, later studies, such as those by the Glasgow Media Group (1976) and Shoemaker and Reese (1991), showed consistency in patterns between different new organizations, and Galtung and Ruge saw ideological news factors as referring to values – especially individualist and materialist – embedded in western society. In further exploration of media logic with reference to genres, McQuail discusses the form of news. Referring again to the work of the Glasgow Media Group in the 1970s and early 80s, in the contexts of television news, he describes as striking the degree to which an unpredictable universe of events can be incorporated daily into 'the same temporal, spatial and topical frame.' While deviations can be found in the case of crisis or exceptional events, 'the news form is posited on the normality and predictability of the world of events' (ibid. p272).

Models of communication

While theories of the press are most directly relevant in the context of the current study, more general theories of communication as outlined by McQuail also illuminate varying dimensions of understandings of news media.

Classified under the dominant, traditional paradigm of media theory is the transmission model, in which the message is seen as being determined by the sender, and what is studied is, as the pioneering Harold Laswell put it, 'Who says what to whom, through what channel, and with what effect?' (ibid. p69) In this process, as refined later by Westley and MacLean, the sender, or media institution, is agnostic as to the purpose or content as the message, other than that it is of interest to the audience, the satisfaction of which is measured via feedback. By contrast, the publicity model focuses not on the intention to send a particular message but on the desire to win and hold attention, with the audience seen as spectators, and the economic motivation to gain audience and sell advertising, while attention also is related to the notion of agenda-setting and to media logic, with the presentational devices for gaining attention put to the fore by Altheide and Snow, from 1971. Important related concepts are those of the audience passing the time in a ritual process to escape everyday reality.[6] In yet more radical opposition, the reception model, as developed by Stuart Hall from 1980, sees messages as being not only encoded, but also powerfully decoded according to varying meaning structures and knowledge of different audiences. Crucially, the receiver does not have to decode the message according to a pre-determined meaning, and may reject that meaning partially or entirely (ibid. pp49-53). Another concept of close relevance is that of mediation, in which media institutions, as producers and distributors of knowledge, interpose themselves between people and experience beyond direct observation. Mediation of 'reality', McQuail argues, is itself no more than a metaphor; however, it is often expressed through other, familiar – since they are found in the media's own self-definitions – metaphors, such as a window on the world or mirror of society, filtering, gate-keeping, signposting, interpreting, a forum or platform (allowing the possibility of response and feedback), or a screen or barrier.

The above section has aimed to distil some of strands of McQuail's writing that are most pertinent to consideration of journalism as a profession. While this in no way purports to represent a constructed model of professional journalism, it nevertheless provides many points of reference to which, it will be seen in the following sections, and in subsequent chapters, other discussions strongly relate.

The public sphere

Given its breadth and apparent comprehensiveness, it is somewhat surprising to observe that McQuail has little to say, at least directly[7], whether in the context of journalism or mass communication generally, about Jurgen Habermas's elucidation of the concept of the public sphere. The curiously low early profile of this since widely recognized contribution to theoretical debates may be a reflection, observes Nick Stevenson, of the late translation and publication in 1989 of *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere* (1995). The theory of communicative rationality, based on an 'ideal speech situation', and the accompanying concept of the refeudalization of the public sphere, maps closely onto much of the later discussion of the news media and the Internet, and will re-occur as a framing theory throughout this study. But it is worth noting at this point that, even if it was largely unacknowledged until closer to the advent of the Internet as a news platform, it has strong relevance for media generally. In particular, Stevenson draws the links to Curran and Seaton's view that commercialization brought about the splitting of the British press into its quality-versus-tabloid formation (Curran and Seaton 2003), while he also points to the use of public sphere theory in defences of public service broadcasting as well as in discourses on democratic engagement and citizenship.

Ethics and professionalism

Journalism as an occupation

A large component of the professional myth of journalists concerning journalism is made up of the studied self-deprecation of the 'hack' (Freeman 2009) toiling in the 'Street of Shame'.[8] In this pragmatic analysis, individually harmless news workers do their best under enormous pressure of time to make sense of the world, and to pay their mortgages. This is, perhaps, a defensive reflex, stemming from an awareness of this highly contested occupation's many perceived imperfections, deficiencies, and contradictions, and often anti-intellectually resistant to organized study of the press (Davis 2008).

Probably owing to his famously pithy (and partisan) style, one of the most popularly quoted writers on the subject of the status of the occupation is the American sceptic

H.L. Mencken, whose doubts concerning the higher claims of the press and its practitioners are expressed in satire directed at early 20th century journalists' ambitions to organize as a profession:

> 'He elects representatives and they meet in lugubrious conclave to draw up codes of ethics. He begins to read books dealing with professional questions of other sorts – even books not dealing with professional questions. He changes his old cynical view of schools of journalism, and is lured, now and then, into lecturing in them himself ... He no longer sees it as a craft to be mastered in four days, and abandoned at the first sign of a better job. He begins to talk darkly of the long apprenticeship necessary to master its technic, of the wide information and sagacity needed to adorn it, of the high rewards that it offers – or may offer later on – to the man of true talent and devotion. Once he thought of himself, whenever he thought at all, as what Beethoven called a free artist – a gay adventurer careening down the charming highways of the world, the gutter ahead of him but ecstasy in his heart. Now he thinks of himself as a fellow of weight and responsibility, a beginning publicist and public man, sworn to the service of born and unborn, heavy with duties to the Republic and to his profession' (cited in Haigh 2004).

The opposite opinion is represented by Joseph Pulitzer, who wrote of journalism education:

> 'My idea is to recognise that journalism is one of the great and intellectual professions; to encourage, elevate and educate in a practical way the present and, still more, future members of that profession' (cited in Weever 2003).

While this occupational tension will be familiar to them, many working reporters, sub-editors and editors will respond with wry scepticism, as will others, to the concept of journalists as a profession, and journalists in Ireland and Britain have long been represented not by a professional body, but by a trade union, with semantic resonances of craft rather than regulation of standards. In this way, journalists are organized as a group in an adversarial relationship with owners and managers, along with workers in other departments such as printers, technicians and clerical staff.[9]

However, much of the literature discussing the role or roles of journalism bypasses this distinction, or incorporates it in a wider analysis that transcends such definitions.

In his study of specialist journalists in Britain in the late 1960s, Jeremy Tunstall (1971) refers to journalism as a segmented and 'indeterminate' occupation, with no single, clear core activity, unlike, say, medical doctors or plumbers. Tunstall's work is neatly situated in advance of most of the upheavals in print journalism that were to be brought about by new digital technologies in succeeding decades (Smith 1980) – a dimension that typically is largely absent from technicist considerations focused on the Internet – and his analysis succeeds in capturing many themes within and around journalism that are not connected to digital developments. One of the aims of the journalists' union, he says, is to reduce the power of employers by narrowing journalists' range of tasks, specifying training, restricting entry and raising status. At the same time, newsgatherers identify with their own specialism and with their own news organization. Tunstall's strongly textured discussion outlines some of the since-familiar theorization of journalism, including the concepts of news values and gate-keeping, as well as the historical tension between journalists' view of themselves as members of a profession, with lofty aims, or of a union. He also describes the tension within journalism between service to the public, sometimes couched in the grandiosely heroic terms of disclosure ideology, and service to economic masters, and he points to the disparity between the public perception of journalism, produced by the few heroic, scoop journalists, and the reality, comprising the predominant journalist manager who processes information behind the scenes.[10]

The ideological and normative dimensions of such discussions of journalism reflect the nature and characteristics of professionalism generally as a means to exert power from within and from above, as delineated in Julia Evetts' analysis (Evetts 2003). Evetts argues that the Anglo-American concept of the profession as relating to a very limited group of protected occupations, as in medicine and law, is no longer useful. Now, professionalism as a means of exerting control in the face of uncertainty has widened to include a variety of knowledge workers.

From this, it would seem fair to conclude that all 'professions', or groups of workers who are to whatever degree professionalized, must strike a balance between their

ideologies and their normative standards, often expressed in terms of public duty, and the practices, or, in journalistic, terms, the craft,[11] that separate them from amateurs.

Objectivity and doing good

In journalism, therefore, it is possible to perceive the influence of the professional ideology as represented in claims to objectivity, accuracy and the public good balanced against the need to be a good news worker, willing and able to produce news according to the requirements (such as brevity) of the format but also of the news organization. Each can be seen as a means of exerting control. Journalism's professionalization may aim to provide protection against market demands and changes in media technologies; similarly, values relating to individual journalists' performance facilitate the imposition of hierarchical editorial structures, serving institutional demands. Nevertheless, even here, the lines are blurred. News organizations, by their nature, must be seen to be credible, and so the ideal of objectivity, however much it is honoured in the breach, also has become an attribute promoted by editors and publishers, even as they opposed (in the US) the unionization of newspapers, as pointed out by Stuart Allan (2004p. 22), who also offers an overview of classic critiques of the liberal pluralist notion of objectivity (ibid pp46-76), and cites Gale Tuchman's seminal work in emphasizing the power of the institution as it routinizes the unexpected.

Stephen J. Ward promotes a more comprehensive analysis, seeing journalists and editors' ethical rhetoric not only as a professional strategy narrowly deployed to validate and defend journalism, but as vital to the communicative relationship between journalism and society, with, in turn, this relationship being conditioned not only by economic, social and political factors but also by technology and by journalism practices (Ward 2004).

Ward positions the ideal of objectivity at the centre of the validity claim, and provides a detailed and multi-layered historical survey of the evolution of the idea, both in terms of rational knowledge generally, as originating in ancient Greek philosophy and science, and specifically within journalism, influenced not least by libertarian ideas advanced in canonical texts such as Milton's *Areopagitica* and Mill's *On Liberty*. He traces the manner in which notions of a pure, unified, cumulative, value-free

rationality were challenged in the 20th century by relativist ideas of socially constructed knowledge, each branch of which is valid only in particular circumstances, by the questioning of Enlightenment ideas by members of the Frankfurt School such as Adorno and Horkheimer, and by the contributions of postmodernists such as Baudrillard and Lyotard casting doubt on the role of metanarratives which attempt to make sense of human experience on a grand scale.

Similarly, he points to a parallel erosion of the doctrine of objectivity and truth-telling, one which he argues belongs to an invented ethics of journalism in a creative process of changing values that took place between the 17th and 20th centuries, developed through the rhetoric of journalists in response to changing conditions with, most importantly, the development of a public ethic in the 18th century and a commercial, mass media-driven impulse in the 19th. His vastly rich analysis of journalistic objectivity and its later undermining, which runs parallel to Habermas's account of the transformation of the public sphere, leads him ultimately to dismiss the norm as a spent force, and he calls for the application instead of a 'pragmatic objectivity', a more pliable variant founded not on absolute claims of truth but which focuses instead on processes and which allows for investigations to arrive at other than a single truth. Here, journalism is seen as imperfect, 'an active empiricism full of judgements, selections, values, and decisions under conditions of uncertainty' (ibid., p.314).

Ward for the most part attempts to provide a new ethical theory, seeking ambitiously to advance the concept to a new level. Others have interpreted specific philosophical or intellectual traditions, from the virtue ethics of the Aristotlean moral compass (Dickson 1988), through the categorical imperative of Kant (Plaisance 2007) to, perhaps most challengingly, the postmodern (Bignell 2000, pp.138-165). While staking no such claim, Sanders (2003), in making the case for a journalism that eschews nihilism, provides a historical and philosophical background. Arguing that journalism and ethics necessarily are intertwined, she integrates philosophical concepts with the particulars of events and controversies in Britain, in the application of ethics across a series of themes that echo familiar current debates, such as press freedom, privacy, relations with sources, commercial pressures and accountability.

In what is, for the most part, a practical journalism manual, Harcup (2007) grounds his exploration of common journalistic dilemmas in a discussion of ethics, and argues that journalism needs reflective practitioners. Others follow this hybrid format to varying degrees, combining higher level discussion with practical textbook-style advice or unpacking ethical principles in a series of scenarios (Keeble 2001, Frost 2000, Knowlton and Reader 2009, Kovach and Rosenstiel 2007, Rosenstiel and Mitchell 2003, Iggers 1999). Atkins (Atkins 2002) sets out to provide a global survey of ethical conflicts and obstacles, and Christians *et al* (2005) look at a wider set of cases relating to mass communications generally but also examining episodes directly arising in journalism, such as the notorious Jason Blair and Rick Bragg affairs, which registered deep public and industry unease at plagiarism and fabrication in *The New York Times*. Such ethics textbooks, rooted firmly in the consideration of 'practical' dilemmas, are little represented in the growing academic debate around journalism studies (Zelizer 2004),[12] yet in their principal thrust they ultimately coalesce with the proposition of the social construction of journalism, however critical the latter perspective may be (Poerksen 2008).

To what extent are journalism ethics taught from fundamental guiding principles, or do they arise from more specific factors? Taking an empirical approach, Wilkins and Coleman used Defining Issues Testing (DIT), based on Lawrence Kohlberg's concept of moral development, to assess journalists' status as moral thinkers (2005). With a sample of 249 US-based journalists responding to a series of ethical dilemmas, they found that journalists ranked strongly, below seminarians/philosophers and physicians but above adults generally, students, business professionals, and accounting auditors. Neither career seniority, professional environment (broadcast as against print) nor gender raised statistically significant differences. However, journalists with experience of investigative or civic journalisms had higher levels of ethical reasoning. The authors cite the influential *Good Work*, by Gardner *et al*, (Gardner, Csikszentmihalyi and Damon 2002) as supporting the view that those for whom ethical decisions are emphasized are likely to have higher scores because they exercised their 'ethical muscles' more regularly (ibid.p41). Journalists also scored much higher on the dilemmas in their own area of domain expertise. Echoing this sentiment, Ulster Television journalist Jamie Delargy addresses the chicken-and-egg problem of whether ethical awareness comes from good practice, or vice versa, and

points to philosopher Alasdair MacIntyre's position, summarized as 'by doing, you learn the right thing to do' (2006).

Codes of conduct

Even as journalists themselves frequently deride the more high-blown and self-congratulatory expressions of journalism's worth, so too is there some common ground of understood meanings between the academy and practitioners. Though some texts largely eschew the subject, focusing deliberately instead on the craft of researching and writing stories, it is usual for journalism primers, a slew of which have been published to service the professionalization of the occupation and to populate education programme reading lists, to set out, often in simple and unambiguous terms, normative values, combined with a sometimes self-consciously no-nonsense approach to making a living in or career of journalism, and with a strong dose of professional scepticism (Brophy and Irish Academy of Public Relations 2007).

Most, if not all, vocational education texts aimed at new entrants assert to some degree, either centrally or, more likely as an integral element in the practices espoused, journalism's bedrock claim to validity and truth-seeking (Keeble 2006, Harris, Spark and Hodgson 1997). In one of the most persuasive instances of this genre, David Randall (2000), while acknowledging the limitations and many pitfalls of journalism, skilfully embeds values and ethics as an essential theme in a manual of how routinely to investigate and report various events, interpret official documents, and structure news stories. Throughout, the virtues of independence and impartiality are driven home to the journalism aspirant. However, in a dedicated chapter, Randall also explicitly enumerates ethical values:

> 'To the insider working on a quality paper, where there is virtually unanimous agreement about basic professional morality, ethics are a code of principles to which all journalists should adhere, or at least feel guilty about if they do not. They are rarely, if ever, required to step outside this code' (ibid., p.133).[13]

A list of general guidelines is then provided (for brevity, headings only are reproduced here):

Journalists should serve only their papers and their readers

Every story should be an honest search for the truth

No inducements to publish should be accepted

Journalists should not allow advertisers to influence, directly or indirectly, the paper's editorial content

Do not use your position to threaten or gain advantage

Do not promise to suppress stories for friendship or favours

Do not invent or improve information

You should not benefit personally from information you acquire (ibid., pp.134-139).

It can be seen readily that these guidelines might indeed qualify as universal tenets, as intended, and that they also are supposed to rise above the challenges of changing conditions, in spite of cultural variations. But this discussion would not be the first to note that the issuing of ethical edicts can raise as many questions as they answer, as journalists, their autonomy compromised by economic considerations, face daily challenges testing such principles.

Philosophical and ethical underpinnings are, it may be fair to say, not much explicitly discussed in the newsroom quotidian, but they remain close to the surface of journalism. The professional approach to journalism ethics is communicated, if not in newsroom discussions, through regulatory and professional codes. The latter, according to Sanders (Sanders 2003), originated in the US at the beginning of the 20th century as part of an attempt to professionalize journalism, but they also may serve to protect readers, sources, those in the news, and vulnerable groups; to educate by setting out core values and principles; to serve in public relations by banning unacceptable practices; and to ward off more stringent impositions. Sanders summarizes the evolution of self-regulation in Britain in terms of the same fearful self-interest, tied to concerns over invasions of privacy, with beginnings in the first Royal Commission in 1949, the establishment of the Press Complaints Commission[14]

in 1991, and, following the critical Calcutt report of 1993, the PCC's re-balancing of its membership in favour of a lay majority with power to change the code (ibid.). A more recent study of 10 years of PCC operations found deficiencies: the commission had adjudicated on a relatively modest number of complaints and, while its performance was strong on protection of minors, reflecting concerns for royal offspring, it was poor on discrimination, and overall had not succeeded in deflecting criticism of press behaviour (Frost 2004).

The establishment of a similar body, the Press Council of Ireland, and the associated appointment of a Press Ombudsman, came about in 2008, in response to comparable pressures, in the context of a looming threat of statutory press regulation following public debate of reform of defamation law (Press Council of Ireland 2009).[15] This was the first full-scale initiative of the Irish news industry towards self-regulation, although a readers' representative scheme had been adopted by the National Newspapers of Ireland in the 1990s (Boyle and McGonagle 1995), with varying degrees of commitment.[16] The Irish Code of Practice borrows much from codes elsewhere, including that of the UK PCC, the NUJ, and from US, Australian and German sources. Prior to its development, and reflecting the cultural proximity, to the point of near unity, of journalism in Ireland and Britain, the sole official or quasi-official reference for guidance of journalists was the Code of Conduct of the NUJ, one of many to be found across journalism in Europe (EthicNet 2009) and worldwide (MediaWise 2009, Jones 1980, Hafez 2002).

No such edifice is required, however, to inspire would-be journalists with the fervour to do good, according to Splichal and Sparks, whose *Journalists for the 21st Century* study of first year journalism students in 22 countries, a third of which did not have a fully free press, found a striking similarity in their stressing of a "desire for the independence and autonomy of journalism" (cited in Wahl-Jorgensen and Hanitzsch 2009, pp.46-47).[17] This contribution serves to emphasize the dichotomy between normative values and experience, and it is this gap that is explored and developed further by Wilkins and Brennen (2004), who see professional codes in the US – specifically, in the contemporary context, the 2003 ethics code of *The New York Times* – as reifying tensions outlined from a psychological perspective by Gardner *et al* in *Good Work* (Gardner, Csikszentmihalyi and Damon 2002). Wilkins and Brennen

cite Raymond Williams in applying a cultural materialist perspective which privileges "the domain of the lived", and observe that the language of the *Times's* code (which, like most others in the United States, is imposed by management) is not transparent, but reflects the ongoing process of interplay between a socially responsible journalism and the realities of media economics. Soon after the code was published, the Blair and Bragg scandals arose: Wilkins and Brennen point to the deficiencies in practices and in the subsequent responses, and conclude, pessimistically, that it is in areas that are contested and subsequently left unaddressed in specific terms that the practice of journalism may be seen to emerge fully. A yet blunter assessment, resultant from an earlier analysis of US national codes, is that such devices themselves may be, worse than simply incomplete, suspect ethically, in that they discourage reform 'by permitting owners, who control the news, to deflect criticism from themselves onto their employees' (McManus 1997).

In related vein, John Lloyd, editor of the *Financial Times Magazine*, rejects the interpretation of John Stuart Mill's proposal (narrowly interpreted here and elsewhere solely in terms of the 'marketplace of ideas') that competition ultimately favours truth, and argues instead that it is monopoly media outlets such as the (pre-competition) BBC, big city newspapers in the US, and those dominating a niche, such as *The Financial Times*, that are likely to be more trustworthy (2004).[18] Lloyd also responds to an observation by Onora O'Neill of a need for greater professional regulation of journalism, emulating practices found in law and the academy, by contending that, unlike journalism, members of such professions are not 'market actors'. Nevertheless, O'Neill includes as an exemplar of good self-regulation Reuters' ethical rules for its financial journalists. If such rules fall short of occupational requirements elsewhere, such as disclosure obligations and shareholding limits, they extend beyond the requirements of the UK PCC and other codes:

> 'Reuters' journalists … face disciplines that those who work for the BBC or RTÉ, let alone for newspapers, do not face. Journalists and editors working for RTÉ and the BBC do not routinely have to declare their interests, or their conflicts of interest, to their managers (let alone their audiences) or to withdraw from broadcasting on topics in which they have a financial interest; nor do newspaper journalists and editors' (2004).

Whereas O'Neill valorizes a management-imposed code, Tony Harcup, a former union officer, approaches the discussion from an opposing perspective. In a review of the operation of the NUJ Code of Conduct, he notes that there is little on-the-job discussion of ethics among journalists, but also charges that academics ignore the economic realities of journalists' employment and industrial relations experience, at a time when their union has been on the retreat, depriving them of a collective autonomy, and when they are subject to understaffing, casualization, bullying, and 'unconstrained management prerogative' (2001).[19] A parallel conclusion was reached in earlier research of American newsrooms, where it was found that ethical codes did not function as a prescription for behaviour unless management were themselves interested in ethics, and unless ethics were the subject of active newsroom debate (Boeyink 1994). Another study based on a survey of newsrooms in Minneapolis challenges the assumption that ethics codes directly affect behaviour, as opposed to operating symbolically (Pritchard and Morgan 1989). Nevertheless, some case can be made for journalists as active agents in tackling ethical questions. For Jean Seaton, it was not a mythical, singular vision, but professional journalism, organizationally expressed in the formation of a staff association in 1937 that, by the end of that decade, positioned BBC news writing as 'a negotiated product of conflict between partisan views'. In an interpretation that challenges the widely-held view of a strict top-down code, she says that, while its founder, John Reith, wanted the Corporation to be above politics, he fought for the right to broadcast on contentious issues. Within the BBC, it was not management, but the new 'professional journalist' who retained a monopoly over deciding the boundaries (2003).

Journalism's critics

'Mistakes' and other transgressions

Academics in search of professional 'mistakes' have little difficulty finding them. Roger Dickinson provides a wide-ranging review of research into journalism, but says that it falls short in its treatment of journalists themselves. He makes the case for an occupational focus, in the context of changing work conditions, and in particular on maverick or undisciplined journalists, since responses to deficiencies are a defining influence for any profession (2007). If journalists frequently fail to match their stated

values, then accounts of delinquent, lazy, tabloid, or 'yellow' journalism are part and parcel of everyday public discourse.

The transgressions of journalism, such as sensationalism, exaggeration, bias or inaccuracy, occur routinely and are perhaps only traceable and measurable, or rendered worthy of discussion, via concentrated techniques such as content analysis, but there are occasional eruptions of condemnation of 'poor journalism', not least from government, the legal establishment, and business. Criticism of Irish journalism practices tend to be muted and sporadic,[20] or focus on more generalized themes, such at the representation of travellers or immigrants, and this may be interpreted as being in itself revealing of the local culture. One of the most prominent focused controversies in recent years was that centred on the UK's Hutton Inquiry, which in the aftermath of the controversy of 'sexed up' dossiers supporting an invasion of Iraq, and the death of the scientist, David Kelly, criticized standards in the BBC, prompting the resignations of that organization's chairman and director-general, and this episode is seen as part of a mounting unease with British journalism more generally, with prominent journalists raising concerns on a variety of fronts, such as weakness in the face of political spin and concentration of ownership (Schlesinger 2006). The affair reached an extraordinary pitch with the attack by Tony Blair on the press, some members of which he infamously described as feral beasts (Riddell, et al. 2007).

A more fundamental assessment of the role of the press, also conducted during a time of conflict, was prompted by concerns over low press standards. By way of the canonical 1956 text *Four Theories of the Press* (Peterson, cited in Ward 2008, p. 301), the Hutchins Commission's report helped cement in US journalism the formal notion of social responsibility (in opposition to libertarian, authoritarian, and Soviet models), which has continued to resonate (Mcintyre 1987, Knott, Carroll and Meyer 2002).

Testing values

Beyond sporadic public discussion of journalism, it is worth considering at this point some of the more salient contemporary critical discourses, sometimes operational and sometimes fundamental, of journalism and journalists. What is systemically wrong with journalism in the late modern era, and why and by whom is it regarded as

deficient? The discussion which follows highlights major themes of academic interventions in recent decades.

Ownership and control

In a detailed and wide-ranging study, James Curran traces the development of the press in Britain, rejecting what he calls the mythical liberal, or 'Whig' orthodoxy of a struggle for freedom, and presenting instead a narrative of free market reform, aimed at stabilizing the social order in the aftermath of the 1848 revolutions in Europe. Key reformers, he says, suffered 'no illusion that a free market would be neutral'. Instead, removal of 'taxes on knowledge' was part of a middle-class programme of reform that did not include the radical, working class press. It was believed that an expanding capitalist press would raise journalists' pay, status and quality, thus promoting moderation (2003c, p.21). Similarly, commercial and political developments in the 1980s produced new pressures on the range of ideological expression. These were increasing inter-dependences of the press and other industries – with attendant corruption – rising production costs, the rise of advertising, and overtly political involvement by Murdoch newspapers, most explicitly manifest in the *Sun's* backing of the Conservatives against the majority opinion of its readership, while, earlier, the *Mirror* had moved from the left to the centre as it interpreted the public mood and radical newspapers, unable to attract sufficient advertising, fell away. In the late 70s and early 80s, a new generation of predominantly right-wing and more interventionist owners emerged. Even where proprietors were relatively inactive, control still could be exercised 'through the selection of senior management and mediated through traditional structures of news-gathering and the influence of dominant political values' (Curran 2003b, p.101).[21] Arguing for more effective public intervention, Curran says that the idea that market democracy produces a free, diverse and representative press date from the mid-Victorian era when costs were low, most newspapers were mainly concerned with public affairs, and the state was dominated by landed elite. Now, press owners' interests are inter-dependent with those of governments, and press scrutiny of government is significantly skewed by considerations of mutual advantage (Curran 2003a).

Entertainment and PR

Writing before the full impact of 'reality' television and its associated coverage in news media, Bob Franklin traces in dispiriting detail the shift from the news of public information and discussion to entertainment and sensationalism, which he sees as a product of heightened commercial competition, government policy, essentially in the form of permitting and encouraging exposure to market dynamics, new technologies attended by union de-recognition and casualization, and changes in journalism itself, with an explosion in the numbers of freelance journalists and in PR practitioners, and a change in the willingness of employers adequately to fund training (1997). Thussu (Thussu 2007) traces the emergence of global infotainment, and places it as part of a neo-liberal imperialism, with its values universalized in an emerging global hegemony, while the role of spin and the power of sources in news production is the focus of Paul Manning's critical analysis. Here, source relations are discussed in the context of journalism production routines and news values, with particular reference to Tuchman's interpretation of objectivity not as a property of journalistic accounts but as a set of practices, or rituals, that journalists can defend as objective, as, while working under pressure, they seek to insulate themselves against professional criticism or legal threats (2001).

 In a highly-publicized recent text, Guardian journalist Nick Davies similarly focuses on sources and PR, and reports the results of an underpinning academic report (Lewis, Williams and Franklin 2008) on news sources as an indictment of standards in British journalism. With national press journalists forced to produce three times as much copy as they did 20 years ago, 60% of press articles derived either wholly or mainly from pre-packaged sources, i.e. either wire agencies or PR material (Davies 2008). Davies' book coincides with the *Stand Up for Journalism* campaign by the NUJ (which also represents PR workers) seeking to redress the cutting of resources for good journalism, saying:

> 'Journalists are reduced to a cross between call-centre workers and data processors. Stuck at their desks re-jigging press releases. Who knows what corruption, lies, and law-breaking is going on in the corridors of power – no-one has the time to look' (NUJ 2007b).

<u>Propaganda</u>

Davies confines his critique to the need for changes within professional practice without challenging at a deeper level the validity of journalism as a truth-telling enterprise. Others do not observe that limit. In their propaganda model of the US media, Herman and Chomsky propose that powerful interests in society shape media policy, not through crude interference, but via structural factors of ownership, control and inter-dependencies of power. Included in this model is the view that journalists' behaviour and news values are conditioned by processes of selection of 'right-thinking personnel' and by internalization of institutional priorities. Even where there is autonomy and dissent, it is limited and kept at the margins. In the 2002 edition, the authors note the intensification of conglomeration; a reduction in resources available to journalism; a rise in the role of primary definers and their PR servants and an increase in their ability to produce flak (complaints about the news media's performance); and the internalization by journalists of free market ideology after the fall of the Soviet system. All of these developments, they say, increase the relevance of their model and have further weakened the public sphere (2002 pp.xi-lviii). To the mostly war-related case studies in the original text, the authors add new applications relating to political discussion of defence budget cuts, positions taken in the public debate over the adoption of NAFTA (with resonances for the Irish Lisbon Treaty debate) and the Mexican financial crisis in 1994-95; opposition to WTO, IMF and World Bank policies; and the chemical industry's successful opposition to the precautionary principle.

In Britain, the propaganda model has been powerfully revived by David Edwards and David Cromwell, whose latest work, *Newspeak in the 21st Century* and its associated Media Lens website[22] aim criticism at the liberal media, such as the BBC and the *Guardian*, posing a fundamental challenge to their claims to truth-telling in respect of controversies such as climate change and the invasion of Iraq, and accusing journalists of conforming to the needs of power while deceiving themselves that they act rationally and independently (2009). The discomfort of mainstream media in the face of this energetically sustained attack is noteworthy, and it is claimed that the book has been shunned by newspaper reviewers (Townend 2009). Jonathan Cook, a British

freelancer based in Israel, writing on the Media Lens site, draws the distinction between Davies' insider approach and that of the Chomskian outsiders and, while endorsing much of Davies' analysis, goes even further, accusing him of ahistorically neglecting to support 'his implied hypothesis that journalists were once successful at truth-telling' (2009).

Looking forward to the future of journalism in general (and not solely through the prism of new media), Peter J. Anderson (2007) sets out the challenges from a political economy perspective. New technologies breeding more audience choice impact negatively on the potential for expensive, high-value journalism, such as television documentaries. Liberal market dynamics mean that the smaller media organizations find it difficult to compete, producing conglomeration: as profitability and markets decline, newspaper companies must seek out economies in advertising and production by becoming part of larger groups. Editorial economies can be further achieved through converged, integrated newsrooms. Conglomeration is inevitable, as profit-seeking companies are naturally inclined to take over healthy smaller concerns, such as regional press and television, and to eliminate competition. With the voices of editors and journalists less audible in giant corporations, diversity suffers as news becomes commodified, seen less as a public good and more as a product or service, and more likely to tend towards soft news that sells and that is cheaper to produce. In view of the scale of such challenges, possible responses, as delineated by Anderson, arguably are rather timid. A light-regulation market approach would be premised on the blunt understanding that there is insufficient demand for high-quality news; individual journalists, such as prominent BBC News figures like Andrew Marr or Nick Robinson, could use their communication skills to render news more engaging for wider audiences; or, with a 'gold standard' of news provision accepted *a priori* as essential to democracy, top-down regulation would be required (ibid.).

Media saturation

Perhaps one of the most totemic and popularly cited texts on media power, framing and hegemony is Todd Gitlin's *The Whole World is Watching: Mass Media and the Making and Unmaking of the New Left*, which analyses press behaviour surrounding the Students for a Democratic Society movement and anti-Vietnam activism in 1960s United States. In his preface to the 2003 edition, issued more than 20 years after the

original, Gitlin distances himself from his then 'noble, rationalist, post-Sixties prejudice', which assumed that politics would have been better had press coverage been different (2003b p. xvi). He now considers that people do not respond to media through cogent thought but, because such thought in most societies is superficial, media instead operates on the level of feeling, providing individuals with emotional texture in everyday experience. And, while the theory of hegemony formed a core component of his earlier analysis, he now thinks it inadequately radical to grasp 'what is strange and essential about our time: the texture of life in the presence of the media' (2003b, p.xvii). He derides journalism's framing of the demonstrations at the 1999 WTO meeting in Seattle, the representation of the 2002 anti-Iraq War protests, and what he calls the astounding outpouring of hatred of Bill and Hillary Clinton, noting the lack of left-wing equivalents during the Clinton era of Rush Limbaugh, Pat Buchanan, or Fox News. However, he also credits the audience with some agency, and cautions that it is worth asking whether, given the prevalence today of audience scepticism and knowingness, news still straightforwardly conveys the normality of the established order. These ideas chime with some which will be considered later, in Chapter 4, in connection with the use of online news.

Journalism culture beyond the bidding of owners

Other criticisms, from within and without, of the deficiencies of the media system, news organizations, journalist practices and individual journalists are thick on the ground over recent decades, mostly in relation to state and corporate control (Miller and Dinan 2008, Miller 1994, Baistow 1985, Bromley 1998, Friel and Falk 2004, Barker 2007, Goldstein 1986, Ben H. Bagdikian 1997). However, Brian McNair, who, in *News Journalism in the UK*, provides a broad perspective on the evolution and critiques of British news, tends towards a more sanguine diagnosis, and sees journalism as responding to wider movements in society rather than simply doing the bidding of owners, business, or the ruling classes. He points to continuing support for the BBC's public service role, and rejects generalized observations of dumbing down in the press. Instead, he argues, a more subtly sophisticated news culture has emerged that can accommodate infotainment, that the feminisation of journalism has blurred distinctions between the private and public spheres that previously had kept readers in the dark on matters of public interest, that readers have begun to act as a constraint in the wake of high-profile excesses, and that market-driven editorial changes aimed at

keeping in step with public opinion have ended the formerly received wisdom of the press as wedded to the Conservative Party (McNair 2003). It is probably a fair summation to observe that McNair's less damning conclusion, which incorporates some countervailing observations of news media, is closer to those of most working journalists than those who fundamentally criticize the project of journalism. However, it simultaneously fits with the ideas of Gitlin, who also sees media consumption as being raised to new levels of sophistication and audience power (2003b).

McNair offers a more complex and, it might be argued, grounded view of journalism that is less inflexibly wedded to notions of the profession as fundamentally flawed and incapable of serving democratic society by dint of its subjugation to market economics. This less despairing and more inclusive approach finds some parallel expression in the work, in his development of field theory, of Pierre Bourdieu. Bourdieu, though scathing in his evaluation, carried out with particular reference to French television news, accords journalism some degree of autonomy in opposition to external pressures. He sees journalism as a field, or specialized sphere of action that cannot be understood by reductive reference to external political-economic structures or hegemonic processes (2005). Instead, it lies in a field within an inter-connected system of fields – of politics, economics, religion and cultural production – which structure social relations and wherein individuals act not out of rational self-interest, but relationally, in the context of habitus, which he describes as a structured "socialized subjectivity' (cited in Benson and Neveu 2005, p.3). The field is subjected to internal tensions between economic and cultural capital – such as, for example, newspaper and advertising sales on one hand and normatively prioritized investigative reporting on the other – as well as to changes wrought by new entrants, but it largely reproduces itself unless it is subjected to pressures from neighbouring fields. The idea of a socialized subjectivity, it could be argued, is one which most closely approximates to the lived – largely unconsciously, in Bourdieu's view – experience of news workers, even as they themselves prize objectivity and detachment. Journalists do not typically perceive or at least discuss themselves as indentured to powerful owners or other economic interests, and do not set out to promote a hegemonic view of society[23], but they are nevertheless aware of expectations of caution and conformity set in opposition to the possibility of an independent editorial approach. This tension between autonomy and heteronomy, then, successfully captures the professional

quotidian as well as situating journalism –or journalisms, since different specializations occur within the field – in wider society.

Bourdieu's ideas of degrees of autonomy in a self-replicating field fit closely with those of Kevin Barnhurst who, in an analysis of US news texts, found that common notions of trends in the form and content of news were not supported, but instead were part of a constructed account of journalism that accorded with a professional ideology. Barnhurst observes that the power held by journalists is an advisory, adjunct influence. However, in the 20th century attention has shifted toward journalists and their analyses and away from politicians and citizens, contrary to the distorted common sense views, based on the professional construction of news as short-form, event-centred and about people. The disjunction between this perception and the actuality of journalism practices moves news not only into the realm of ideology, says Barnhurst, but within a narrow definition of a negative ideology (2005).

In a complex attempt at blending Bourdieu's ideas on journalism with 'new institutionalism', Benson proposes what he calls a new spatial conception of the journalistic field, in which, even with its limited autonomy, professionalism plays a mediating role between market power and non-market, civic power (2006). This interpretation, emanating from a critical perspective, nevertheless allows that the theory of the journalistic field may bring us beyond the seeming despair of Chomsky and Curran, and recognizes some impetus toward public service, even if changes currently happening within journalism are viewed as negative. Risto Kunelius observes that Bourdieu sees the structure and relationships of the field as reflecting the broader struggles of the 'field of power', and comments accordingly:

> 'It goes without saying that if this really is the direction in which the journalistic field is moving, some parts of an earlier public service ethos in journalism will be weakening' (2006, p.684).

Summary

This chapter has outlined, in a highly compressed manner, some of the central theories and concepts through which ideas around journalism and news media are understood and contested in current debates, chiefly characterized by the tensions between

journalism's normative values and professional validation, on one side, and, on the other, critiques from a variety of perspectives. The aim has been to provide an underpinning to later discussion of new media and journalism, rather than to attempt to present a comprehensive epistemological taxonomy of the universe of journalism studies. Foremost in this review has been the evolving concept of objectivity and, with it, the inter-linked development of a professional self-identity and ethical awareness of journalists, even within a self-replicating habitus, or ideology. It has also laid out some of the canonical strands of thinking about journalism in general communication theory, and has noted the contours of some of the principal strands of censure of journalism, especially in the Anglo-American tradition, which also largely pertains in Ireland (Hallin and Mancini 2004).

It is reasonable to conclude at this point that, while journalism and journalists aspire to some high ethical values, news is a deeply problematic phenomenon that is in flux, with many deeply critical perspectives articulated, and with uncertainties facing practitioners, audiences and critics alike. These problems, although some of them have acquired new significance or can be expressed through technological and associated political-economic dimensions, relate also to journalists' historical roles and role perceptions, and for the most part predate the advent of networked digital media. As will be discussed in the following chapter, they have begun to be played out again in fresh ways on the Internet, which has opened a discussion in which new digital technologies are seen by some as presenting opportunities, or enabling, improvement or reform, often with strong links to the various wider positions around technology in society, as outlined in Chapter 2. Assessing the degree to which such debates are fundamentally new in the context of journalism is part of the essence of this study.

Endnotes

[1] It is difficult, and perhaps is becoming increasingly so, to avoid American texts when perusing the subject reading lists and library shelves of, arguably, any journalism school in these islands and elsewhere. The author some years ago was informed by the acting head of an Indian journalism education establishment that it had access solely to American text books. Its sponsor only funded US books, and, even though much of the Indian press is redolent still of the country's colonial past, the school could not afford the cover price of British books.

[2] While one would stray into hyperbole to call it a 'bible' of communicaton studies, the text is nevertheless ubiquitous on reading lists in communication and journalism programmes.

[3] The 1994 edition is deliberately chosen here, reflecting not only the text's canonical status but also this deliberate and key admission, which is absent from, or less directly expressed, in later editions.

[4] This study, based on telephone interviews with more than 1,000 participants across the United States, is a widely recognized landmark in research into journalists' work and attitudes and which has been integrated into an ongoing project encompassing research from 1971 to 2003 (1986, Beam, et al. 2009) and has been extended to elaborate transnational comparisons.

[5] A common debate in relation to journalism education is whether public relations should be included as a subject. Similarly, the changing role of newspaper sub-editors in Irish newspapers in recent decades, attended by casualization and out-sourcing abroad, raises questions as to whether this class of news worker is still engaged in journalistic work.

[6] While it is the intention in this section to confine the discussion to more general media theory, and to elaborate on new media dimensions at a later point, it is worth noting here, so direct is the resonance, that the model of media players competing for attention has been revived more recently, in the context of Internet media, in terms of 'the attention economy' (Goldhaber 1997).

[7] Later editions most probably incorporate more of Habermas's ideas, and, as shall become clear in Chapter 4, these underpin much work on online news.

[8] *Private Eye's* title for its regular section dealing with press gossip.

[9] An attempt in the 1980s to establish a professional association in Ireland failed, having encountered strong opposition from closed shop NUJ chapels.

[10] In the author's experience, it is on this disparity which is centred one of the most significant misunderstandings of the popular imagination and of aspirant entrants to the profession, on one hand, and the experience and orientation of those working in news media, on the other. This realization is probably one of the most important and difficult lessons for students enrolled on vocational journalism courses. It could be argued that such programmes have a duty to inform potential participants of the gap between perception and the quotidian in a news organization.

[11] Most journalists, or most newspaper journalists, certainly would be more familiar in their work settings with discussions of craft rather than values.

[12] It is, perhaps, surprising that no prominent research focuses on the secondary construction of journalism culture though analysis of such texts.

[13] Randall dismisses these as 'largely an irrelevance' to those working on a mass market tabloid, which he places in opposition to elite titles. While this hard distinction surely is problematic – and it is unlikely that all tabloid journalists see themselves as entirely free of ethical constraints – the opposition of 'quality' and tabloid titles is reflected in this study's focus.

[14] See http://www.pcc.org.uk/.

[15] In November 2009, the Council announced substantial adjustments to the code of practice relating to comment, incitement to hatred, and the reporting of the judgements. See http://www.irishtimes.com/newspaper/ireland/2009/1103/1224257963860.html

[16] In Independent Newspapers, the managing director's personal secretary was accorded the task.

[17] While critical of some of the methodological assumptions in the study, and expressing scepticism regarding the socialization of students, the authors see it as confirming the role of journalism education.

[18] Lloyd also sees the decline in standards in media as cause to encourage journalism studies in the academy.

19 The author can recall but one union discussion on a newspaper's editorial policy, as opposed to pay and conditions, during my years as member of the Independent Newspapers NUJ chapel. The issue concerned the dropping of an Irish language column by the *Evening Herald*. The editor was forced to come before an emergency meeting of the chapel to explain the decision, which he justified by stating that he could not understand Irish, and could not have material which he could not read in his newspaper. Under threat of industrial action, he was forced to undertake to reinstate the column.

[20] Since the foundation of the state, Ireland has had little such public, structured deliberation of the roles and workings of journalism, and thus there is scant material available beyond memoir and discursive histories which frequently rehearse, with various degrees of colour, standard claims for the profession. While Irish journalism and the political establishment historically have had their own outbreaks of enmity, they have been focused for the most part on censorship, as outlined in Chapter 1, or on allegations of unfair coverage. One recent criticism of standards came from media owner Denis O'Brien, who decried journalists' lack of understanding of business, and accused a reporter working for the Sunday Independent (in which he shares ownership), of deception in her attempts to interview the Taoiseach (Siggins 2009). Politicians and news media exist in a symbiotic embrace, but the former, while recognizing competitive pressures that may impact negatively on standards, inevitably see much to improve in the performance of journalism and are happy to point out such deficiencies (Dempsey 2006). Another recent outbreak of controversy over standards centred on the sordid reporting of the death of the politician Liam Lawlor, who, Sunday newspapers erroneously claimed, had been in the company of a prostitute when his car crashed in Moscow.

[21] Over recent decades, Irish newspaper proprietors have been perceived as largely non-interventionist, and there has not been the same overt association with political leaders, other than in the case of the infamous 'payback' front page editorial of the *Irish Independent* referred to in Chapter 1. However, in the absence of a systemic analysis of the power relations in Irish news media, the themes of Curran's highly critical account of the UK press are also most likely to apply in Ireland.

[22] See http://www.medialens.org

[23] Some opinion columnists deliberately espouse conservative values, of course, but this can be considered as being part of a sub-genre, connected with entertainment, that is not at the centre of news work, or, certainly, is not strongly represented in discussion of normative values.

Chapter 4: Literature review – news, journalism and the Internet

Introduction

Just as the Internet has spawned a profusion of scholarship, punditry and hyperbole in the fields of culture, technology and politics, as discussed in Chapter 2, so, as a closely inter-dependent layer within these themes, there has grown in the past decade a discourse of similar contours around journalism. In this discussion, a similarly evangelical, proclamatory tone gradually has come to be tempered by wider-scoped analyses taking into account institutional and professional dimensions of news.

The aim of this chapter is to discuss and synthesize the development of online journalism in the context of the varying interpretations, representing the principal scholarly and professional streams with reference to the particular contexts in which journalism and the Internet, or the wired society, interact. Ever-present in the multifarious dimensions of these discussions is the already-observed, at the wider level, tension between celebratory, often market-driven technological determinism predicting transformation (or, in some economic analyses, ruin for 'old' media), and the recognition of broader and more societally-embedded shaping forces. In the latter stream, there are strong currents of critical, sometimes vexed debate around the nature of professional journalism and its normative values, with, typically, a sharp opposition of opinions and practices framed as progressive and democratic versus the legacy of 'traditional' journalism.

The broad debate

It is possible to discern a number of components of the wider debate, each of which is the locus for tensions concerning the fundamental nature of journalism and its future, and these are explored later in this chapter. At the heart of this discussion is the

overarching question as to whether journalism and news are transformed in fundamental ways by the emergence of the Internet, or whether instead online news accommodates continuities with journalism's core values and practices. An alternative way of expressing this is to ask whether journalism and journalism practice merely are transposed, largely unchanged, to online platforms, or whether the Internet is a new meta-medium that transcends established media characteristics and in which journalism changes significantly. Debates around this issue are sometimes polarized along a one-dimensional, either-or continuum, and couched in the language of disparagement, such as 'shovelware', or 'dumbing down', or in terms of stubborn resistance to changes by old, corporate, mainstream news media, sometimes referred to as MSM. Within such debates, drawing on strands of discussion around the Internet generally, are questions as to whether the news media is, will be, or should be, top down or democratic, whether news will or should be richer and more complex, or, at a time of information overload, more focused and directive, to what extent public discourse in the media ecology can be opened, and whether concepts of news should broaden beyond the professional to include the amateur.

It is hardly necessary to observe that, underpinning much of this debate and, certainly, much media comment on it, is the inevitable tension between hype and technological determinism, on one side, and the persistence of historical patterns on the other. News on the Internet is, itself, a long-running story (Shedden 2010) and one that is revealing not only of professional journalism agendas but also of the strategic commercial attitudinizing of publishers and cheerleading of senior journalists charged with the editorial stewardship of online media properties, of those in entrepreneurial new media ventures or, sometimes, those in journalism education who see online innovation as sexily iconoclastic (Bromley and Purdey 2001).

At this point it is useful to stress that, while considerations around the viability and sustainability of online news business models necessarily form a crucial underpinning element in this discussion, with the political economies of online news publishing impinging directly on the practice of journalism, it is not the purpose of the present study to examine solely commercial publishing dimensions of Internet news, as if in pursuit of a holy grail that thus far has eluded most of the largest multinational corporations and niche publishers alike.[1] The principal concern of the broad debate,

beyond shareholder value in media conglomerations or the success or otherwise of individual entrepreneurship, has been the validity or otherwise of the journalistic enterprise, sometimes clumsily constructed in terms of the 'impact' of the net on journalism, but more usually critiqued in the context of the increasingly multifarious and often fine-grained inter-relationships between journalism, its culture, values, processes, tools and technologies, its publics, its sources and the net.

Two views of good journalism

Bill Kovach, perhaps one of the most internationally recognized and exalted defenders of journalistic standards, summarizes what he sees is at stake, in language that points firmly to the power relations and political-economic dimensions of news work:

> 'Unless we become knowledgeable about the technology, conversant with its application, and active in shaping the decisions that will be made about its uses, other forces with more powerful interests will make them for us' (2005).

However, if Kovach speaks the language of conventional 20th to 21st century journalism practice and its embracing of and adaptation to the net, another thinker, in an early foray on the subject sees in digital networked media the opportunity to overthrow current orthodoxy and to establish not simply a new way of doing journalism but a return to older, more direct ways. Prominent new media critic and *slashdot.org*[2] editor Jon Katz's passionate declaration opens the possibility of a reform of journalism founded on the antithesis of now-familiar and, to some, sacred normative values of objectivity and neutrality, instead valorizing the partisan, polemic model of early democratic revolutionary journalism (1995). Katz, a staunch advocate of free speech, invokes Enlightenment values to call the Internet the 'bastard child' of the 'father of journalism', because of its universality and tolerance of diverse perspectives. Thomas Paine aimed to write 'democratically', in language that everyone could understand: this, says Katz, is 'the language of the Internet'. Paine would rage against the corporatization of news and would resist the impending marketization of the net, recognizing content and telecommunications conglomerates such as Time Warner, the Baby Bells or Viacom as 'different incarnations of the same elements that scarfed up the press and homogenized it' (ibid.).[3]

This position, unashamedly and aggressively hostile to the conventional practice of journalism at the turn of the millennium, is, however, later moderated by a recognition that journalism must endure, and that news cannot be divorced from major outlets acting as gatekeepers, even if those gatekeepers must learn to 'share power' (Katz 2001). Katz's call for a return to a news agora liberated from the tyranny of objectivity is endorsed by Jim Hall, in a 2001 work more systematically considering online journalism, with the observation that:

> 'Writers such as Addison, Steele, Johnson, Swift and their less well-known brethren in Grub Street were read precisely for their views and opinions' (2001, p.41).

Hall sounds a deterministic note by framing problems in journalism as analogous to bandwidth: traditional media's difficulties with truth, objectivity and impartiality stem from mediation via technologies that impose a media logic and necessarily compress and filter messages.

Such challenges to journalism and journalism culture's high modernist certainties, posed on the most fundamental level, are re-echoed with more specific expression in thinking about multimedia, interactivity and openness of the 'new' news. The purpose of this chapter is to explore how the Internet and its associated phenomena operationalize issues facing the profession, across profound dimensions of normative values and ideal identity, its materialized production, as well as the quotidian experience of the practice of news work.

Technology, formats and platforms

Evolution towards the web

If newspapers can be described as a 'hard' format, with an inescapably physically constrained presence, the fundamentals of which arguably, at least in the view of cyber-evangelists, have not changed for decades or even centuries, then the rendering of previously print-bound news across a variety of soft digital options represents the most dramatic and immediately straightforward apparent transformation wrought by the net and associated ICTs. At the very basic level, since the establishment by the

mid-1990s of the graphical browser interface of the World Wide Web as the standard for publishing online, the technology requirement for the publishing of digital text files originally intended for crude analogue ink reproduction – and newsprint typically has been the crudest of printing formats – amounts to no more than the most elementary and minimal coding in HTML. Still images from digital cameras, slowly adopted by professional news photographers in parallel with the rise of the net, are immediately amenable to reproduction in 'new' media.[4] Content management systems (CMSs) through which all but the earliest of web newspaper editions are organized, formatted and presented, are relatively simple in terms of database development and, though publishers may have invested significantly in heavily-customized proprietary systems, are generally available as freeware, one of the most frequently advertised attributes of which is ease of use. With such accessible tools, it is, in theory at least, possible to produce an online newspaper without the 'deep pockets' that are a prerequisite for technology investment in a large scale, modern printing press.

The adoption of the web as a news platform was not, however, a foregone conclusion, and newspaper publishers, in tandem with the modernization of print production, had been experimenting with other means of electronic publishing for some decades, not least with videotext (Smith 1980, Weaver 1983). In setting the context for his heavily-cited study on journalism practice in newsrooms in the newly networked environment, Pablo Boczkowski sets out the evolution of the publishing of US daily newspapers in digital consumer-oriented formats, tracing a path away from ink on paper through early efforts by a variety of actors, but in which the Knight-Ridder group, MIT and Columbia University's newly-formed Center for New Media played leading roles, focused on technologies such as videotex (in which the British Post Office's Prestel system was an early leader), teletext, fax, and the emerging proprietary networks such as CompuServe, through to the settling on the web standard in the mid-90s in response to consumer adoption of the graphical browser (Boczkowski 2004b). Online systems also have evolved quickly to accommodate audio and video technical capabilities, and in more recent years new platforms from PDAs to smart phones have been embraced with relative technological ease (Paulussen 2006), as predicted as early as 1994 by Knight-Ridder's new media development director, Robert Fidler (1994).

Newspapers' response

If parts of the preceding section can be compared to the familiar promotional matter of a software vendor, the assertions of technical potential cannot be denied. However, the adoption and use of multimedia in news has more complex and more problematic dimensions that extend beyond a narrative of inevitable, untrammelled progress achieved through technology. Boczkowski characterizes the first phase of 'electronic publishing' of newspapers as pragmatically defensive: publishers were moved to explore this array of non-ink-on-paper options in answer to perceived threats to print (2004b). Thereafter, once newspapers had coalesced on the web as the preferred online platform, they engaged in what he describes as a process of hedging:

> 'It appears that in a relentless pursuit of permanence, newspapers ended up undertaking substantial change' (ibid., p.52).

It is at this stage that Boczkowski identifies the practices of repurposing, or use of 'shovelware' – the redeployment of existing content supplemented by new content or by new functionality such as user customization, archives, horizontal collections of content on particular topics, and recreating new types of exclusively online content, but ones that were based on practices that 'drew partly from symbolic, behavioral, and material repertoires already existing in media and computing circles' (ibid., p.60). Included in this sub-category are content types such as breaking news; in-depth special reports, perhaps with heavy use of audio, video, graphics and animation; new, regular streams of original content such as political news; and user-generated content by way of chat rooms, forums, reviewing and ranking.

Although this range of responses incorporates some innovative measures, the collective actions of newspapers at this time are summarized in this analysis as the spreading of risk in a volatile environment, in a shift by newspapers from, citing Grabher's distinction, adaptation to adaptability, where the latter of the two albeit complementary concepts refers to a more flexible and future-facing orientation, as reflected in a new emphasis in, for example, recruitment on learning capability rather than existing functional skills. For all the outward signs of innovation and change, Boczkowski argues in this sophisticated analysis, American dailies have adopted a contradictory position:

'(They have) tried to transform a delivery vehicle that has remained unaltered for centuries, and whose permanence has anchored a complex ecology of information symbols, artefacts, and practices, while simultaneously aiming to leave the core of what they do, and are, untouched' (ibid., p.71).

While any historical account of newspaper formats and print technologies will easily rebut the startling assertion that they have been frozen on paper for centuries, it nevertheless is this tension between transformation and continuity, between the technical choices considered unproblematically open to journalism on the one hand, and what newspapers do, at their core, on the other, that animates a large part of the debate around online journalism.

Champions of convergence

John Pavlik, executive director of the aforementioned Center for New Media and another highly influential, anchoring figure in the debate of online news, takes, somewhat confusingly, a simultaneously historical and speculative approach to his treatment of the effects of new media on journalistic outputs (2001). Pavlik's analysis mixes the brightly declarative tone, familiar from the cyber-evangelist genre and much commercially-oriented coverage of the net, with discussion of journalistic practice and formats, often invoking specific case studies not only to illustrate but also to establish general points. His work can at times display the naive belief in progress of the futurologist, but for the purposes of this review it has the virtue of chiming with, and representing in compressed form, much of the by-now ubiquitous, mainstream rhetoric surrounding this topic.[5] Pavlik addresses multimediality by arguing that the new range of ''communication modalities', comprising text, audio, video, graphics and animation, along with 3-D news and 360-degree video which he predicted would be in use by media organizations by 2010, would overcome the limitations of analogue media. Online journalism, he says, unfortunately has been slow to incorporate multimedia capabilities, because of a lack of tradition, because print-based news operations do not view video and audio as very relevant, or because of constraints in skill sets. Pavlik expends much time and imagination extolling the coming benefits to journalism of the 'omnicamera', a device capable of capturing video in a 360-degree arc, which, for example, would not have missed vital footage of the 1993 siege at Waco, Texas, as CNN's conventional cameras did, which might

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have solved the mystery surrounding the assassination of John F. Kennedy, and which could offer news consumers a choice of viewing angle of events such as the Irish Gay and Lesbian Organization's protests at the 1997 New York St Patrick's Day parade. The failure of news organizations to embrace this technology affording contextualized journalism is ascribed here to the slow development of what Pavlik calls a new storytelling paradigm, and he diagnoses this inertia as being caused by cultural resistance, although with little insight offered into why journalists are, in his view, technological laggards.

Pavlik's account of multimedia journalism, while occasionally acknowledging some risks, is largely celebratory. His terminology speaks of the ICT engineering lab more than it does the newsroom: he uses 'object-oriented', a term borrowed directly from software development, to describe potential layers of content made up of video, animation, graphics, statistical information, and hyperlinks. More caution is expressed in relation to dynamic content and the ability of online news to update instantly: here, it is seen that immediacy might be achieved at the expense of quality, and in particular to quality of writing. Nevertheless, he is overwhelmingly on the side of journalism made better by technology, and draws a stark opposition between old, bad news and new, good news:

> '... despite the claims of many traditional journalists, the truth is not easily encapsulated into a single linear narrative of fifteen hundred words or less in print, or three minutes or less of video and audio. Only in an alternative, online broadband medium can context be provided for complex, multidimensional news events, where perspective and point of view are centrally important in understanding the complete truth behind the news' (ibid., p.23).

For Pavlik, from this point, as with other primarily technicist perspectives (Carlson 2003, Kawamoto 2003, Salwen 2005), the truth only can be delivered through technology, with broadband and the expansion of modalities the keys to unlocking the complexity of modern societies.

Jane Singer, among the most prolific of academics writing about online journalism in the last decade and a half, asserts that the overarching ethical issue stemming from 'cross-platform' journalism is whether it enhances or detracts from 'the journalist's

commitment to public service' (2007b, p.198). Singer hails what she calls the 360-degree perspective on a story – a variation from Pavlik's all-seeing camera – as providing comprehensive news tailored to each media format. She is willing to point to problems, real and potential, relating to culture clashes between journalists from different media backgrounds as well as dangers of cross-promotion and intensification of work pressures. Nevertheless, she enthusiastically endorses the view that 'multiplatform storytelling is the future', and cites the 2005 report of the Project for Excellence in Journalism which concluded that journalism's future lay in a converged multimedia news environment. Even if other media forms remain, the Web, she says, is where the public can and will get the information it needs to be self-governing.

A closer review of the principal directions of early online news format development in 'e-newspapers' is provided by Barrie Gunter (2003), who bases his discussion to a large degree on Li's three models of online newspapers – the interactivity model, seen by some as the most essential attribute of new media, the hybrid model, focusing on the blending of new media formats in news presentation online, and the media transaction model, based on Bordewijk and van Kaam's 1986 formulation (Li 2005, Bordewijk and Van Kaam 1986). In this latter model, information flows in new communication systems can be classified in turn according to four patterns – allocution, where information is distributed from the centre, as in traditional media; conversation, where individuals interact freely without an intermediary; consultation, where users seeks information from a central store, and registration, the reverse of consultation, in which the centre acquires information from users, perhaps without their knowledge (Gunter 2003, pp.61,62).

While Bordewijk and van Kaam contended that the development of information services generally was away from allocutory towards consultative and conversational, Gunter sees newspapers as still mostly filling their sites with material from print, with few changes to copy, more stories appearing in print-only than in web editions exclusively, and aiming to gratify the same needs of readers and advertisers. Specifically, he observes that there are few newspaper sites offering multimedia, that archives and reference services have seen some development, and that in the US more newspapers are prepared to publish stories online in advance of the print edition,

although continual updates at this time have not yet been adopted widely in Britain (ibid.). This observation of slow evolution echoes previous findings from digitally-advanced Scandinavia (Eriksen and Ihlstrom 2000).

Jim Hall's primer, published roughly contemporaneously, attempts to provide a more comprehensive overview of the themes concerning changes in journalism in the context of the net, switching the emphasis from specific technologies to the form of news (2001). In this analysis, news outlets are assessed according to how well they exploit the particular characteristics of the web. Hall flags changes in consumption patterns towards personalized taste, aggregation of content, many-to-many communication (as opposed to the broadcast, one-to-many, model), and the immediacy of rolling or breaking news. *The Irish Times* is cited, along with the *Guardian's newsUnlimited*, as a newspaper title that eschewed the pure shovelware route to web publishing, instead putting original reporting on the web in 1994, and moving to distribute its entire daily edition by email.[6] Here, it is classed in the company of other web progressives, atypical of most media at the time, such as *MSNBC, CNN Interactive, Salon, Slashdot, Hotwired* and *Cnet*, while Microsoft's *Slate* is condemned as 'a case study in how not to produce news on the web', attempting to charge a subscription and running serious, magazine-length features, while operating a traditional print hierarchy of editor, subs and beat reporter (ibid., p.30).

Perhaps inevitably, given the high-level perspective he takes, Hall's approval for the online-friendly titles is founded vague criteria. A reading of *Hotwired* and *Salon* would confirm that they clearly were then, and remain, examples of online media outlets offering journalism of considerable worth. But they are praised by Hall principally for providing content that is relevant and accessible, qualities which it would be absurd to suggest are confined to the online realm. Beyond good content, however, in Hall's view the interactivity found in such web organs is singled out as the distinguishing property that makes for a journalism that is more accountable than in print.

In addition to marking a perceived modest shift away from shovelware, and picking up on new thinking around hyperlinks (Kilfeather 1996), Hall invokes George Landow's (after Barthes) concept of packages of information, or 'lexias' in order to

foreground the role of hypertext in stimulating what he proposes are new ways of writing in narrative structures that represent a departure from the rigid hierarchy of the news format. Through hyperlinking, different lexias are available to individual readers, so that there is no single path through a news story, and no single conclusion or summation is possible. The inverted pyramid shape delivering a single truth (Pöttker 2003) is dismissed here as too crude and inadequate to cope with the complexity and plurality of possible meanings: now it is necessary to accommodate the many strands of a story as a net or matrix, while, in addition to this expansion, online news producers are exhorted to present the news in layers. Hall calls this 'an editorial imperative', and, eliding the contradiction of his insistence on a media logic inherent in layering, declares that:

> 'In online journalism, there is no reason why the form should not be determined by the content' (2001, p.71).

Hall makes reference to the interaction of web production technologies with site design, observing that modular layouts allow for changes that do not disrupt the broader presentation, and extolling the benefits of archives and search engines. For the most part, his exploration of this important aspect of online news is hobbled by the need to explain a variety of terms that today are perhaps familiar to the general web audience, such as HTML, XML, Shockwave, Java, server hits, the idiosyncrasies of different web browsers and the notion of 'push' media such as *pointcast.net* and Microsoft's since-abandoned media channels, an attempt at a rigidly broadcast model which was proposed as an alternative to the user-centred 'pull' media of the web. Tellingly, Hall makes no acknowledgement of changes in printing technologies and formats in the later decades of the 20th century, not least a general shift to modular layout.

Away from the hard determinism on display here, Hall raises issues around more fundamental problems for journalism practice, such as the idea, implied in the finite space and time logic of print, that a story is capable of completion, that is, with a fixed beginning and end on any one day. The online space is not constructed in this way, and newsrooms operating to rigid deadlines must adapt to varying degrees to the emerging 24-hour news cycle, while the web also affords greater incorporation of sources by dint of the possibility for direct access to databases and speech transcripts.

Nevertheless, tempering his enthusiasm for the notion (citing Eric Meyer) that content should drive form, Hall recognizes that 'traditional' journalism standards should not be abandoned and, more precisely, that the role of the gatekeeper remains. Additionally, in spite of his focus on the minutiae of disparate technologies, he contends that the primary role of the online journalist is not to master convergent multimedia techniques. Rather what is important, he says, is 'the ability to conceptualize a piece of journalism in multimedia and interactive terms' (ibid., p.91). Here, as in the analyses of others, the message is contradictory and confused, at once celebrating the breaking of the constraints of the medium, and at the same time warning of challenging new rules of engagement.

Pavlik and Hall's are not the only analyses that centre for the most part on technology-driven change. Complementing historical accounts of the development of online journalism and discussions of convergence of technologies in news, usually with reference to a fearful newspaper industry struggling to overcome the limitations of time and geography (Nguyen 2008), journalism instructional texts focusing on the net frequently emphasize the potential for multimedia presentation of content and the opportunities presented for non-linear story-telling (Brooks and Missouri Group 2004, Foust 2005, Ward 2002), sometimes with striking over-simplification in which the very novelty of online techniques appears to be the sole rationale for their adoption (Rosales 2006). In such texts, which typically also feature online research techniques for journalists, new formats and modalities are presented as to be taken for granted as items that must now comprise part of the working journalist's repertoire of skills. Inevitably, a striking common characteristic of efforts in the 'can't afford to stand still' genre is their rapid obsolescence: the relevance of basic HTML tutorials has for some time been overtaken by the adoption of content management systems; instructions for using a variety of search engines failed to foresee the mass adoption of search, and Google in particular, as a primary means of navigating the net; and glossaries of once esoteric ICT labels and acronyms quickly come to include terms which either have become commonplace or refer to protocols which are now rarely used.

Stuart Allan provides another perspective, looking at the early development of online news through the lenses of immediacy, depth and interactivity, using, like Hall, the

progress of selected news stories online to illustrate descriptively the properties and qualities of new news formats (Allan 2005). Allan posits the aftermath of the Oklahoma City bombing of 1995 as a watershed in the adoption of breaking news, such was the demonstrated power of the Internet to react, leaving newspapers behind. The Heaven's Gate cult's mass suicide allowed *washingtonpost.com* to exploit the net by putting online a copy of the cult's site which had been overwhelmed by traffic, along with a timeline and links to primary source documents and to archived *Washington Post* articles. Internet advocates defended the *Post's* policy against those arguing for narrower disclosure for fear of aiding the recruitment of cultists, and Allan asserts that online news sites played an important role in helping to contextualize the story.

A wider examination of newspaper development less dependant on individual, high-profile episodes, is provided by Greer and Mensing, who, in a longitudinal study of the websites of 83 daily US print newspapers, found significant increases in news on home pages (carried by only 53% in 1997), archives, daily updates, and other features, so that a constructed 'news sophistication' score rose over the period of the study, beginning in 1997, from 4.8 to 6.61. A steady increase in the use of multimedia is also recorded, and the authors foresee an acceleration here in line with the adoption of broadband, while user registration rises, as does subscription, at a time when the issue of paid-for content was in flux (2006). A related study of the efficiency of the design of news sites in delivering information proposes that this quality connects with the shift in power from publishers to readers – the more user-centred the design is made, the more likely it is to retain its audience – although it is not a foregone conclusion that the more visually appealing sites score highest, since immediacy of access, choice of content and smoothness of news flow also contribute to efficiency (Li 2006, Li 2002). A study from the same period incorporates a rare dimension in the field, tracing the development towards modular, graphic layouts of print visual design along with web and television formats to describe the convergence of all three, in a vivid concretization of Bolter and Grushin's theory or remediation (Cooke 2005).

Returning to the subject more recently, Jim Hall is of the opinion that the convergence of print and web news is a *fait accompli* (Hall 2008). He cites former newspaper editor, media commentator and Internet champion Roy Greenslade's 2006

pronouncement (significantly expressed in future tense) that for journalists there will be no split of functions between print and the web and that, as well as providing text copy, they will also, after very little training, transmit audio and video for podcasts and vodcasts from a self-operated auto-cue. For Hall, the first generation of technologies of 'the new news' are now in place, and at the most fundamental level the meaning of the word 'news' has been altered:

> 'What has become clear is that any discussion of "online news" or "online editions" is an anachronism. When we talk about news journalism we are referring to a set of technologically and, increasingly, formally converged media and forms" (ibid., p.208).

However, replicating a problem present in much discussion of the implementation of online news, Hall bases his analysis, in which he reaches this fundamental and far-reaching declaration, on observation of a highly select group of websites, chosen precisely for their widely-celebrated demonstration of advanced online techniques. Thus are invoked the transnational standard-bearers of online journalism's progress – *Guardian Unlimited, CNN*, the *BBC*, *The Daily Telegraph*, *The* (London) *Times* and, in historical context, US pioneers such as the *San José Mercury News,* the *Palo Alto Weekly*, and the *Raleigh News and Observer* – in order to support a conclusion that news generally has undergone a deep transformation.

Persistent continuities

A different, and considerably more problematic picture emerges in a study of news content focusing on the reporting in 2008 of five news stories by 'traditional' British national online news outlets. Even if they are studying leading news sites, instead of new possibilities in user empowerment, greater depth and increased diversity, Redden and Witschge find that the drive for immediacy and the constant updating of websites effectively has produced less news, not more, and more news that takes the same angle and even, because of institutional connections, identical outputs (2010). While this finding, based on actual content rather than pre-selected illustrative narratives, challenges the sweeping claims of the advocates of new media technologies, at another, more specific point in the discussion concerning journalism processes, it offers a view of forces at work in opposition to hopes for democracy-enhancing

computer-assisted reporting (CAR) (Garrison 1998, Paul 1999) and is more in tune with grounded observations of the pragmatic, selective and limited adoption by journalists of online research techniques (Machill and Beiler 2009). This view of, at most, stasis in the form of online news is further reinforced by a 2008 content analysis study of prominent online outlets in the US, UK, Russia, France, and Germany, which concluded that, even if low levels of experimentation are apparent, news on the web, is 'basically good old news journalism, which is similar to what we know from "offline" newspapers', and that such news shares the national boundaries prevalent in the older medium (Quandt 2010).

<u>Working with innovation</u>

Another British study, by Thurman and Lupton, based on interviews with senior digital editorial staff at *Sky News*, *BBC News*, the *Guardian*, *The Financial Times,* the *Mirror*, the *Sun*, *The Telegraph* and *The Times*, provides a composite, textured understanding of the adoption of multimedia (2008). What emerges here is an appreciation among decision-makers of the benefits of and need for multimedia, strongly tempered by caution and uncertainty. The authors make the significant observation that the British experience differs from that of the US, because cross-media ownership, common in America and therefore adding economic impetus to newsroom convergence, is more restricted by regulation in the UK.[7] The study found that the much-reported, radical approach of *The Daily Telegraph* in setting up a wholly new, digitally integrated newsroom was not entirely endorsed by participants. Whereas the *Guardian* accepted the need for more integration, this was seen as a more gradual process which desk editors could negotiate themselves, while *The Times* deliberately emphasized the separateness of a vanguard group looking at new technologies and new possibilities in journalism.

Newspaper journalists' reaction to multimedia was broadly positive, but the study found that such transitions were largely limited to volunteers, since the nationals had a large pool of staff from which to draw the necessary numbers, with individuals motivated by creative curiosity or even vanity. Perhaps the most striking outcome in this research, however, is the bias of editors and news executives in setting training priorities not towards the 'cool' skills of online journalism training, but towards traditional skills. These were:

'… being able to write quickly, clearly and accurately; being able to spell and have excellent grammar; being able to write snappy headlines; and possessing the ability to spot a strong story' (ibid., p.443).

Developments in multimedia were mixed: video was increasingly being adopted as a consequence of the rapid success of *YouTube*, but audio podcasting was relegated to niche status, and text remained, in the view of the journalists, at the core of content. While an established role was seen for interactive storytelling via animation software in breaking beyond traditional story formats, concerns were voiced over resources and training needs, and ventures into the *Second Life* realm in pursuit of the audience were viewed with caution.

If the state of play at national UK level appears mixed, with an underlying, heavy preference for more traditional format options, a less sanguine picture emerges, from Williams and Franklin's case studies of British regional newspapers in the Trinity Mirror Group (2007). In this research, focusing on working reporters rather than editorial or corporate management, a clear division emerges between those who must implement multimedia strategies and those who are perceived to have adopted them in pursuit of short-term goals. Journalists worried that, with insufficient resources, quality would suffer, and that their already heavy workload would increase due to the web-first policy (putting stories online before they appear in print) and video production, while it was also reported that editorial staff were under pressure to utilize video from external sources, such as police and public relations practitioners, sometimes from YouTube.

Some journalists had already engaged in industrial action over the implementation of multimedia in newsrooms and had won pay concessions, in the context of long-standing concerns of the NUJ formally articulated in its 'Journalism Matters' campaign, and echoing the union's own commissioned research (NUJ 2007a). The union report refers in its appendices to an agreement at *The Irish Times* for consultation on a 'multi-media newsroom of the future', along with a broad acceptance of and welcome for the development, fears expressed over working conditions, professional standards and the creation of a new, lower category of production journalist.

'We see the integration of online and print operations as a very real opportunity and not as a threat. It will be an ongoing process which will have to be constantly monitored in order for us to uphold our core principles and so that we can remain flexible enough to adapt to new challenges' (ibid.).[8]

An appendix relating to capturing of images at the *Drogheda Independent* reflects more prosaic but perhaps more immediate concerns, far removed from Pavlik's omnicamera (ibid.).[9] Here, in a newspaper that at the time did not employ any photographer, resolution of the question of whether reporters should take pictures for publication is deferred in a new house agreement, with a working party set up to monitor the use of digital cameras by journalists. While management sees practice as evolving alongside technology, even to the point of reporters not needing dedicated cameras but using mobile phone cameras instead, the union re-asserts 'the primacy of news gathering as the core function of reporters' and ' the primacy of photojournalism as the core function of photographers'. This scenario, in which journalists in a small regional publication defend their defined roles in the face of technological change, is starkly at variance not only with the perception of celebrated solo multimedia journalist and former photographer Kevin Sites's adventures in war zones, but also optimistic narratives of hyper-local multimedia reporting in Florida (Martyn 2009).

Such tales from the trenches in Irish newspapers appear to denote a local professional culture that is peculiarly resistant to change, but an update by Kevin Barnhurst on the state of play in US newspaper websites dispels the notion that the American context is one of thrusting progress in the implementation of online features (2010). Barnhurst's team studied three high-profile US newspapers – *The New York Times* (with an online audience of more than 20 million individual readers), the *Chicago Tribune* and the Portland *Oregonian* – and found that their development as it stood in 2005 was little advanced on the position in 2001, and that they remained visually impoverished compared with their corresponding print editions. Where there had been development, it primarily had been in constructing site navigation aimed at managing readers' usage with a view to delivering more advertising, serving the revenue-generating purposes of the online entity rather than making it easier for citizens to find information.[10] More generally, the topic of multimedia and convergence has tended to fade in recent

years, and in some of the most recent texts it significantly is not foregrounded as separate specific focus of discussion of online journalism (Deuze 2011, Meikle and Redden 2010).

Interactivity

Just as multimedia convergence and Internet platforms and their affordances have become a well-aired topic in the discussion of online news, the concept of interactivity made possible by new technologies, and intertwined with format, has become arguably more totemic of the potential for the improvement and extension of news media online.

Fortunati and her colleagues label interactivity as operationalized in online journalism as 'a metaphor of online news' and this text provides a relevant exploration of a rather elastic notion (2010). Beyond Jensen's influential construction of interactivity as a category in communication and media studies (1998), Rafaeli's important extension of the concept constructs it as a meaningful chain of communication, rather than a simple one or two-part exchange (Rafaeli and Sudweeks 1997), raising the bar for consideration of the presence of this feature as a media artefact. At the same time, the wider body of literature on online journalism, from Hall (2001) to Friend and Singer (2007) reflects the centrality of this feature to potential new values in online journalism.

Participation, connectivity and user power

Much comment on audience or user participation in news media, whether broadcast or online, is couched in euphoric or declarative language (Almasy 2005). With contested interpretations, however, Fortunati et al (op. cit.) provide a summary of Kim and Sawhney's classification of three broad theoretical approaches. The first, limited classification relates to the ability of communicators simply to exchange messages, with media that stimulate such exchange classed as interactive. In the second, the criterion applied as a test of interactivity is the ability of users in a given media environment to modify the form and content of that environment. It is in this context that much discussion has developed concerning the shift of power from media producers to the public, in which users also become producers, or 'prosumers', and in

which networked journalism, citizen journalism, and participatory journalism often are situated. The third classification enumerates elements of interactivity that pose a more difficult test, however, seeing the concept as inherently rooted in communication power relations.

> '... power in communication means, for the producer, the proactive ability to select the argument, to decide how to present it, to determine who can be the interlocutor, as well as to determine the time, duration, place and cost of communication, while, for the consumer, power means at most a capacity for reaction and defence, or perhaps the option to be passive' (ibid., p.45).

Notwithstanding the difficulty presented by this last, quite fundamental classification of interactivity, the debate around the concept principally has been situated in terms of the re-balancing of top-down, one-way communication, away from powerful mainstream media (MSM) and toward the public, publics or communities, fitting more adequately the model's second-tier approach. And, as in the case of multimedia, technicist celebration is strongly woven through much of the discussion. Once again, the celebrity online commentator Jon Katz (whose contribution is typical of much extemporized reflection on the topic) is pithily in the vanguard:

> '... journalism doesn't get (interactivity), and has resisted the idea fiercely. Newspapers, newsmagazines and TV networks haven't radically changed form or content in half a century, despite their aging audiences, and growing competition from new media sources. They are allergic to interactivity. Increasingly, it appears they are incapable of it' (Katz 2002).

One of the more productively structured elaborations on the subject is that provided by Mark Deuze (2003), even if to some extent it can still be classified with commentary in which the deployment of online technologies is viewed in terms of inevitable progress. In this comprehensive analysis, multimediality and hypertextuality both are considered, but it is primarily through interactivity that Deuze structures a model of varying forms of online journalism. The four kinds of online journalism which he perceives are arranged across two dimensions: on a vertical axis based on the degree of moderation of participatory communication, and on a horizontal axis that expresses levels of concentration on editorial content as opposed

to 'public connectivity'. In this typology, mainstream news sites are located high on the scale of editorial content and on moderation of communication, contrasting at the other extreme with what Deuze terms 'share and discussion' sites.

The former group includes, along with most newspaper websites, some net-native sites, and it is towards this form of online journalism that most professional training in online journalism is oriented. The latter refers to a type of online journalism that provides a platform for people to connect with others, often around a specific theme, as in the cases of the ICT news site *Slashdot*, or the anti-globalization network *Indymedia*. Deuze places two other categories between these poles. Index and category sites, such as those operated by *Yahoo!* or *Moreover*, and the notorious *Drudge Report*, provide aggregated content and contextualized links to other sites (with attendant problems concerning the practice of 'deep linking' in which the hyperlink bypasses the owner site's home page or other site identifiers to go straight to the relevant content item). Meta- and comment sites are sites which critique and discuss news media generally – journalism about journalism, such as media watchdogs, professional journalism websites, or 'alternative' sites. For these, Deuze cites *Mediachannel* or Poynter *Medianews* in the US, *dotJournalism* in the UK, or *Extra!* in The Netherlands.[11]

Deuze adopts Massey and Levy's (1999) qualities of interactivity in online media – complexity of choice, responsiveness to the user, facilitation of interpersonal communication and ease of adding information – and, from these, he outlines three levels into which websites' interactive options can be classed. Navigational interactivity refers to aids to help the reader move around the site. In this sense, aspects of print such as 'continued on' (or turnout lines) could also be classed as interactive. Functional interactivity allows readers to contribute via features such as bulletin boards (or, later, comment fields for individual stories) and email links. Adaptive interactivity is positioned here as the most developed, and refers to sites configured so that every action of the user has an impact on its content, with user behaviour remembered and reflected by the site software, and with users allowed to customize their content and to upload their own content, as well as annotate and discuss it.

Deuze argues that this typology of online journalisms, centred on websites, should not be taken in isolation from consideration of journalism as a whole in which the different futures of journalism are seen to exist symbiotically with 'content-based notions of news work' (ibid. p.15). This model, though highly developed, can be very crudely summarized in terms of connectivity versus content, and in terms of the power relations between journalists and the audience. Deuze critiques other approaches to questions around online journalism as being biased towards the assumption that its future is determined primarily by professionals' monopoly on story-telling and, in a key declaration, claims that the typology of online journalisms serves to show that 'much of journalism's potential can (or even should) be found in reversing this paradigm' (ibid., p.217). In spite of its setting in a careful analysis, grounded in previous literature and in observed developments, and providing a conceptually valuable framework, this is a surprisingly stark and radical claim of iconoclastic transformation. For Deuze, it seems, even in his carefully constructed model, the affordances of new digital technologies are driving revolution.

News as a conversation

Cecilia Friend provides a more discursive overview of thinking around interactivity, and its implications for journalism professional roles, linking her treatment to the abandonment of the normative value of objectivity, 'journalism's highest ideal' (2007c, p.12). Friend connects this with broader, non-Internet-related challenges to journalistic detachment, such as the rise of literary and narrative journalistic forms, the re-introduction of first-person writing in news, and the public (or civic) journalism movement which took root in the US in the 1990s. Now, she claims, just as technology gave the context for the emergence of objectivity as a principle of news reporting in inverted pyramid orthodoxy, it is to be expected that technology and its influence on society continue to fuel transformation. She cites familiar net enthusiasts such as Dan Gillmor, author of the influential *We the Media* (Gillmor 2006) and net guru Jonathan Dube in anticipating a bright, democratic future for news. Here, news is a conversation. Gillmor's conviction could serve as shorthand for the myriad claims made in this respect for online journalism: digital natives, he avows, will not be lectured, but expect to be informed through dialogue.

It might be tempting to assume that such a conversation would become more developed in a dialogical news model in line with geographic patterns of economic development, and in particular of IT penetration. But Massey and Levy's comparatively early and much-cited research, based on analysis of English-language newspapers in Asia, found little evidence to support this notion, instead observing that, counter-intuitively, there was more interactivity in semi-peripheral contexts (1999). The researchers argued that it might be more useful to look at political and cultural factors and at the specific circumstances of each publication, rather than assume a generalized causal link between interactivity, affluence and sophistication of the technical infrastructure.

A close examination of how interactivity is manifested on US newspaper websites is provided by Imfeld and Scott, who carried out a content analysis of 47 sites with discussion forums (2005). They note in passing that, of the top stratum of newspapers, a group of 23 titles representing a quarter of the combined daily total of 52.1 million, only 11 sites had discussion boards: those in the second tier, represented primarily by regional newspapers, were more likely to have such boards, while the smallest outlets of all in terms of print circulations were most unlikely to carry a forum or even to publish on the web. The research found that, in the main, where forums did exist, they were unambitiously developed, with few direct statements of the purpose of the message boards, and with little facility for users to evaluate posts or to play a part in gatekeeping and monitorial functions. Where some such advanced provisions apparently were in place, this tended to be because the sites in question use the external *e-the-People* site, often with links describing the forum as 'Town Hall' and without informing readers that they were being taken to a third party online property. Such links were also noted by Singer, in her analysis of local Iowan newspapers, in which she concluded that, in spite of the modest flowering of some features such as forums and live online chats with candidates in the coverage of a US presidential election, what primarily emerged was the web's strength in providing information, in breadth and depth, rather than interactivity (2002).

Zeng and Li's study of 106 online newspapers in the US took a more inclusive measure of interactivity, constructing an index from a number of elements classed as interpersonal interactivity and content interactivity, the former comprising email and

forums, and the latter relating to section links, hypertext in documents, and a search engine (2006). It was found that larger newspapers had more interactivity overall, though only in content interactivity, interpersonal interactivity remaining static. Longer-established online newspapers were more interactive with, again, this correlation appearing only in content interactivity. A third hypothesis, that the more technical, rather than editorial, staff were devoted to web sites the more interactive they would be, was found to hold true in relation to both forms. Zeng and Li make little comment on the differing outcomes in relation to different types of interactivity. However, they do observe that interpersonal activity 'requires more human power' (ibid. p.153), and it is possible to speculate from this that such effort would be required from the domain of journalism, or content provision, rather than from technicians, while the greater interpersonal interactivity shown in outlets with more technicians might be taken to indicate greater institutional interest in and commitment to new media practices.

Greer and Mensing (op. cit.) note Massey and Levy's findings and those of others tracking the emergence of interactive features internationally, with, in broad summary, a preference shown for email and forums. However, in their longitudinal analysis, they find that, while general email, reporter-specific emails, posting of reader responses and user ability to customize news were all present among US dailies, only the provision of staff email addresses grew significantly. In Europe, the MUDIA research project came to a similar conclusion, with limited adoption of interactive possibilities, including in Ireland (Trench and Quinn 2003). A study that offered a US-international comparison, based on online coverage of the Iraq war, found that, while hyperlinks and images were present, and while US sites showed more interactivity and multimediality than non-US, full convergence of interactivity comprising user feedback alongside audio, video and animation had yet to be reached (Dimitrova and Neznanski 2006). Another study comparing US and European sites reached the same conclusion, even as newspapers raised their rhetoric about responding to calls for a 'new journalism' on the Internet (Quandt 2010), while, at a more fundamental level, the usually unspoken assumption of the desire of the audience to participate has been undermined by the empirical evidence showing that most users adopt a passive role (Bergström 2008).

Hyperlinks

Many studies of interactivity deal with a broad, multi-faceted concept, sometimes, as we have seen, formulating indices based on accumulations of occurrences of specific interactive features, perhaps including hyperlinks in this measure. I have also outlined in the discussion above how expectations for changes in the formats of news, shifting towards a more democratic, user-empowering heterogeneity, have been articulated. However, most probably because of their (literally) essential role in the creation of the web (Berners-Lee and Fischetti 1999) and the significance of software-coded links between web pages in constructing media and social links (Elmer 2006, Gao and Vaughan 2005), or simply because of their relative ubiquity in online news, the use of hyperlinks as a specific interactive device in online news, and, equally, as a defining feature of its format, garners much separate attention.

Gatekeeping policies

Friend discusses hyperlinks primarily in terms of journalism ethics and potential conflict with commercial goals (2007a). With pressure to make websites pay in an environment where it is likely that content is free to access, the danger of a breakdown in the 'church-state' separation of journalism and commercial activity is increased, she argues. Print news has greater graphical control than that available to web producers, so that it is more difficult online to create a visual separation of content and advertising. New practices have emerged that allow sites to sell hyperlinks placed in stories, and the 'contextual keyword advertising' of the IntelliTXT system controversially and briefly used by *Forbes.com*, scans content and automatically places commercial links that appear to be editorial-driven.[12] Of wider concern, however, are the potentials and associated practices surrounding links that are indeed part of the editorial content proper. Mainstream news sites, says Friend, do not tend to link to external sites, even in obvious cases where the story source is a respected science journal, because of fear of representing an implied endorsement or, perhaps more immediately compellingly, fear of steering audience away from the outlet's online property. Here, gatekeeping arises, even though, it seems, it is felt necessary to make a special argument for the role in the context of the Internet, where lurid details of rape cases or videos of the beheadings of western hostages in conflict

zones already are accessible. Friend argues that such decisions depend on the newsroom's own standards as they relate to their existing (traditional) outlet:

> 'A news organization is still a filter, and just because something is "out there" and accessible, I don't buy the well, then "anything goes" type argument' (ibid., p.192).

Network theory is invoked in Tremayne's study to throw light on linking patterns in US online news stories (2004). Tremayne, following work on the growth and distribution of hierarchical networks generally by Barabási (2003), who found that links were not evenly distributed, but tended to concentrate, in a process of preferred attachment, on a small number of hubs, confirmed that story type and context affected the number of connections made. International stories, therefore, because they had many dimensions, were more likely to have links than 'spot' – single issue stories, tightly focused temporally and geographically. Additionally, the gap in the number of links between such story categories grew over a four-year period between 1997 and 2001. Websites' related media also impacted on link numbers: those of television channels had more than online newspaper editions. In a follow-on study, Tremayne observed that the increasing preponderance of sites' internal links, as opposed to external, as news organizations built their online archives, confirmed the principle of network attachment (2006). Among external links, government and military sites were the most common category, accounting for 40% of the total. Even as outward-directing links diminished as a proportion of the total, the number of such links pointed to foreign websites also fell. Tremayne predicts that a growing percentage of stories will have few or no links, with a simultaneous rise in the number of links on a very small number of exceptional news stories, typically running stories involving government.

A by-now considerable body of empirical analyses of mainstream online news sites provides a chorus pointing to the relative absence or conservative use of hyperlinks (Oblak 2005, Chang, Himelboim and Dong 2009, van der Wurff, et al. 2008). In spite of the potential for freeing up the news discourse by means of an easily and cheaply-implemented device, newspapers are cautious: against the seemingly trivial editorial or technical demands of this simple technology, the hyperlink carries with it social questions around the professional role of the journalist, and mainstream media are

seen to cling fast to their gatekeeping function. Thus is established, for some, a categorical divide between so-called old and new journalism. Conventional journalism is seen as a closed, fossilizing and now fearful system, and is contrasted in terms of deficit with the fresh, open ethos of net-native sites and the blogosphere (Rosenberg 1999, Rosenberg 2010), although others are moved to complain that too many links subject the reader to information overload and, at the same time, circular reading (Luzer 2008).

Slow and cautious in Europe

The large-scale, European-wide content analysis of newspaper websites, with which this study intersects, confirmed what was for the most part, though with some notable exceptions, the slow and cautious approach to multimediality, interactivity and hyperlinking that the bulk of the research and other literature indicates (van der Wurff 2005). Of 72 outlets (60 newspaper sites, with 12 online-only services included for comparative purposes) studied in late 2003, most in their front pages mimicked their corresponding print news outlets or, alternatively, used linking to create portals that included other online properties, or created a hybrid oriented towards both print and portal. The shovelware quotient was high, with an almost complete (95%) overlap in some countries, including Ireland, and print and online stories dealt with similar topics from similar locations, with a preponderance of government and business sources. In a constructed index measuring user feedback, reflecting the use of general and reporter-specific emails, the highest score of 0.73 was achieved by the online edition of Lithuania's *Lietuvos inios*, but against an average of just 0.38. Where *El Pais*, of Spain, rated 0.53 in a discussion index reflecting sites' provision of polls, forums or chat rooms, the mean score was 0.16. Multimediality threw up a striking outcome: print (0.1) narrowly surpassed online news (0.09) in this index: each format used primarily photographs, while online there was little use of infographics, animation, audio or video.

The full potential of content interactivity as expressed through facilities for user customization is embodied in *El Pais* online, which scored a full 1.0, as, from its front page, it offered six regional editions, Spanish or English language options, search and

full archive, and allowed the reader to prescribe a specific selection of news items. Again, however, the average score was considerably lower, at 0.34. In an immediacy index, expressing the extent to which front pages either were updated continuously or carried breaking news sections, the picture was more developed, with a mean score of 0.47. The highest scorer in this index was the UK's online-only *Ananova*[13], at a full 1.0, combining breaking news and content updating to the extent that the entire complement of news stories was refreshed over the course of the day, with no overlap.

Of all of the indices measured, hyperlinking was lowest, at 0.08. Once again, there was a striking exception, this time in the form of the online-only Swiss *info* site, the most significant stories on which linked on average to two other stories on the same site, had one reference to a print source, and five external links: it scored 0.63, whereas the average across Europe was almost eight times lower.

Overall, of the 60 online newspapers observed, 42 were categorized as having few Internet features; 17 were in a group displaying more features, and only one, the Cypriot *Simerini*, qualified as showing a full suite of multimedia, content interactivity and hyperlinking. While some of the principal researchers in this study, assessing the results later, emphasized the complementary role of online newspaper editions, and their heterogeneous nature (van der Wurff, et al. 2008), whatever about the sometimes startling, sometimes nuanced differences among them, European online newspapers can be described as having displayed a predominantly cautious and gradualist approach in their evolution within what commonly has been represented as an arena of radical transformation.

An important caveat in this discussion is provided by Quandt and Singer (2009), who note that much discussion of websites' formal characteristics is coloured by a judgemental opposition whereby sites are described as advanced or progressive depending on the extent to which they exploit Internet features. This is a view that finds a strong echo in more recent commentary (Steensen 2010). It is therefore wise to bear in mind the relatively rare admonition that the limited use of 'converged' features may represent a sensible strategy option rather than simple backwardness. Such a stance 'may be an economically and socially sensible choice, in line with market conditions and user expectations, rather than an indication of lagging development' (Quandt and Singer 2009, p.137). It is also interesting that this observation is made on

factors predominantly leaving aside considerations of journalism professional roles and values. Quandt and Singer see further developments in mobile content and in new renewed moves towards so-called smart home technology as potentially changing how audiences receive journalism content, although, where this is an expression of vague promise, they ascribe more specific and substantive potential change to associated developments in user-generated content.

User-generated content: crowds, wisdom and credibility

Just as interactivity in digital media beyond the narrow confines of mainstream media sites has sparked massive expansion in online spaces such as weblogs, Facebook, Twitter and YouTube, so it has become an urgent theme of debate in communication studies, but with special significance for news and journalism. With this discussion comes a fresh crop of neologisms, with do-it-yourself media producers, prosumers, or 'citizen journalists' exploiting the 'transmediality' offered by convergence and by new tools allowing users to appropriate and re-circulate content via 'mash-ups' (online systems, often proprietary, in which various kinds of media are combined). Inherent in this new 'wave' are notions of collective intelligence and the wisdom of the crowd as located ephemerally in what is increasingly referred to as 'the cloud'. From this perspective, change primarily is occurring, not through the adopted practices of conventional big media, but through the actions of audiences, even as they themselves fragment into new arrays of sub-cultures (Jenkins 2002, cited in Lister 2008, p. 222).

Distributed interactivity in the blogosphere

Much of the early analytical discussion of the potential for change in media has focused on the weblog, or blog, due to its rapid adoption and ease of use (Blood 2000) and its early perceived impact in public discourse and in debates on the validity and boundaries of conventional journalism, especially in the US and to a lesser extent in Britain (Gillmor 2006, Allan 2006). For Stuart Allan, it is this new, distributed interactivity that is central to a consideration of online journalism, where emerging media platforms, as expressed through the quickly-defined practice of blogging, reshape the relationships between media producers, sources and audiences. Allan

pinpoints as a pivotal moment the 1997 murder trial of British nanny Louise Woodward and the posting of the judgement on the Internet, an action which immediately drew opinions that such disintermediation brought into question the role of newspapers. In the same period, the *Drudge Report* was emerging as a popular but notorious source of gossip; *BBC Online* was launched with a promise to provide journalism that would make sense of the world, and blogs emerged, along with some disputes about their definition, but with central characteristics of linking, information sharing, and commentary (2006). Thus is established a familiar and frequently re-echoed opposition between blogs and traditional media, between 'old' and 'new' journalisms, the former typically characterized as open and democratic, and the latter closed and privileged. Allan re-tells the much-cited narrative of the reporting of racist comments by US Republican Senator Trent Lott, forced to retire after the story gained momentum not in the conventional press, but among bloggers, leading to what was described in press coverage as the Internet's first scalp. More recently in Ireland, the effect of an opposing politician's tweet in the Cowengate affair, which culminated in the resignation of the Taoiseach, Brian Cowen, following a radio interview in which he allegedly was hung over, has been hailed widely as illustrating the power of social media (Sheridan 2010).

What is perhaps more interesting here is not the mythologizing of distributed media production in social media, including blogs, but within it the competition for credit between traditional media and former outsiders, and the perceived opposition of the two, crystallizing in a discussion in which themes such as credibility, objectivity and transparency have been revisited continually.

Journalists in the blogosphere

Donald Matheson's landmark text provides an overview of the dimensions of this current. He observes that Foucoult's notion of the coercive power of the normal fades for journalism, as it adapts to new conditions that challenge its 'conservatism and rigidity'. Similarly, Bourdieu's idea of the symbolic power of news language, without which truth claims weaken, becomes relevant, as the tone of journalism changes online (2004). Matheson, a former news reporter, focuses on an early *Guardian* weblog filtering international news (from mainstream media), in order to investigate journalism's epistemology. He invokes Mackay and O'Sullivan's (1999) argument for

the significance of the 'impact' of new communication technologies on existing media and their practices, which he considers carry higher social capital than new forms, while not fully dismissing claims to radical transformation to be found in personal blogs. Although in his hermeneutic study he finds that the *Guardian* blog adopts in large measure the language and style of news, he observes that it also makes less claim to knowing what readers want or what an event means, basing its authority not on the notion of a singular, definitive text produced for an imagined, guessed-at audience, but acting instead as a source of 'multiple knowledge'. Thus, traditional journalism roles are blended with new ones, in a subtler way than anticipated by those who have predicted media revolution:

> 'As a form that depends on the journalist's selection of material but which at the same time foregrounds that act of selecting, (the blog) reorients the authoritative, public position of the journalist without abandoning it for the solipsism of the "Daily Me"' (ibid., p.460).

This new form of meshed authority stems from the practice of assembling and annotating large numbers of links from diverse publications, which in turn tends to dilute claims to facticity of any one text. Here, it seems, is the idea – rather elusive within conventional news sites – of non-linear coverage, with divergent paths constructed from the web's essential characteristic, made concrete.

The credibility of this new expression of news coverage, collectively constructed through the open device of the hyperlink, is given empirical grounding in a survey by Johnson and Kaye (2004) of blog readers, who expressed greater trust in blogs than in traditional media. Fresher evidence of a new or evolving form of journalism, now being embraced as journalists move from 'blogophobia' to 'blogophilia', comes in the form of a survey of blogging practitioners in 30 countries, more than half of whom said their work had been transformed through blogging, with feedback from 'the former audience' now diminishing the role of both editors and official sources (Bradshaw 2008). However, Haas (2005), in a wider-ranging review, argues that little has changed. Just as the details and the implications of the Trent Lott affair were more complex than often presented, so the reality of 'warblogs' devoted to the covering the US's 'War on Terror' is seen to be one of remediation of mainstream content that strengthens rather than challenges the position of elite sources such as government

officials and acts as an 'online echo-chamber of mass-mediated political view' (Singer 2004, cited in Haas 2005). Haas highlights studies that demonstrate how, just as traditional media privilege prestigious, elite news organizations in a process of inter-media agenda-setting, so a select group of star bloggers act as inter-weblog agenda setters, with one study of skewed influence finding that seven leading blogs attracted more than 50 per cent of all incoming blog links (Halavais 2004, cited in Haas 2005), while some of the top names in the blogosphere also work as journalists in mainstream media (the closest example provided here being Andrew Sullivan, one of the *Sunday Times's* leading political commentators).

Further evidence of a closely dependent rather than symbiotic relationship is provided by Messner et al (2008), who observe the emergence of an agenda-setting news source cycle between blogs and traditional media, but one in which 73 per cent of sources cited in blogs are other media, with this reliance especially heavy in politics. Sharon Meraz's study, while finding some divergence across the political spectrum, with right-wing American bloggers more resistant to linking to mainstream media, again offers evidence of a persistence of agenda-setting from the centre (2009). While elite traditional media no longer have a monopoly of influence, they remain the principal force in the creation of blog agendas. *The New York Times* and the *Washington Post* heavily favoured traditional media – and most of all each other – in their hyperlinking, while the only independent, citizen media blogs capable of gaining their attention were former journalists or those still with traditional media ties. Meraz concludes that traditional media have 'hijacked' the blog form:

> '…. a tool designed for outward, networked conversations (has been used) to maintain internal elite, conversations within their network neighborhood of other trusted, traditional media entities'(ibid., p.21).

Key to this influence, she says, are 'the sociopolitical boundaries of the press pass or knowledge of journalism norms and traditions'(ibid., p.2).

Nor is the exercise of such power confined to the generalized policy of linking, or to old print culture worthies. Haas points to the sacking of mainstream media journalists for blog posts that transgress editorial policies, while gatekeeping editorial hierarchies have emerged even in high-profile group blogs such as *IndyMedia* and *Slashdot*

(op.cit., 2005).[14] On the audience side, the absence of editorial systems and processes are held to be at the root of heightened reader concerns over bias and objectivity in online news sites when compared with newspaper or television (Abdulla et al. 2005).

A wider digital culture

Mark Deuze discusses the praxis of blogging, podcasting and radical media centres such as *Indymedia* with reference to participation, remediation and bricolage, in an attempt to achieve a synthesized understanding of global digital culture based not simply on new technologies but located in what he calls the pervasive and historical components of the practices of capturing and sharing information (2006). He notes the adoption of participation by media corporations in spheres other than news, such as cinema (as in *Star Wars* fan movies) and television (with producers of *Survivor,* a reality TV show, participating in online forums), while also citing, alongside the 'everyone is a journalist' rhetoric of those such as Gillmor, the stated intention of New Corps CEO Rupert Murdoch to render his organization's websites more competitive by making them places of conversation and destinations for bloggers. Deuze proposes to augment Bolter and Grusin's concept of remediation with that of distantiation, a process of manipulating the dominant way of doing or seeing things, whether as part of the hyper-individualization of society, in which only the private matters, or as a deliberate social act aimed at deconstructing or subverting the mediated messaged of what is seen as mainstream. In this analysis, blogging and participatory journalism are seen to have some continuity with the public journalism movement seen earlier in the US, based on the assumption that, for journalism to survive, 'participation should be embraced over detachment' (ibid. 2006, p.69). Deuze also moves towards resolving the rather one-dimensional and unproductive blogs versus journalism opposition with a more complex view, arguing that remediation and distantiation may mean being deeply immersed in 'the system' but simultaneously adopting a self-definition of working to reform it, both from the outside and from within.

Deuze draws on Giddens' concept of the bricoleur-citizen immersed in individual 'life politics' of sometimes ideologically inconsistent choices. Mainstream online journalists themselves practice bricolage and remediation when they publish re-purposed content. But, even as they decry the problems of information overload and

Buadrillard's implosion of meaning, they also, along with *Indymedia* sites and bloggers, in using hyperlinks, attribute an active bricoleur-identity to their readers.

Bricolage clearly is evident in blogs, and especially in metajournalism sites, as well as in the *Indymedias*. In the time elapsed since Deuze's article it has become clear that the concept is equally if not more applicable to the Web 2.0 of more flexible and more user-friendly and popular social media platforms displaying varying relationships with mainstream news, though with 'legacy' media links still providing most original reporting (Project for Excellence in Journalism 2010). Such activity is accelerated further, through the use of mobile devices, to a level of 'informational promiscuity' (Jackson 2007). Major aggregating entities, such as Google and Yahoo!, participate in and support this information system through RSS and other technologies. Thus, as Web 2.0 and mobile media adoption rises, Deuze's assertion that bricolage is the central component in digital culture whereby people recognize each other and give quality and legitimacy to their actions is given added currency and weight.

This wider notion of ubiquitous networked news also is alluded to by Reese et al, who similarly argue that the blogosphere should be viewed in a context beyond the opposition of citizen versus professional content producer (2007). Instead, they conclude in a study of popular news and politics sites, that relentless criticism of the media is a less common motif than is often assumed, and that blogs often function as a secondary market for the work of journalists. The blogosphere weaves together citizen and professional voices, so that it is misleading to inquire whether the so-called 'Fifth Estate' wields greater influence than journalists. It is in the aggregate, within its location in a larger structure, they say, that the impact of the blogosphere lies.

Transparency

Among the qualities most frequently hailed as flowing from the open blogosphere is that of transparency, a concept which does not always sit well in a traditional news culture of closed editorial meetings and the myth of 'news sense' as the essential quality of a good reporter. It has become increasingly relevant in recent years, not only in the context of networked communication but also in the crisis of credibility being suffered by US news media (Plaisance 2007). Discussion of blogs ranges from the extent to which their characteristics meet the criteria for the reconstitution of the

Habermasian public sphere (Ó Baoill 2004), to criticisms by professional journalists on the grounds of inaccuracy and absence of verification (Carlson 2007), and even to raising questions as to who is a journalist, and whether blogging constitutes journalistic activity (Blood 2003, Andrews 2003). The informal, discursive and conversational format of much blogging potentially carries with it a culture of explicit linking to sources, of contingency and uncertainty, and of a process of development of a particular story, rather than the closed narrative of conventional journalism. Such aspirations are expressed in a series of blogger codes, or collections of principles, – and clearly they must remain to some degree unfulfilled in the largely unregulated publishing space that blogs represent (Singer 2007a). Singer points to Jonathan Dube's augmenting of the ethical code of the Society of Professional Journalists to include an obligation on the part of the bloggers to disclosure, and to identify and link to sources where feasible, and to Rebecca Blood's call for bloggers to publicly correct any misinformation carried in or linked to by the blog, not to delete or rewrite any entry, to disclose conflicts of interest, and to note questionable or biased sources. If such practices are not adhered to directly by mainstream journalists, then, suggests Singer, bloggers acting as 'watchdogs on the watchdogs' can bolster ethical behaviour, as in the cases of the spectacular and much-celebrated falls of *CBS* anchor Dan Rather and *New York Times* senior editorial executive Howell Raines over shoddy practices foregrounded by bloggers, and the promise of bloggers to journalists to, in words of media executive, blogger and *Guardian* columnist Jeff Jarvis to 'fact check your ass' (cited in Singer 2007a, p.135). Thus, the often hostile and cutting commentary of the blogosphere provides a new dimension, that of citizen journalism about journalism, within the domain of metajournalism.

This simultaneously challenging and complementary relationship between journalists and bloggers or citizen journalists is explored by Lowry and Mackay (2008) as part of a systems framework wherein occupations overlap, with professional journalism displaying vulnerabilities, necessitating adaptation and incremental change in the short term, perhaps through co-option of blogging, and potentially transforming its nature in the longer term. Such co-option among mainstream news outlets online is already evident. Singer describes this as a process of normalization of the format (2005), while elsewhere it is discussed in terms of 'news repair', a process of corrective softening, similar in purpose to the established use in conventional

reporting of human interest or colour stories to complement the harshly factual inverted pyramid news (Robinson 2006).

The rise of the journalist's blog, or j-blog, hosted on traditional media sites has links with previous attempts to augment and demonstrate the transparency of the news selection and production process. In his essay on digital culture, Deuze places these efforts in continuity with efforts by newspapers, beginning in the early 20th century in Sweden and Japan, to increase participation by means of readers' representatives and ombudsmen, with the US following suit in the 1960s to 1980s, and some European newspapers catching up in the 1990s (2009). Online participation extends furthest, however, when major media outlets provide for citizen journalism on their sites, allowing blogs that combine editorial gate-keeping with user-generated content, as in the cases of *Le Monde* or South Africa's *Mail & Guardian*. Deuze is careful to stress the historicity of such developments. These devices, he says, are not new, but represent a 'supercharged' version of what went before and essentially maintain the closure of journalism, even as they demonstrate that journalists are trying to give expression to digital culture.

Bill Kovach argues for transparency as an appropriate response to what he asserts is the obsolescence of journalism's gatekeeping function in an age in which 'the Internet has torn down all the fences'. Journalists must instead become referees who, in order to maintain trust, must be transparent:

> 'Tell them what you know and what you don't know. Tell them who your sources are and if you can't name the sources tell them how the sources are in a position to know and what biases, if any, they may have. In other words, provide your information so that people see how it was developed and can make up their own minds what to think' (2005).

Bolstering such sentiment have been much-aired experiments in exposing editorial decision-making to the audience: the daily *Spokane Review* in Washington State gained particular attention through the introduction of a series of measures (not exclusively online) aimed at increasing openness, including opening news meetings to the public, with the facility prominently advertised, a regular op-ed page column by the editor concerning journalism practices and news values, an *'Ask the Editors'* blog

by five 'editors', a *'Daily Briefing'* provided by a journalist summarizing a daily staff critique and highlighting stories being worked for the next day; citizen blogs critiquing the newspaper in a *'News is a Conversation'* section, with responses from editorial staff and readers; independent assessment of the newspaper's work by a journalism academic who also responded to reader complaints; engagement by the editor in lengthy online chats; and a process of interviews with citizens as part of research towards planning a re-design of the newspaper (Robinson 2009, Smith 2005). Such efforts are, however, noteworthy for their rarity, representing extravagant public displays that do not typify mainstream media practice online.

Michael Karlsson argues that transparency features at the level of the site are often the subject of anecdotal attention or generalized observation seen above, and that instead this quality should be studied at the news content item level, since it is here that objectivity and truth-telling claims repeatedly are made (Karlsson 2010). His study of the websites of *The New York Times*, the *Guardian* and Sweden's *Dagens Nyheter* found that, while a variety of transparency features exist, implemented to varying degrees, they are marginal, and the online journalism studied in these titles takes confidence from more traditional values and routines. Nevertheless, a study based around the views of media experts and commentators in The Netherlands concluded that, while there was strong convergence on core journalism norms, participants put a 'strikingly strong' emphasis on transparency as an 'overarching norm' in journalism, whether online or offline. In the context of the new, open media system, with attendant suspicion of professional journalism, transparency emerges as 'the major measure to secure the quality of modern-day journalism' (van der Wurff and Schönbach 2010, p.12).

Citizens and participation

Just as the advent of mass access to publishing via blogs and other platforms brings into focus issues for journalism practice, so the emergence of a trend of amateur or lay collaboration in the gathering, processing and publication of news, using digital technologies, has been seen to pose questions for professional roles. Alongside and within the blogosphere, adding to the permeability of news discourse, citizen

journalism has been put forward as providing a wider, bottom-up dimension, with the clear message, express or implied, that it counterbalances mainstream professional journalism or addresses its deficiencies (Bowman and Willis 2003, Woo-Young 2005, Deuze, Bruns and Neuberger 2007). South Korea's *OhMyNews*, along with Indymedia and Wikinews, are perhaps the most salient examples on a global scale of the phenomenon of citizen journalism deliberately operating independently of mainstream media in order to provide alternative, non-corporate perspectives (Allan 2006, Allan and Thorsen 2009). With a broader background of civic engagement and participation in the public sphere (Papacharissi 2002, 2009) often, discussions of citizen journalism are elaborated in this context by specific, high-profile news events concerning elite nations, such as the 2005 London bombings (Sambrook 2005), the fatal attack by London police on the newspaper seller, Ian Tomlinson, in 2009 (Curran 2010) or the Hudson River plane landing of the same year (Luckie 2009). The most starkly illustrative instances of the perceived role of citizen journalism occur where it is seen to take a position in mobilization of opposition to the coercive force of the state, as in the cases of the Seattle globalisation protests (Van Aelst and Walgrave 2002) or in video coverage of the killing in Iran of Neda Soltan (Livingston and Asmolov 2010). Such global media events are frequently held out as examples of the rise of citizen media reporting, with, to varying degrees, suggestions of democratization of repressive societies through technological transformation, although such interpretations are convincingly disputed (Morozov 2011). Less widely, some of the discussion around the practice relates to micro-narratives of local news items that may be overlooked in the application of conventional news values (Sonwalker 2009).

A pervasive news ecology

Mark Deuze builds on his earlier discussion of bricolage (2006) by drawing together the many strands of the debate to articulate how, in the tensions between the translocal and the local, the individual and the collective, corporate journalism, while ineffectually remediating its core 'product' for online consumption, has lost touch with the lived realities of citizen consumers (2009). Those realities, he says, citing Zygmunt Bauman, are found in a liquid modernity characterized by accelerated change, with a sense of permanent revolution wreaking havoc on both journalism and politics, and undermining the traditional pillars of the state. In the new media ecology,

news organizations engage in liquid journalism, striving to find a balance between the production of editorial content, associated with the roles of gatekeeper and information provider, and the provision of public connectivity to enable debate.

Deuze rejects the notion of a cohesive, politically-directed purpose for the collective intelligence found online. Instead, rather sweepingly, he identifies the emergence of the citizen-consumer, with the value attributed to media content increasingly to be found in the interactions around news, rather than in the news product itself. He endorses the view of Margaret Hammell that the act of consumption is becoming the site of political involvement. This emerging individualized system he sees as the counterpoint to the journalism which heretofore had been 'the property of what journalists do in order to sell news...' (2009, p.24). The positing of the location of the future of news, or of its value, in what he calls 'creative consumerism' (2009, p.25), seems a controversially (or controversialist) liberal adaptation of reception theory, albeit with little consideration of resistance as being significant in relation to new technologies just as with mainstream media texts (Wyatt 2003), and with increased emphasis not only on active user involvement but also on the commercial dimension. However, Deuze ultimately pulls back to opt for a less iconoclastic vista, foreseeing a mix of old and new. With transmedia storytelling featuring user agency living alongside one-size-fits-all content intended for invisible mass audiences, corporate media enclosures will live alongside collaborative production of news, he says.

Deuze's concept of liquid journalism adapting itself to an ever-shifting world is echoed by Hermida's related concept of ambient journalism, which is effected through 'awareness systems' enabled by the likes of Twitter and other lightweight but ubiquitous digital tools in an asynchronous media environment (Hermida 2010). What is different in this analysis is that, where Deuze sees the uneasy co-existence of opposing forms of journalism, Hermida echoes the rhetoric of traditional media appropriation of digital platforms and user habits, and sees, as an option for professional journalism, evolution towards a facilitating role of helping the public navigate through such systems.

Luke Goode adds another perspective that draws on the idea of a news sphere beyond mainstream producers, but he emphasizes that it is also beyond citizen content creators, arguing that all those in the online networks engaging in the metajournalism

of tagging, recommending and re-circulating news 'render the agenda-setting process of established professional media outlets radically provisional, malleable and susceptible to critical intervention' (2009). This wider understanding complements that of Axel Bruns, who introduces the concept of 'gatewatching', a role that is less directly controlling than the filtering activity of traditional media gatekeeping, but more active than that of an Internet librarian, who merely keeps track of published output (2005). This new form of participatory, multi-perspectival, collaborative journalism is seen by Bruns as helping to provide contextualisation for news as it moves away from its original sites of production, and also as undermining existing hegemonies. Nor are the individual agents of change here solely content producers: they are also, it is claimed, 'produsers', who engage with online news sites in both consumptive and productive modes, perhaps virtually simultaneously. It is worth noting that, in coining this new label, Bruns rejects the economic dimension embraced by Deuze: he describes the term 'prosumer' as excessively commercial.

A more actively sceptical perspective, incorporating the inter-connectedness with the mainstream order of much new media produced at the margins, is provided in the British context by Nick Couldry's investigation of what he calls online news sources and writer-gatherers (Couldry 2010). Couldry isolates professional gossip sites such as the UK armed forces' *ARRSE* (*Army Rumour Service*) and *The Magistrate's Blog* as positive developments in improving communication within professional and campaign groups, but also as emerging as source actors in their own right, even if that is also partly connected to the willingness in some cases to go beyond the blog and to foster strong relationships with professional journalists. Significantly in this analysis, political bloggers are excluded: opinions, says Couldry, are hardly a new element in journalism, while allegedly democratizing celebrity sites such as *Popbitch* merely feed off the established tabloid press. A by-product of this study, conducted by interview, is the caution that language in this field is not yet settled, with interviewees disputing the use of the terms 'citizen' and 'journalism', and with the former label, originating in America, described as 'Stalinist sounding or just tacky' (Couldry 2010, p.144).

Professional work

Interwoven in the discussion of online citizen journalism, much of it promoting some form of enhanced journalism, is the notion of a remedial, deficit-filling challenge to traditional journalism as practised in mainstream media. As we have seen, much of the discussion either takes place at a level of evangelical abstraction, or focuses on the output of traditional and online media, sometimes in isolation from the practices and views of journalists themselves. However, consideration of how journalists and newsrooms formerly associated exclusively with a traditional media outlet have moved to adapt to the net has been equally extensive, presenting a generally more grounded if less heroic understanding of online news.

Specificities of news production

The conceptual space of news in a vastly expanded online ecology, discussed above, forms the basis of Burns's rejection of the initially appealing concept of ambient journalism as an unproblematic extension of the profession (Burns 2010). In addition to critiquing the weaknesses of social media in perhaps familiar ways, such as highlighting its susceptibility to manipulation for propaganda, as in the case of the Iranian election protests, and to inaccuracy and rumour, Burns points to the core professional dimensions that he says para-journalism overlooks, and argues that journalism's values and norms, along with the learned craft of reporting for recognized media institutions that provide communal validation, mean that there is more in play than the common academic portrayal of 'gate-watching' on behalf of a corporatist media elite.

Pablo Boczkowski's highly influential '*Digitizing the News'* ethnographic research of innovation and adoption of online techniques at American daily newspapers shows, he says, a 'transformation... in the editorial and work domains' (2004b, p.187). As discussed earlier, in relation to news format, Boczkowski characterizes the appropriation by newspapers of online options as one of reaction rather than contribution to developments, focusing on protection of the print franchise and on more certain short-term gains. Further, he powerfully argues for the importance of heretofore neglected production dynamics in considering the potential forms of new media news, and for the principally offline shaping, in editorial offices, of such news, asserting that an exclusive focus on media products runs the risk of attributing cultural

or technological inevitability to what are locally contingent outcomes. In other words, in order to understand what is happening in online news, newsrooms must be studied. Among the changes he most emphasizes as evident in the innovation trends observed are the challenges to established occupational identities and the need to manage user-authored content in what he calls 'distributed construction'. However, in spite of the depth of his analysis, which receives strong weighting in subsequent studies, and the clear evidence of tensions between print news culture and the demands on online journalism, Boczkowski's ultimate conclusion is indeed centred on format and, it seems, the notion of an unstoppable force which he has been careful to reject in his elaborations: print's very struggle to survive online has, he asserts, paradoxically enabled the creation of a new medium that becomes ever-different to its originator.

Boczkowski's approach has been widely validated by subsequent researchers, even if it is recognized that reliance on case studies can make generalisation of results a 'risky exercise' (Domingo 2005). Observational research in newsrooms, and interviews with and surveys of journalists, have yielded a mixed picture of embracing of some technologies and practices combined with sometimes intractable scepticism, but, equally consistently, a dampened enthusiasm when conflicts arise (Fortunati, et al. 2009, O'Sullivan and Heinonen 2008, Heinonen 1999).

A perhaps not unexpectedly pithier flavour emerges from literature sourced from within journalism. Former BBC documentary maker Peter Lee-Wright succinctly expresses the converse of Deuze's vision of consumer-citizens, thereby problematizing both theoretically elegant and folksy notions of audience power, in a sentiment that it could be argued represents the dilemma of all professional news journalists, regardless of medium:

> 'Constantly buffeted by every special interest group, and accused of social, racial, and political bias from all sides, BBC News has usually managed to remain aloof and retain an authority based upon the quality and certainty of its journalism. But the paradigm of telling people what they need to know to function in a democratic society appears to be giving way to a model that offers people what they want -- when, where and how they want it. New media have not only facilitated this change, but have expedited it' (2010, p.74).

Lee-Wright talks of the fears of journalists that power is shifting to technical staff, and of the deterministic, Orwellian 'Get web-savvy or we die' newspeak associated with the BBC's powerful Future Media and Technology (FM&T) cross-divisional body. He highlights the problems facing editors confronted with audience power, as 'most-read' web listings show that BBC News website users are more interested in a macabre tale of Canadian Mounties finding five severed feet than they are in depressing news of the Zimbabwean elections. Thus, he endorses critiques of academic research as obsessed with new media, even as journalists are having a 'collective nervous breakdown' (Fox, cited in Lee-Wright 2010, p.79), and argues that even the most enthusiastic fans of new media recognize the dangers of news being delivered by mechanisms of associative choice rather than directed content.

Whereas BBC executives, it seems, sometimes have adopted more moderated stances on the net and its benefits – UGC has not altered the running order of programmes – Lee-Wright's conclusion on news culture in the light of online strategy at Britain's public service broadcaster is that its now relativist position falls short of endorsing what he calls core values, while journalists concerned at the threat to those values by 'technologically-driven reductionism' are dismissed as latter-day Luddites.

A related thread of the same study, in which British journalists were surveyed for their views on sources, found an experienced reality that did not fit with the more high-blown claims for UGC (Phillips 2010). In this account, journalists, under increased deadline pressure in an accelerated news cycle, refuse to pay attention to UGC because, overwhelmed with material aimed at them, they are forced to rely even more heavily on filtration systems of known hierarchies and established news values. So, rather than providing for greater source diversity, the net reifies existing practices and even intensifies their logic. At the same time, cannibalization of copy from other online media produces a tendency towards the homogenization of content.

Against this seemingly fundamental challenge, Neil Thurman's study, based on interviews with senior editors at mainstream British news websites, concurs with Boczkowski's more particularized approach, in which local conditions such as cost and technical infrastructure are seen as more important determinants of the adoption of, or in some cases withdrawal from, user content initiatives (2008). Nevertheless,

Thurman also records that journalists and editors had specific concerns around reader contributions that are more closely aligned with professional journalism standards:

> 'They felt that there was a need to edit material to: avoid duplication, keep the standards of spelling and grammar high, select material that was newsworthy with broad appeal, and ensure balance and decency'(Thurman 2008, p.154).

David Domingo's work is similarly located at the point where the wishful thinking of a more open and participatory journalism meets professional contexts, what he calls 'the actual space for decision making in the development of online journalism, where genres, routines, values and products are tested and created' (2008, p.3). To this end, he champions a social constructivist framework informed by actor network theory, with the adoption of the anthropology of technology as a qualitative approach to research of online journalism. In practical research terms, this means studying the operation of newsrooms, and the thrust of such research is to point to the complexities, in the context of professional routines and practices, of adoption of UGC or participatory journalism (Domingo 2008, Paulussen, et al. 2007, Paulussen and Ugille 2008). In particular, in his study of four Catalan news websites, Domingo interprets the difficulties encountered in the implementation of interactivity in terms of Winston's 'law' of the suppression of radical potential, which in this context he characterizes as relentless in ensuring that the 'inertia' of journalistic culture prevailed (2008). Just as Thurman and Lupton found in their study of British editors in relation to multimedia (2008), and Hermida and Thurman in relation to interactivity (2008), journalists in Domingo's study were nominally receptive to new dimensions of news but, in practice, other than in the case of an online-only portal:

> '… the professional culture and the priority given to immediacy –which fitted better the values and routines of traditional journalism – made them perceive audience participation as a problem to manage rather than a benefit for the news product' (ibid., p.698).

This favouring of traditional values is, he says, citing a study by Boczkowski of three American online newsrooms (2004a), common to both Europe and the USA. Similarly, even as Deborah Chung signals her approval for interactive features in sites selected for awards by America's Online News Association, she nevertheless

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recognizes confusion over how best to implement interactivity, in a slowly evolving news culture that she says shows 'little signs of paradigm shift' (2007).

Routines to the fore

Two interesting observations emerging from studies cited above relate to exceptional story types. Thurman recognizes the input of citizen contributions in major event stories, but draws a far-reaching distinction in his observation that this activity, however dramatic and impactful, relates to the lower informational barriers encountered in such abnormal circumstances. In the more routine stories dealing with elite sources, which form the major part of the news diet,[15] journalists retain professional exclusivity (Thurman 2008). Similarly, Domingo, while otherwise pointing to the difficulties in the innovation process of online journalism, highlights set-piece coverage of major events as the point of online showcasing for mainstream media. In a telling counterpoint to popularized representations of online journalism, he argues that such events provide a space for utopian experiments, with user-involved, media-rich, highly hyperlinked and in-depth content. Such specials, he says, represent the institutionalization of myths, but ones which daily journalism routines cannot accommodate.

Research in Ireland

Structured consideration of the interplay of journalism and the Internet in Ireland has been light. Where much of the popular media focus has been on the economic dimension, academic work concerned with online news primarily has been directed towards the nature of online news sites, and on Irish professional journalists' views on and response to the net.

A study conducted in 2001 by Anthony Cawley provides ethnographic description of the online newsroom (since subsumed into the principal newsroom) of the website of *The Irish Times*, then *ireland.com*, based on observations over three weeks (2008). Among differences noted are the merging of formerly specialist roles. A journalist writing for the website is expected to cover general news, business and sport, and is described also as functioning as 'sub-editor, photographer and publisher' while the website does not have specialist beat correspondents. Journalists identify themselves

in phone calls as *Irish Times* staff, even though they also specify that they are from the website. In multimedia, of which more is said to be planned, staff travel to external studios to record a webcast, and a technician admits that what is being produced is video that reflects television, rather than web, values. Staff point out the tensions between print format and ideal online writing styles, yet frustration is expressed over the repurposing nature of much of the work, since senior management insist that the print house style – a 'crucial marker of identity'(ibid., p.51) – is applied online. The online journalists have inferior pay and conditions, and, although they are proud to belong to a first generation of their kind, are sceptical of their company's senior executives' commitment to online. At editorial meetings, the online editor is seen to be marginalized and is barely included in discussions. What is clear from this account is that the online news project, even as it has been hailed publicly as a progressive strategy, is subservient to and dependent on the institutional and professional infrastructure of the historical print title.

In 2002, the author undertook a survey of the Internet features of 64 websites, including national and regional print titles, broadcaster sites, sites associated with specialist print publications, net-native sites, and sites aimed at ex-patriots. In addition, semi-structured interviews were conducted with 17 journalists associated with some of the site sample (O'Sullivan 2005a). This study found that net-native outlets proved to be most conservative in their approach to the web, providing less volume of content but also less interactivity. Established media organizations had experimented with some interactivity features, but had for the most part adhered to a mass media model that reflected the invested infrastructure of news production. For their part, individual journalists expressed broadly positive sentiments concerning the potential of the Internet, with a few quite earnest in stressing the possibility for improving journalism but with others articulating more strongly their opposition to new concepts of news and to interactivity. One print reporter insisted, 'A story is a story is a story,' while an online producer said: 'If you hand the microphone to the rabble, then noise-to-signal goes way up.' However, the principal sentiment was one of confident continuity of the core activity of journalism, with an expressed openness to and curiosity around new features. The present study seeks to build on this research with more focus on national newspaper titles, and more detailed examination

of their properties, and, through the use of a Likert-scale questionnaire, an analysis of the opinions and perceptions of practitioners.

In 2001, Brian Trench and Gary Quinn reviewed seven sites and interviewed their staff. The sites included a mix of net-native sites and sites published by established news organizations such as *ireland.com* and *RTÉ.ie.* The study found an 'uneven' commitment to innovation, particularly with respect to interactivity. There was strong adherence to accuracy and reliability, and, where a more user-oriented approach was taken, this was seen as an extension to professional journalism rather than a re-invention (2003). Eddie Brennan later conducted interviews with eight Irish national newspaper journalists in order to assess, in the context of a Bourdieusian national habitus, 'the extent to which IT is transforming Irish journalism' (2005). This study concludes that, with low rates of Internet usage and a vibrant and trusted newspaper sector, local specificities meant that there was no vacuum which might be filled by a politically-oriented blogging culture.[16] Journalists generally did not feel under competitive pressure from the web. However, in an observation that maps onto the British experience discussed above (Phillips 2010), the issue of trust as invested in established media brands, and the perceived unreliability of websites, meant that journalists themselves, rather than enjoying access to more diversity of information online, were forced to turn more towards existing media. In this way, economic and symbolic capital from 'the real world' were reproduced. Similarly, a 'creeping atomisation' of journalistic work, with a decline in their social capital as journalists used the web as a source of primary interpersonal contact, could create a heavier dependence on PR (op. cit.).

Conclusion

The purpose of this Chapter has been to outline, contextualize and synthesize some of the relevant strands of discussion of online journalism, tracing the discussion from simple, one-dimensional claims for the transformation of public discourse, news and journalism, through to more grounded and specific discussions that incorporate the questions facing professional journalists in the context of the development of the Internet. The review has shown that, rather than journalism being simply impacted or

enabled by the application of new digital technologies, there is a complex and as yet unresolved interplay between professional news work and the ever-multiplying technical options available to news producers and consumers, in which deeply embedded professional norms are operationalized.

Where popular and commercial narratives and, as we have seen, some academic accounts, posit a simple opposition between vividly alluring new possibilities on one side and sclerotic 'old' media on the other, instead, following on more general discussions on technoculture and professional journalism in Chapters 2 and 3, this review has elaborated a deeper understanding focused on how new potentialities map onto the values and roles of journalism. In this account, qualities such as multimediality, interactivity, transparency and openness of news to new actors are seen to have been zealously championed, not least by those arguing from a technicist perspective. However, as each new potential is hailed, so media scholars, many of them former news practitioners, have problematized its relevance to the actual conditions and culture, the habitus or ideology, of professional journalism, and have shown that such notions of progress cannot easily be assumed but instead must be investigated in a methodical way.

This study seeks to inquire into the indications or otherwise of the possibilities for the extension or reform of journalism through the Internet as integrated into professional journalism and news culture. It is in this context, itself reliant on and inter-penetrated with broader notions of democracy, news media, journalism and the Internet, that the present study of Irish news content and format, and the opinions of working Irish journalists as expert respondents, is situated.

Endnotes

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[1] Given the pervasive framing of issues in market terms over recent decades, and the pressures on freelancers to sink or swim according to their own energy, imagination and talent, it is perhaps not surprising that many students approaching online journalism see it almost purely in terms of commercial viability, and are less immediately animated by professional issues that are thrown up by online news. One postgraduate student at an end-of-semester review of an online journalism module observed that it had failed because it had not provided guidance on how to make online journalism profitable.

[2] An open, incisive and highly-regarded online publication based on contributions from the technology community.

[3] 'Scarf up' is US slang for 'gobble'.

[4] In the mid-90s, staff photographers to whom the author spoke, and who were still processing film in dark rooms, argued unanimously that digital cameras would never achieve the quality required for professional news work.

[5] It is interesting to note that Pavlik's much later work relating to digital media generally, which takes a sector-by-sector, more economics-centred approach, has little to say about claims for online journalism (Pavlik 2008).

[6] This development probably occurred in response to the success of *The Irish Emigrant*, which gained a large following in the 1990s by aggregating and condensing Irish news media output in an email newsletter. In this period, the power of the net in overcoming distance to reach the Irish diaspora was particularly emphasized.

[7] This distinction may be temporary, however, since the UK Government has declared its intention to remove media ownership restrictions at local level, and, in what has been perceived as a political campaign by Rupert Murdoch, it has been suggested that controls governing cross-ownership at UK national level should also be dismantled (Burrell 2010).

[8] See Appendix 3 of the report, not in the pdf version, but available at the time of writing at http://www.nuj.org.uk/innerPagenuj.html?docid=621.

[9] See Appendix 5 of the report, not in the pdf version, but available at the time of writing at http://www.nuj.org.uk/innerPagenuj.html?docid=625.

[10] Difficulty in navigation around websites and the absence of context that print provides stands out as an aspect of online communication that is recognized as deficient when compared to the widely understood grammar of print design and the physical cues of content on paper.

[11] Other such sites, with a decidedly sceptical edge, include Medialens in the UK and the more modest MediaBite blog in Ireland.

[12] As does Google Adsense, in certain circumstances, such as advertising associated with site searches.

[13] Since subsumed into Orange's web content.

[14] The dangers for journalists operating in social media outside of their established processes was starkly illustrated it the controversy over RTE *Prime Time* anchor Miriam O'Callaghan's ill-advised tweet confirming the death of celebrity radio host Gerry Ryan. The episode was seen as bringing into sharp relief the difference between the ethical responsibilities of professional journalists and others (Linehan 2010). While the current study does not encompass a survey of journalists' social media activities, it is apparent that the many Irish professional journalists using Twitter to communicate with audiences are for the most part careful to state on their profiles that the views expressed there are their own and not those of their employers.

[15] Such stories are sometimes referred to as 'say' stories; as they are based on what someone, usually an official source, says, or emanate from a 'pseudo-event', such as a press conference, rather than on a specific happening outside the routines of public communication (Randall 2000).

[16] This may no longer be the case, as evidenced in the emergence of specialist sites. Such sites include *irisheconomy.ie*, which provides a range of coverage beyond the economic orthodoxy found in mass media newspapers, while the *Mediabite* blog challenges the media consensus in a politically conservative environment, and *Politico* offers coverage from a broadly left perspective.

Chapter 5: Research methodology

Introduction

We have seen in previous chapters that the potential of the Internet to alter news and journalism has become a major theme, both among media themselves (Hagerty 2009, Raynsford 2003, Anonymous 2005) among critical commentators on media (Curran 2010, Pilger 2007), among activists for reform of journalism (Katz 1995) and among media researchers (Bromley and Bowles 1995), with the discussion focused primarily on how the net empowers readers and challenges journalists and publishers, but also on how the ICT environment gives rise to new enabling scenarios for producers.

Perhaps the concern that is often accorded the most urgency in relation to print news is the potential of the Internet to render the 'traditional' medium obsolete and, by fundamentally altering modes of consumption, take readers and advertisers away from newspapers, speeding the demise of the industry and, with it, its powerful institutions, and their embedded conventions of production and consumption (Küng, Picard and Towse 2008, Picard 2004). Another familiar theme is constructed around the idea, present from the early origins of the net, and overlapping to some degree at least with professional values and norms in journalism, that new, digitally distributed media will overcome structural shortcomings in media systems of western capitalism, the better to reassert the democratic role of media, free from the constricting forces of elite political and economic power, even if this discourse often simultaneously is couched in the language of personal liberty (Gillmor 2006), on one hand, and crowd wisdom on the other (Muthukumaraswamy 2010). Related to both of these themes is the consideration of the role of journalism in the media ecology. In the emerging, digitally-based system, news consumers have more choice, readers have the technical facility to respond critically to news coverage or to initiate their own individual or group journalism or meta-journalism, and the relationship between source actors, media professionals and readers becomes more complex and less manageable for gatekeepers. Essentially, the purpose of this study and its component methodologies is to explore, in what is, in historical terms, the earliest period of significant adoption of

the Internet, the responses and attitudes of an established and heretofore privileged profession to potential upheaval or gradual erosion in the underpinning societal structures that facilitate a broadcast, top-down model of media, where agenda-setting, gatekeeping and framing of news by a few producers for audiences of many have been the norm.

The primary question that this research sets out to address is whether, in practice, journalism is meaningfully altered, either in its manifested output or in the role, perceived and otherwise, of members of the profession. The thesis postulated is that, at the current point of evolution of news and the net, the role of journalism largely remains as it has been for most of the existence of mass media news publishing, after the model that evolved in the English-speaking world in the 19th century, and that, despite the emergence of high-profile phenomena such as interactivity, citizen journalism, blogs, social media and various forms of user-generated content, which often serve idealized notions of a reformed public sphere, journalism largely has not been deepened, expanded, or otherwise transformatively enriched by the advent of the Internet, nor has it been rendered less relevant or more dispensable by virtue of apparently competing news-related phenomena native to the net. Within this thesis is the concept that journalism, essentially, is a complex mix of processes, the nature of which is not determined or in a simplistic way enabled or impacted by technology, but may change as part of a process of interaction with social, political and economic factors in which technology plays its part. However, the study seeks to identify and explore a more particular relationship between journalism as practised in print and journalism as practised on the web, by problematizing the increasingly voluminous body of opinion, echoed in both online and traditional media and to varying degrees in the academic discourse, that heralds a new universe of public communication radically altered by the enabling properties of the net.

The use of print as a device through which to gain an understanding of online journalism is guided partially by the author's working background, as discussed in Chapter 1. However, it is also apparent, at least superficially, that Internet news as so far manifested in largely text-heavy websites, embraces the culture, formats, logic and conventions of print news to a greater extent than that of broadcast. While the rapid adoption of broadband connectivity, and with it the rise of video, may alter this pattern, we can observe that, to date, media organizations, including broadcasters

whose textual output previously had been limited to teletext, have to a large degree favoured textual forms over the 'multimedia' of sound and moving image. Even as multimedia in online news increases, it is clear that much of the content on offer remains textual and is produced for direct reading from the screen, as from the page, even as the variety of screen types increases, and with the latest devices aiming to mimic the printed page. Accordingly, while taking cognizance of developments in and around broadcast and multimedia news production, the focus of the research is aimed towards mass media print news as expressed in the online, World Wide Web editions of newspapers, as this arguably remains the locus of the greatest interaction of so-called 'traditional' journalism with new media.

It is important to clarify also that the scope of this research does not include direct consideration of new phenomena occurring on the net outside professional journalism, most notably the rise of mass blogging and social networking, but also the use of the web as a public relations and propaganda tool by government, business, NGOs, and activists of every hue. That is not to say, of course, that such developments can be discounted or ignored: since they are part of the array of new elements in the information landscape in which professional journalism plies its trade in trust, it will be seen that they hardly can be avoided. It may be desirable and even possible to construct a comprehensive global model of public communication that reflects fundamental new relationships between journalism, new potentialities, and new producers of content, news or otherwise, but such a project is not envisaged here. Just as it similarly must exclude consideration of changing audience patterns, this study deliberately seeks answers within journalism itself and within the content of classic media, focused as it is on the professional roles and values of such media.

Context re-visited

As a global phenomenon that has impinged on media worldwide, at least in developed economies, the Internet therefore calls for international comparative research. A wider understanding is to be gained by placing such an examination in a setting that similarly crosses the boundaries of the nation state. Based on this logic, European media were the subject of a research sub-group of the COST action *The Impact of the Internet on the Mass Media*, which examined newspaper websites and as part of which the author carried out an initial, if rather truncated, analysis of Irish online

news (O'Sullivan 2005b).[1] However, such an approach does not preclude a deeper and more layered examination of national contexts, and it is with the latter that this study is concerned. Thus, the focus here is exclusively on Irish newspapers, and, within that category, national daily newspapers in the Republic of Ireland[2] as the most significant news outlets in terms of readership and as standard bearers for professional journalism in this state.

This chapter sets out the phases of research that, together, form the methodology for this dissertation. The first phase comprises an exhaustively comprehensive content analysis, based on a highly detailed code book, of daily newspapers and their websites, conducted initially in 16 countries (van der Wurff, et al. 2008, van der Wurff and Lauf 2005)[3]. It is augmented by a second, smaller study focusing more closely on interactivity features in Irish newspaper websites, which was conducted as part of a four-country comparative project (Fortunati, et al. 2010). The third phase, conceived as a substantial extension to the previous COST research, seeks to scrutinize the attitudes of 23 Irish journalists who were among almost 240 news professionals who took part as informed respondents in a study comprising 11 European countries, roughly a decade after the arrival of the net in newsrooms (Fortunati, et al. 2009, O'Sullivan and Heinonen 2008). The informed survey means that print and online journalists were asked for their opinions, as expert practitioners, on a broad range of questions relating to their perceptions of how the Internet touches their work and potentially affects their role, as distinct from being surveyed on a large scale in a statistically valid sample.

Research elements

As outlined above, the research uses two phases of content analysis, along with an informed survey of journalists in order to address its research question. Sub-questions addressed here are as follows:

Does online news produced by large, mainstream media organizations differ from its 'traditional' antecedent?

Do journalists work differently in the context of the web, and, if so, do such differences in routines translate into differences in values and role perceptions?

Do journalists themselves see the net as a means to reform, improve or extend journalism?

Do journalists see their role or roles re-defined by the presence in the new media ecology of new forms of citizen or participatory journalism from outside professional news media?

Content analysis provides the study with an observable and verifiable base of data suitable for detailed primary analysis, and capable of direct use in analysis (Domingo 2005, Kopper, Kolthoff and Czepek 2001). Its systematic deployment means that the observation of what is happening to the outputs of journalistic work is isolated from the individual preferences and prejudices of the researcher, so that, as far as possible, all attributes and properties of media arterfacts are captured. The informed survey is an established, ethnographically-based method which aims to provide deeper and more critical data for analysis than that which would be provided by random sampling methods, and which is particularly suited to the study of organizations and professional groupings (Sieber 1973, Fowler 2002). While these methods provide a solid and useful foundation for analysis of the emerging patterns in online journalism, they are, however, augmented for the purposes of the study by a qualitative, assessment, informed and given texture by the author's own professional background as a newspaper journalist, as well as by perspectives from news design and information design relating to the forms of news presentation. Thus, an additional layer of thick description is provided to enrich and synthesize the analysis, addressing the recognized shortcomings of a purely quantitative approach. While such an approach is associated especially with ethnography (Geertz 1973) it is also appropriate to the study of cultural texts, whether personal documents or media artefacts (Hodder 2003). It is intended that this blend of methods will provide the basis for an integrated and nuanced analysis of the phenomenon of online news at its nascent stages in the early 21st century and in the as-yet early phases of digital media adoption.

Media outlet data for this research were captured in late 2003 and in 2004, while responses to the informed survey were taken from journalists in 2005 and 2006. What is intended in the research is not a latest update from the field. Rather, the research aims to provide a historical point of reference, based on snapshots taken over a period that corresponds to the first phase of a meaningful encounter between journalism still

largely grounded in print but with the maturation of the Internet, and in particular of the World Wide Web, at such a stage as to take it beyond the realm of exotic novelty and naive or speculative futurism (O'Sullivan 2005a, Evans 1999).

Content analysis and detailed description

Industry commentators, scholars and journalists themselves all have commented on the potential of the Internet to realize a range of high-level objectives for the profession: to achieve the strategic aims of newspapers, to reform public communication, and to bring news to the audience that is faster, more relevant, more efficient, more democratic. Many have commented equally on threats and pitfalls for journalism, journalists and publishers. Others have seen the net as an opportunity to bypass news organizations and journalists, with the most optimistic heralding the coming of an age of post-journalism, or as a means to counter 'top-down', big media, mainstream media (MSM) journalism. While many such commentaries point to exotic new forms of journalism, often centred on individual, non-professional engagement, relatively few have sought systematically to compare actual journalism as rendered in print with the actual journalism from the same producer organizations as rendered on the PC screen.[4]

While one of the primary criteria governing the selection of research methodology chosen was the achievement of access to comparable data across disparate national media systems, the points of investigation serve well also for a national study. An important consideration from this perspective was that the study was limited specifically to the print and online editions of mainstream, general circulation, 'quality', regularly published, paid-for newspapers.[5] The aim in defining a meaningful Irish study in the context of collaborative European research was to achieve a research setting and method that accommodated the national, general, daily non-tabloid news outlet prevalent in this country. A 'regular' publication was defined generally as one that produced a discrete edition four times a week or more, and in Ireland this implied national dailies, or morning newspapers. Daily national titles can be considered to be those publications which most represent the journalistic convention and professional concept of 'straight' or 'hard' news, in the sense of reportage of current events, or analysis of current events, while tabloid newspapers and, to varying degrees, evening and Sunday newspapers, can be seen to have different agendas, as evidenced, for example, by the tabloid emphasis on entertainment, celebrity and sport.[6] It is

primarily, though not exclusively, to so-called quality newspapers, most of them daily, or their publishers that reference is habitually made in discussion of the role of the press in a modern democracy, while, notwithstanding their considerable circulations, tabloids are more likely to be treated as a separate form. Daily, morning edition[7] nationals in Ireland enjoy the highest aggregate circulations when compared with other classifications of print news, and they have the largest staffing levels and the most developed organizational structures, including, especially, editorial, and therefore represent the particular research setting that is most likely to reflect evolved professional practice free of the idiosyncrasies of smaller titles where individual personalities or exceptional policies may dominate. Another determining consideration is that the author's professional experience over two decades has related predominantly to daily nationals, and so provides some basis for more informed and nuanced analysis and interpretation in relation to this genre.

In order to capture variation across news outlets, the international study specified four titles per country. However, in Ireland, with its smaller market, three news outlets – the *Irish Examiner*, the *Irish Independent*, and *The Irish Times* – fell within the definition. It was considered inappropriate to distort the capture of data by including an atypical newspaper in order to artificially inflate the number to accord with a benchmark more appropriate for larger scale or more fragmented and diverse news markets. In this respect, the scope of the research in Ireland has been set to accommodate the national setting rather than the European.

In order to provide another dimension of comparison, the wider study called for the inclusion of online-only news outlets – news websites native to the Internet in that they did not have a related off-line edition. In Ireland, however, no website ultimately was identified that could be placed in this category, as all such entities (e.g. *online.ie* or *eircom.net's* news section[8]) were found to comprise primarily syndicated or re-published content from established print or broadcast media outlets, while specialized sites with journalistic input such as *irishhealth.com* or *techcentral.ie,* though interesting in terms of the development of online news media, were considered outside of the scope of the study. It is worth noting that Ireland was exceptional in having at this point no comparable general news sites that could be considered independent of conventional media.

Just as the selection of outlets studied required national adaptation to a generic idea of a newspaper, so the international setting meant that the dimensions of the study could not be directed or bound by the researcher's prior reading or understanding of familiar titles and local news culture: this made for an open and objective *modus operandi* in which the aim was to examine basic characteristics of media. Rather than the perhaps more nuanced and informed analysis that might spring from quotidian familiarity, this research element attempts to capture such fundamentals as the type of news provided by newspapers in their print and online editions, the relative balance between news and other content, such as advertising and publisher self-promotion, the use of hyperlinks, degrees of multimediality, and the level, variety and extent of interactive opportunity. The decision to deploy a broad quantitative research tool in this way at the level of data gathering does not, however, preclude qualitative interpretation based on more finely textured knowledge and understanding acquired from the author's professional experience as a journalist or, indeed, as a reader of Irish newspapers.

The content analysis promotes the capture of extremely close detail in preference to wider breadth of observation. This approach demanded that the research be limited to the most important items, in terms of size and placement, on or starting on the front page of the newspaper, print and online, on one day. While restricting the analysis in this way clearly acts as a severe delimiter on the scope of the study, and by necessity excludes some of the subtleties of the content mix of any media outlet in which relative balance of material is a matter of structured design, the measure is necessitated by the scale of the challenge and by the difficulty in establishing comparability between pages of a print newspaper and the pages of a website, each of the latter usually being devoted to a single story. Examining the front page provides a greater insight into the priorities, including editorial priorities, of the publisher, reflecting as it does the underlying rationale in play when editorial teams establish hierarchies of importance and frame each day's news according to their particular values. Consequently, the front page is a critical anchoring ground for comparisons between online and offline editions and between the various titles, while, as stated, this focus does not preclude augmentation by the application of qualitative analysis of the front page itself or of other pages or features of the website. The attempt to capture in such detail the content and character of front pages demanded a similarly detailed and inclusive codebook (Appendix A).[9]

The day chosen for data collection – October 8, 2003 – was determined in part by collective researcher convenience, but principally by the need to study 'normal' or routine output without the possibly distorting effect of an extraordinary upheaval, nationally or internationally. In the event, there were no stories that might have such an impact on the news diet of the day. Screenshots were saved in .MHT files, a format in which the browser saves disparate elements of a web page rather than HTML alone, thus ensuring the capture of as many elements as possible. It was not possible to capture some dynamic elements, including advertisements and datelines called from servers by scripts.

The coding demanded the physical measurement of spatial attributes of the front pages of both print and online outlets.[10] Since, by their nature, web pages could not be measured in conventional units of area, they were printed out on A4 sheets to provide a consistently proportionate proxy.

In order to minimize errors, the data were subjected to several phases of reliability testing. While some minor inconsistencies were identified in specific national contributions to the common European dataset, the Irish data were not thus affected.[11]

Code book:

The codebook used therefore provides a structured picture, on one day, of print and online news media. The codebook is divided into seven sections, with the last three designed to capture changes over the course of the day. Parts A, B and C organize the gathering of data at three levels, as follows:

Part A, outlet data (61 questions):
This section establishes the identity and general characteristics of the subject media outlet, logs references to additional services (other than news) offered by the provider (e.g. email, pdf, or mobile editions), tests the levels of hypertextuality, customization or personalization offered, and captures the presence or otherwise, along with the characteristics, of search tools, archives, and advertising, including classified advertising. While in the online edition the front page of the news site was at the core of the study, the question arose here as to how deep, in terms of hyperlink clicks, one should navigate in the observation. The rule adopted was that any link on the front page that seemed relevant should be followed, but not further than one click. However, in the case of search, archives and advertising, since these items are likely

to be removed from the wider news space, this one-click rule was lifted, and the exploration could go as deep as necessary.

Part B, front page (74 questions):

The purpose of this section is to capture in fine detail the large variety of discrete elements that together make up the front page, both in print and online, and assess their relative importance in terms of the space devoted to them. In essence, this section scours the front page in order to detect and measures the presence or absence of each of an array of possible individual items, ranging from news stories, to standalone hyperlinks to advertisements or self-promotional items.

Part C, news items (130 questions):

This section provides more detail and examines individual stories. In addition to the size and component parts (e.g. headline, text, graphic) of stories, the codebook also covers content, sources, subject matter, content interactivity (as opposed to site interactivity), and re-purposing. One of the most consistent challenges in comparing content across two dimensions – between print and online on one hand and between varied news markets on the other – was to establish labels and corresponding definitions. Accordingly, some of the applied nomenclature does not square with terms that may be more familiar to media practitioners in Ireland or Britain (and some of the definitions are necessarily more precise and more explicitly constructed, and therefore may appear laboured, at least by the standards of conventional practice). A 'news item and content item' is defined in the codebook as 'a combination of a headline and at least one sentence additional text, or a combination of a graphical element (photo, figure) with at least a caption'. By this definition, items comprising headlines only are excluded. Types of news items most commonly are:

1. *bullet* – a headline and short summary of at least one sentence and a maximum of one paragraph heralding a substantial item presented later
2. *brief* – a very short article, maximum one paragraph
3. *news article* – a report of what has happened ... (and) when, where, who, what, sometimes also why.

In all, the codebook provides for 19 different types of news item, though few applied to the Irish context. Salient properties of stories logged included:

- topic

- locale

- associated graphic content – photograph, illustration etc.

- opportunity for reader comment (on that story)

Part D and F of the codebook relate to evening editions. Since, in the case of Ireland, both print and online outlets were confined, beyond breaking news, to a single, morning-only edition, these sections are not relevant to the country study. Part G provides primarily for brief qualitative description, and an opportunity to add deeper information in the coding. In this study, however, it is intended that a separate, deeper description, provided later, will instead inform the analysis.

Prioritizing the front page

Looking at newspapers and websites in this way allows us to progress towards comparisons that help us consider to what extent we are witnessing the realisation of the radical potential of the Internet and a transformation of news, or the absorption of new technologies into established modes. At this juncture, however, one must be careful not to draw sweeping conclusions. In particular, the necessarily narrow focus of parts of the codebook on the 'front' or home page of news websites may mean that interactive features that are found deeper within the entity are not registered. Polls and discussion forums that spring from content items to which the user must first drill more than one level are not, therefore, logged. That said, similar qualifications may be made on the print side of the comparison, and, as has been argued, the level at which such features are placed in itself provides an indicator of how they are valued by editors and publishers. Even if the codebook allows for the capture of a very wide array of data, it does not set out or purport to capture everything. Rather, where a general search of a website for potentially hidden features would prove prohibitive and could not be relied upon as exhaustive, relying as it would on coders' instincts and skills, the codebook seeks to discover what it is that newspaper organizations consider important enough to frontload for their readers.

Another caveat that is relevant here concerns the shifting concept of this front, or home, page as reflected in web editions freed from the physical ordering of newspapers rendered in a series of printed pages. A website, by its nature, does not technically require or impose a singular home page, and, once having navigated to the

site, readers can be redirected to 'landing' or other pages which need not necessarily reflect news content alone. This new freedom and the potential for variations in its application present an immediate definitional and methodological difficulty for the comparison between print and online edition front pages. In order to maintain a rational basis for comparison, one of the codebook's measured variables, 'Front page distance', relates to the number of pages through which the reader must travel from a website's home page to reach the main news page. Ordinarily, where a newspaper replicates its front page online, this might be expected to be zero, i.e. the web home page also serves as the news index page, and is the site of entry to the news offering for that title online. However, where a website is organized as a portal, the home page serves as a point of entry to a wide array of services and content expanding beyond the newspaper edition. In the Irish context, at the time of this study, two of the main online outlets positioned their newspaper online editions thus.

This embedding of the core newspaper reflected practice elsewhere, perhaps the most developed implementation being the then *Guardian Unlimited* website, (since rebranded and re-developed as *guardian.co.uk*), of which the *Guardian* and *Observer* newspapers form sections. Content from *The Irish Times* at the time of this study forms a part, and not the whole, of *ireland.com*, and in *unison.ie*, which carries news from a host of regional newspapers, the *Irish Independent* online edition is presented as a dominant but non-exclusive locale for online news (O'Sullivan 2005a). This quite radical use of the web to broaden the offering put before the audience has more recently been softened, if not entirely abandoned, with both Irish sites now presented as the online manifestation of the individual title and much more closely integrated with the print edition. While it is not proposed here to discuss the wider significance of such developments, it must be made clear that the study has been carried out in the former period. Nevertheless, it remains relevant, on two grounds: primarily, the study records the condition of online editions at a crucial and telling early stage of significant adoption of the net as a publishing platform in news; secondly, the movement away from the portal model had occurred relatively recently, and this model therefore has pertained for a protracted period representing the much greater span of the existence of the online editions across their early evolutions.

The incorporation of the newspaper online edition into a larger online entity, in itself significant, forces the coder into a difficult choice as to what to measure, with each

option seeming in some way arbitrary. The codebook defines front page distance online as the minimum number of links that have to be clicked to navigate from the URL matching '*www.name of outlet.domain*' to the front page of the news service proper. So, in comparing *The Irish Times* with its online iteration, one seeks out not the home page of *ireland.com* but instead follows the link from there to *The Irish Times* (front page distance of 1) with a similar path for the *Irish Independent*, though not for the *Irish Examiner.*

While this option more faithfully records a comparison of matching entities, it necessarily discounts the blurring of boundaries evident in digital media. However, within the restricted scope of this study, it was considered that comparing a newspaper with its counterpart portal would introduce many mismatches and even more qualifications. To illustrate, one might ask if a portal, typically published by a sister company, puts out special reports and hosts active discussions with readers, can we conclude that the newspaper has responded actively to online opportunities? Adhering in these circumstances to a stricter interpretation avoids much of the semantic and potentially circular discussion of what represents the manifestation of a print news organ online.

The content study as established therefore excludes meaningful analysis and interpretation of the phenomenon of the portal, in the same way that it does not claim directly to address other important aspects of news online, such as community media or the growth of journalistic blogging. The focus of this research methodology is, therefore, what can be considered the core journalistic artefact, as represented in classic print newspaper mode, and, altered or otherwise, in its online manifestation. (O'Sullivan 2005a)

This closely defined examination allows detailed comparisons of print and web editions, between the Irish titles, and with the European norm and (while avoiding simplistic notions of progress in technical innovation) with perceived leading practice in the implementation of online news. In addition to analysis of the coded data, the study method also provides for qualitative analysis and interpretation. This additional qualitative layer, as discussed above, adds flesh to the raw patterns emerging from the coding, draws attention to visually salient aspects of news presentation that are not immediately apparent from the existing data, and allows more space for selection and interpretation, especially applicable in the analysis of results, based on professional

experience. While some highly abridged reporting of the quantitative data, aimed at providing a basic account of online newspaper editions in Ireland, has already been effected (O'Sullivan 2005b), more extensive use of the data gathered, combined with qualitative enhancement, provides the basis for a deeper and more textured reporting and analysis in this study.

Observations of interactivity

The principal content analysis outlined in detail above is complemented by an additional content analysis of the interactive features of Irish websites, part of a four-country study of such features. This project, which aimed to explore how, in Ireland, Bulgaria, Estonia, and Italy, the websites of the widest-circulation online dailies embodied interactivity in practice, was conceptualized as extending and deepening the exploration of the online editions of the newspapers that had been studied in the primary content analysis, thus addressing some of the limitations of that part of the methodology (Fortunati, et al. 2010). One could envisage a scenario where, although a website's front page contained little or no interactivity, or reference to interactivity, there were nevertheless interactive opportunities at a deeper level of the site, perhaps as a tentative step towards further development. Such a feature could potentially be of some significance, say, in the case of a moderated forum. For example, at various stages in its development *ireland.com* had carried a reader forum in its business section which would not have been detected by the content analysis coding. Given the strong emphasis in much of the literature and discussion on interactivity, and its key role in assessing and classifying new media, it was felt that the additional emphasis on and deeper study of this feature across newspaper websites was worthwhile. As with the content analysis, a given day – October 12, 2004 – was chosen for data collection in relation to interactivity.

Interactivity in a website occurs on several levels, and in an online newspaper potentially comprises many elements, including hyperlinks, invitations to comment on stories, facilities for emailing journalists, and facilities to customize content and format, as addressed in the content analysis above. However, the primary emphasis in this part of the study was on interactivity centred on the individual, such as in the form of e-mail, forums, letters to the editor, polls, chat and/or interviews with prominent figures. Within this broad category, it was concluded that forums in particular would provide rich and accessible data on the nature of communication, if

any, between users and editorial staffs, and the type of relation which develops among journalists and forumists. Forums, unlike, say, polls or comment fields, provide at least the technical potential for longer forms of dialogue, and so would act as a barometer of the depth and meaning of the interactivity in play, and of the power relations between news producers and visitors to their websites. Whereas it is facile to publish an automated poll, and relatively trivial automatically or semi-automatically, through light moderation, to carry reader comments, engaging with a reader or readers in a truly interactive sequence represents a much stronger challenge, in terms of resources but also in terms of the re-definition of the role of the journalist and the realization of his or her professional values. Additionally, from the perspective of researcher access, forum posts would be available to view, while emails would be private.

The choice of forum as the object of study presented problems for data collection from the Irish titles studied, (the same as those studied in the content analysis), because, at the time of the study, among the Irish web newspaper editions only the *Examiner* supported forums in the sense of the now familiar online spaces where users have control over discussion threads to which they can post directly. While this in itself can be interpreted as a significant observation on publishers' stances on interactivity, it was decided that, since they provided some user-generated content extending beyond the traditional category of Letters to the Editor, responses to online polls in the cases of the *Independent* and *Times* would be included in the study. It is important to acknowledge here that, already, an upper boundary on interactivity has been set, since heavily-moderated comments provided by readers in response to a pre-determined poll fall far short of the fluid interaction potentially present in an online forum. It is worth noting that this component of the research comprises only data-gathering on observable discussions, and does not address the motivations of those providing or moderating such forums.

Given its relatively limited scope, and its deliberate maintenance of continuity with the content analysis, this part of the research methodology should be read as an adjunct to the latter, larger body of data, intended to add depth and texture to the analysis of a fundamental potential characteristic of new media with potentially far-reaching implications for journalism. However, it also in itself registers a starting point for continued longitudinal study of interactivity in Irish news media.

Informed survey:

The content analysis and the study of interactivity, taken together, provide a static image, or snapshot, of the condition of online newspaper editions at a specific point in their evolution. The data and the resulting analyses from these phases also interlink with and inform a connected study of what news producers themselves consider important in the so-called 'digital revolution'.[12] In addition to gathering data on working methods and tools, which aimed to investigate how journalists use the Internet in newsgathering and news processes, news producers' responses were sought on whether or how the Internet intervenes across the range of issues facing journalism. Thus, the research focus agreed with international collaborators is on role perceptions of how a "good journalist" is defined in terms of professional values and practices.

While there are complex arguments around institutional and economic influences on the work of journalists (Picard 2004), it was feared that line or editorial managers would consciously or otherwise incorporate in their accounts the effective impact of such pressures, rather than being concerned primarily with journalism values. In a previous study, in which the author had interviewed a group which included several editorial executives, it had been found that those with a managerial brief, rather than interpreting and responding to questions as journalists and relating to journalistic values, had predominantly included commercial and competitive considerations in their discussions (O'Sullivan 2005a). Similarly, it was decided to limit the study to journalists working in news, as understood in its narrower sense, so that, for example, feature writers and page designers were also excluded.

The sample chosen was that of journalists from three of the newspapers as defined in the content analysis, so that continuity is maintained linking observed titles and journalists surveyed. Interviews were conducted principally by telephone over the period late 2005 to early 2006 (the duration reflecting the sample's targeted nature, along with the operational difficulties of co-ordinating the international effort). With the aim of eliciting a more considered response, and to enable them to familiarize themselves with the questions and to raise any ambiguities, journalists who agreed to contribute to the study received an emailed copy of the questionnaire some days in advance. This additional buffer reflects the intention to conduct an informed survey rather than gather instant responses in the manner of a mass survey. As expert

practitioners, respondents were not expected to answer questions without having had time to understand and consider them. In the event, a few journalists, typically those who were the most technically aware, replied by email, and, since the method did not call for a recording of qualitative data, such responses were included as valid. Questions were closed, and most were based on five-point Likert scales, allowing the limited application of quantitative methods beyond illustrative frequency tables in relation to the European dataset.

While the entire dataset of 239 journalists from 40 of the highest print circulation titles in 11 countries (Cyprus, Estonia, Finland, Greece, Italy, Lithuania, the Republic of Ireland, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden and the UK) provides the basis for further investigation on a European level (O'Sullivan and Heinonen 2008), it also affords deeper analysis at country level in Ireland, with an additional comparative dimension. At country level, the number of respondents in this phase would not comprise a valid sample for conventional statistical analysis.[13] That said, the Irish subset and its frequency patterns can be used to illuminate insights that complement data raised by other methods, as well as furnishing comparative material which usefully can be set against the construct of the continental journalist.

 In the general sample, respondents were 'seasoned professionals' with 14 years the mean span of career as a journalist to date. Their self-definition in terms of work profile was 64% print and 12% online, with 24% considering themselves as both print and online journalists (O'Sullivan and Heinonen 2008). The plan had called for interview targets of 18 print journalists and nine online journalists in each country, (although this distinction is in itself addressed by the questionnaire, given the blurring of roles which means, for example, that every print journalist whose newspaper has an online edition is, by literal definition, if not by self-perception, also an online journalist).

In general, researchers across the international study experienced some difficulty gaining co-operation from respondents, with journalists sometimes protesting that they did not have the expertise to discuss the issue of the Internet and journalism. Indeed, some respondents at *unison.ie* reported at an advanced stage in the interviewing phase that they had been instructed by the organization's senior management not to respond to questions. While the reluctance of many journalists to have themselves subjected to questioning about the net and its interplay with their

practices and values may be of interest in itself, this feature is necessarily outside the methodological scope of this study, and was recorded only anecdotally by the research group. The Irish group comprised 23 journalists, slightly above the country average for the study, with mean career span of just under 11 years. Of these, 17 were print journalists, three online journalists, and three defined themselves as both print and online journalists. They had an 'Internet age' – the duration of their experience of the net – of just under 7 years, on average. While, once again, no statistical significance can be accorded to the breakdown of participants, nonetheless, taken in conjunction with the other strands of research in this study, and also viewed within the international dimension, the data gathered provides indicative insights into the practices and perceptions of working journalists in Ireland.

Summary

Each of the methodologies deployed in this study contributes to an incremental, triangulated research approach that incorporates the practices and expressed values of journalists, along with the concretized expression of such practices and values. While each phase is itself partial and clearly is subject to specific limitations, as discussed above, the enriching of quantitative data with qualitative assessment provides a sound basis for evaluation and analysis of an important sector of Irish journalism's response to the Internet at a specific, strategic moment in the development of news online. The research comprises rigorous and highly-detailed content analysis, complemented by qualitative methods which are informed by the author's professional background. Similarly, it focuses on materialized outputs of journalism, but interweaves with that perspective a considered approach to assessing the values and practices of journalists that find expression in those outputs. The research data are set out in detail over Chapters 6, 7 and 8.

Endnotes

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[1] The COST Action 20 'The Impact of the Internet on the Mass Media' provided the opportunity for examination of the 'progress' in adoption of the Internet by mass media in Europe (Leandros 2006). While the author's initial research forays into the field of news in a new ICT environment (O'Sullivan 2005a) pre-dated the COST research network, later work which provides substantial data for this thesis has been carried out in the setting of a series of collaborative projects under the auspices of the COST Action. These projects furnished a framework in which research and analysis has been carried out at European level, with national descriptions, aimed at an international audience, providing an interpretative background. Deeper analysis at national level, including comparative analysis with European norms or practices in individual countries, remains by agreement of the network in the realm of the individual researcher or groups of researchers.
In addition to having academic ownership of the Irish data collected, the author also played a defining part in the conceptualization, design and operation of these projects, and had significant and acknowledged input into discussions that determined the design and content of codebooks and questionnaires used (see Appendices 1 and 2).

[2] Although there is cross-readership and some cross-fertilization, Northern Ireland's media system is usually treated as separate, having a distinct market, differing patterns of ownership, control and regulation, and a largely distinct news agenda.

[3] The later of these studies confined the analysis to 14 countries, still including Ireland, and adding Germany, which had not been represented. European data used in the current research is taken from the later study, with the exception of that shown in Table 6.11, referring to self-promotion, for which a comparable updated table was not available.

[4] An early outline typology by Colin Sparks of British newspapers and their corresponding web publications (Sparks 2002) provided revealing insights into some the evolutionary patterns emerging among UK publications and their audiences, but also served to highlight, in contrast to the rich vein of research and analysis emerging around some individual country studies, the early dearth of data and analysis on the European scale. The author was a member of a small working group which, meeting in Lisbon in 2001, set out to define a project on this dimension.

[5] It is tempting to make the assumption that newspaper genres that are relevant in Ireland (or the UK) also can map directly onto other country media systems. However, in the international study, the focus on national daily newspapers raised some definitional difficulties for researchers in some countries, because of variations in formats. For example, in some countries, sports-dedicated dailies, such as Italy's *La Gazzetta dello Sport*, are well-established or even dominant.

[6] While it is recognized that, especially given recent format changes in UK and Irish newspapers, which are likely to continue, this may lead in time to some ambiguity, the term 'tabloid' is used to denote the particular style and tenor of the typical 'red top' as originated in Britain. The adjective 'quality' is intended to denote those titles that present themselves as providing serious and perhaps more rounded reportage.

[7] Whereas in Ireland the research parameters meant that only morning editions were examined, this was not the case in every national market in the wider study.

[8] Eircom.net, owned by the state monopoly network and telephony provider, by this period had taken over the Internet service provider Indigo, in which the author had been involved in the piloting stages of editorial content production.

[9] The author contributed significantly to the discussions framing the codebook, the construction of this component of the research methodology being conducted on a collective basis among a minority of members of the network sub-group. An iterative process of refinement of the codebook was pursued through a series of meetings, culminating in the production of an agreed vehicle common across all of the participating countries, but also accommodating individual researchers' variously articulated interests, ranging from professional roles to business models. Therefore, while the codebook and the associated research effort was envisaged as encompassing a very wide range of research topics and questions, and their accompanying data requirements, its large size and comprehensive codings allowed the researcher concurrently to pursue his or her own research agenda.

[10] The author was assisted in the final phase of coding by Eve Merton, who worked according to my instructions.

An earlier data collection on March 3, 2003, was discarded in its entirety because of questions over reliability across the international research group, (with testing having been carried out by Edmund Lauf of the University of Amsterdam). In this phase, the scope of the analysis included the news section of the eircom.net website: in the later data capture, this site was not studied, on the grounds that including its content, much of which in any case had been sourced from conventional newsrooms, would distort rather than inform the research. Nevertheless, this first pass over the data provided lessons in careful observation and capturing of the characteristics of, in particular, web pages the fluidity of which presented challenges in both definition and measurement . In addition, while the network data set was seen as flawed, the Irish data was not considered to have contributed significantly to this problem, and therefore formed the basis of a conference paper offering some preliminary results (O'Sullivan 2004).

[12] The author, along with Prof. Ari Heinonen of the University of Tampere, was selected by the newspaper working group of the COST A20 Action, to co-ordinate this study, the focus of which was initially proposed by the author at the general meeting of the Action in Dublin in early 2004. Several meetings were held to refine and direct the research, and a website using the Moodle platform was implemented for additional communication. Through this processs, a self-selecting subset of the researchers agreed on a broad research aim and plan. The plan represented the distilled and combined inputs of a small number of researchers, each with his or her individual aims. In particular, while some in the group emphasized newsroom practices, following on from the seminal work in journalism ethnography of Weaver (1998), it was also felt that the study should include the interplay of new media and professional journalistic values and ethics, and these concerns are reflected in the resulting survey questionnaire, aimed at establishing an understanding, or achieving a model of, a 'Constructed European Journalist' after 10 years of the Internet's effective adoption in news organizations.

[13] On a European level, there are also limitations to its use, because the sample was not randomly taken: however, it has allowed for limited and cautious statistical interpretation (Fortunati, et al. 2009, Sarrica, et al. 2010).

Chapter 6: Data reporting – content analysis

Introduction

This chapter sets out the data gathered and collated in the first of the three phases of research, as outlined in Chapter 5, and provides detail and summary reporting of the principal bulk of material gathered in the content analysis. Qualitative, contextualizing observation and description of the web editions' look and feel and their relationship in this regard to their print parents is provided in the following chapter, in order to add depth to the material presented here and to capture additional nuances in the publishing of news as it moves online. Data from the second research phase, relating to the ancillary, follow-up study of interactivity, and the third phase, based on the informed survey of working methods and professional roles, are reported in Chapter 8. The data thus set forth will provide the basis of the analysis in Chapter 9.

The content analysis data are provided in frequency tables within the text. Detailed explanations of the variables and how they are constructed are provided in the full codebook included in Appendix A. Data are taken from observation of front pages and from news stories linked to or continued from front pages.

Content properties

Irish national newspapers' online editions in October 2003 were in what could be considered the second phase of web content design and production. Earlier manifestations of the three titles – the *Irish Examiner*, the *Irish Independent* and *The Irish Times* – had been constructed on simple, HTML-based platforms[1], but by the period of data collection for this study these had been replaced by more sophisticated content management systems that presented material in a portal style, in a more

integrated and consistent way, with more layers and, as shall be discussed later, with more connections to the various other activities of publisher organizations. At the time of writing, each of the three national newspapers have re-designed and re-launched their websites, the *Examiner* most recently, and there have been incremental changes: these updates which, on the whole, can be characterized as still cautious and for the most part marginal, are detailed more fully in Chapter 10 . Here, however, it is intended to concentrate attention on the sites as manifested on the day of data collection.

The data for Ireland are organized across a variety of topics, with values reported for print and online editions, thus providing a basis for comparison. European averages are also provided for comparison. As observed in the later discussion of the 'look and feel' of the web newspapers, online editions differ significantly in several ways from their print equivalents, while in other ways continuity is emphasized. The first data section, 'Outlet characteristics', refers to the breakdowns of content types across print and online media on the front page. A second section, 'News', refers to characteristics of news stories, while a third section registers characteristics more particularly related to online publishing.

Outlet characteristics

Content types as a percentage of front page space

The first level of data, shown in Table 6.1, below, relates to the spatial proportions of content types on respective pages, with measurements of news, breaking news, entertainment, service information, advertising, self-promotion, and hyperlinking.

News: Overall, news comprises a much greater proportion of the space occupied (i.e. excluding empty space allowed for margins, column gutters etc.) on print front pages, at 74.1%, dropping steeply to 49.2% online. Irish print newspapers are almost as 'news-heavy' as the European average, and online editions carry slightly less news than the wider group, which registers 51.5%. The principal contributors to the steep fall in news content in Ireland are the *Independent* and the *Examiner*, with low online values of 32.2% and 47% respectively. *The Irish Times* maintains its approximate news quotient, dropping only slightly, from 74.3% to 68.4%. Generally, it can be observed that the adoption of online newspapers has occasioned the substitution of

publishers' core content with other material and features, though, perhaps surprisingly, given its status as a pioneer of online news, the *Times* here displays greatest continuity with the print model.

	Table 6.1: Content types as a percentage of space								
	Medium	**Break.**	**Inter.**	**Service**	**Entert.**	**News**	**Ads**	**Self-Prom**	**Pointer**
Print	Irish Times	0.0	0.8	0.8	0.0	74.3	17.9	5.5	0.8
	Irish Independent	0.0	0.0	0.5	0.0	72	19.9	6.6	1.0
	Irish Examiner	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	76.2	16.9	5.2	1.7
	Ir mean	**0.0**	**0.3**	**0.4**	**0.0**	**74.1**	**18.2**	**5.8**	**1.2**
	Eu mean	**0.3**	**0.4**	**0.5**	**0.2**	**75.1**	**8.0**	**12.2**	**3.2**
Online	Irish Times	0.6	3.2	1.1	0.0	68.4	10.3	1.5	14.9
	Irish Independent	3.0	2.9	3.3	0.0	32.2	20.5	5.5	32.7
	Irish Examiner	6.1	0.8	6.1	0.0	47.0	9.1	0.0	31.0
	Ir mean	**3.2**	**2.3**	**3.5**	**0.0**	**49.2**	**13.3**	**2.3**	**26.2**
	Eu mean	**1.1**	**2.9**	**2.2**	**0.7**	**51.5**	**7.2**	**6.1**	**28.4**

Pointers: The biggest single increase in the proportion of space allocated online compared with print relates to pointers (hyperlinks in the web context), including both text and graphic pointers (see definition in Appendix A). Where print editions in Ireland average 1.2%, the corresponding web entities register 26.2% – a difference that matches in scale, if not in precise values, the fall in space for news. Within the wider European sample, space devoted to pointers shows a shift of similar magnitude, from 3.2% to 28.4%. (While, as a proportion of total content, pointers may appear secondary, it is worth considering that they often are displayed in prominent positions on the pages, in graphic format and, conversely, that dense lists of small-scale, plain text hyperlinks have a high visual impact on the page, not least because of the mouse-over cursor effect inviting the reader to interact. Such factors are afforded greater attention in the following chapter.)

Breaking news: Running counter to the trend of less news online is the adoption of breaking news. Print newspapers display no breaking news, although they are capable of doing so in limited form.[2] Irish online newspapers on average give 3.2% of front page space to this feature, with the *Examiner* devoting 6.1% of its web edition's home page, and *The Times* offering least, at 0.6%. The development of a specialized site, *breakingnews.ie*, by the *Examiner's* publisher, Thomas Crosbie Holdings, can be presumed to have played an important part in the valence of this particular facility on its flagship newspaper site. The European average for breaking news is 1.1% online, compared to 0.3% in print. Once again, consideration of the raw percentages may encourage an interpretation that breaking news is not important. However, such is the design of the web pages that the feature often has disproportionate impact, due to its graphic presentation and prominent placement, and such aspects are taken into account later in this discussion.

Service Information: This category of content, which refers to everyday, routine information like weather, traffic etc., registers an increase from 0.4% to 3.5% in the Irish titles. This change is also found in the European data, but with a slightly less marked rise, from 0.5% to 2.2%.

Interaction and communication: Items relating to facilitating interaction and communication from readers, such as contact telephone numbers, email addresses, etc., show an increase in Ireland from 0.3% to 2.3% of front page space. Neither the *Independent* nor the *Examiner* print editions have any such items, so this facility is new in their online editions. European newspapers generally display variation of a similar order, with 0.4% in print and 2.9% online.

Advertising: Total advertising (including consumer, commercial and classified) space falls online to 13.3%, from 18.2% in print. Here, again, however, there is strong variation between the outlets: the *Irish Independent* carries 20.5% advertising, roughly double that of its two rivals, and also roughly equivalent to its print parent. The fall-off in advertising is not reflected to the same extent in the general sample: overall, European online newspapers show a lesser reduction, from 8% to 7.2%.

Self-promotion: The share of space dedicated to promoting goods or services offered by Irish newspapers or their publishers also drops online, from 5.8% to 2.3%. Once

again, the *Independent* is the exception, largely maintaining this value, with 6.6% in print against 5.5% online, perhaps reflecting the wider commercial interests of INM. In the other titles, self-promotion falls away to little or, as in the case of the *Examiner*, nothing. Self-promotion is much more important for European outlets generally, but also decreases online, halving from 12.2% to 6.1%.

Entertainment: This category of content is not represented in Irish newspapers, either print or web. In the wider sample, it forms a small part of content across Europe, and it shows an increase from 0.2% in print to 0.7% online.

Content types by number of items

Table 6.2 provides the count of individual content items and their type. Pointers (hyperlinks) are not counted individually here, as they are covered both in outline and in depth further below.

Table 6.2: Content types (number of items)								
	Medium	**Break.**	**Inter.**	**Service**	**Entert.**	**News**	**Ads**	**Self-prom**
Print	Irish Times	0	7	1	0	15	1	3
	Irish Independent	0	0	1	0	12	2	2
	Irish Examiner	0	0	0	0	4	1	3
	Ir mean	**0.0**	**2.3**	**0.7**	**0.0**	**10.3**	**1.3**	**2.7**
	Eu mean	**0.0**	**0.7**	**0.4**	**0.1**	**11.2**	**1.7**	**3.7**
Online	Irish Times	1	4	1	0	15	2	1
	Irish Independent	6	3	2	0	32	9	3
	Irish Examiner	6	1	2	0	15	4	0
	Ir mean	**4.3**	**2.7**	**1.7**	**0.0**	**20.7**	**5.0**	**1.3**
	Eu mean	**0.8**	**2.6**	**1.7**	**0.4**	**18.3**	**3.8**	**3.5**

News: It is again clear that news predominates across all titles and across Irish and European daily newspapers generally, though with large variations. As news shrinks online in terms of space taken, it nevertheless increases overall in terms of item count. Most striking is the increase in items in the *Independent* to 32, as the title's online edition makes strong use of hyperlinking to allow it to place smaller items on the front

page. Also notable is the rise in the *Examiner's* news item count from a low 4 in print to 15 online, tending closer towards the Irish and European norms, at 20.7 and 18.3 respectively, up from 10.3 and 11.2.

Breaking news: Migration online brings with it the marked introduction of breaking news. Where they previously had none, now the *Independent* and *Examiner* have 6 items each, though with the latter providing much more space for the feature; the *Times*, however, chooses to publish only one. The Irish trend towards breaking news online is much stronger than the European average, shifting from zero to 4.3, while the EU mean rises only to 0.8. More detail on breaking news is provided below.

Service information: Information subject to routine updating shows an increase in Ireland as in Europe, with Irish titles, digital or print, showing more propensity to run such items. Although the figures at national level remain very low, the change online, from 0.7 to 1.7, is roughly consistent with the increase generally, from 0.4 to 1.7.

Interaction and communication: Whereas it does not stand out in terms of space measurement, consideration of individual items reveals a remarkable count for the *Times's* print front page, with 7 items under this category, where its daily rivals have none. Online, they converge, with the *Times's* reduction counter-balancing the introduction of 3 such items by the *Independent*, and one by the *Examiner*. Overall, while the print comparison is heavily skewed by the *Times*, online, the Irish and European averages are almost identical.

Advertising: Even though total space for advertising falls online, the number of items increases. Once again, the *Independent* displays the most salient shift, from 2 items to 9. The *Times* and the *Examiner* move from 1 to 2 and from 2 to 4 respectively. The change in the Irish context closely follows the aggregate shift across Europe, with once again, the online editions having several multiples of their print equivalents.

Self-promotion: Self-promotion is the only content category that drops in terms of items carried online. It does so in both the *Times* and the *Examiner*, and also in the Irish and European averages, with the *Irish Independent* the only instance in which there is an increase.

Entertainment: With a low European average score both in print and online, entertainment is not present in content items in any of the Irish editions on either platform.

Content type as a proportion of item numbers

Table 6.3 displays the distribution of content types within the newspapers' bundles, online and off.

Table 6.3: Content types (% of items)								
	Medium	**Break.**	**Inter.**	**Service**	**Entert.**	**News**	**Ads**	**Self-prom**
Print	Irish Times	0.0	25.9	3.7	0.0	55.6	3.7	11.1
	Irish Independent	0.0	0.0	5.9	0.0	70.6	11.8	11.8
	Irish Examiner	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	50.0	12.5	37.5
	Ir average	**0.0**	**8.6**	**3.2**	**0.0**	**58.7**	**9.3**	**20.1**
	Eu average	**0.3**	**3.6**	**2.3**	**0.4**	**62.3**	**10.2**	**20.9**
Online	Irish Times	4.2	16.7	4.2	0.0	62.5	8.3	4.2
	Irish Independent	10.9	5.5	3.6	0.0	58.2	16.4	5.5
	Irish Examiner	21.4	3.6	7.1	0.0	53.6	14.3	0.0
	Ir average	**12.2**	**8.6**	**5.0**	**0.0**	**58.1**	**13.0**	**3.2**
	Eu average	**2.7**	**9.1**	**5.8**	**1.3**	**56.7**	**12.8**	**11.5**

News: The average proportion of content items devoted to news drops by 5% across Europe, from 62.3% to 56.7%, a much less dramatic reduction than that seen in the division as expressed in terms of space on the page. The Irish average remains more stable, at 58.7% to 58.1%, though within that apparent stasis there is a notable fall from a high of 70.6% in the *Independent* print edition to 58.2% online, with balancing gains in the *Times* and *Examiner*.

Breaking news: Irish newspapers online show a very high score in this item, at 12.2% compared with the European-wide 2.7%, principally due to the *Examiner's* very heavy use of the feature, at 21.4%, and the *Independent's* 10.9% count. With the

Times at 4.2%, each of the Irish newspapers exceeds the European average in this respect.

Service information: This category of content climbs online, both in Ireland and in Europe generally, to 5% and 5.8% respectively. The *Examiner's* jump from 0 to 7.1% accounts for much of the Irish shift, whereas at the *Independent* this type of content falls away.

Interaction and communication: Whereas in print the Irish papers have more than double the percentage of items compared with the European group, at 8.6% compared with 3.6%, the Irish online count is static while the European implementation is stronger, at 9.1%.

Advertising: This means of measurement of advertising sees a rise online from 9.3% to 13% in Ireland, and from 10.2% to 12.8% in the wider sample. The *Independent*, at 16.4%, scores highly. The *Times* web edition carries considerably less, by comparison, at 8.3%, although this has leapt from 3.7% in print.

Self-promotion: Expressed in these terms, self-promotion has fallen away to a large degree in Ireland, with 20.1% in print matched by just 3.2% online. In Europe, the trend is in the same direction, with a less steep but still noteworthy drop, from 20.9% to 11.5%.

Entertainment: Entirely absent in Ireland, this category of content registers at very low levels generally, with just 0.4% in print increasing to 1.3% online in Europe.

Target content of pointers by percentage

Table 6.4, below, shows the kind of content, in mean percentage terms, that is referenced by the pointers, both text and graphic, present on the front page.

News: There are wide variations in the use of pointers as they relate to news (which often occurs in print as a feature of the index of stories carried on inside pages). In print, the *Times* and the *Examiner* dedicate 77.8% and 81.8% respectively to news pointers, whereas the *Independent's* lower usage of this option, at 30%, brings the Irish average to 63.2%, still markedly higher than the European norm of 42.2. Online,

there is convergence among the titles and between the Irish and European norms, with a generally lower proportion of pointers serving news.

	Medium	Break	Inter.	Serv	Entert.	News	Ads	Self-Promo
Table 6.4: Text and graphic pointers by target content type (% of number), mean								
	Irish Times	0.0	11.1	11.1	0.0	77.8	0.0	0.0
Print	Irish Independent	0.0	10.0	10.0	40.0	30.0	10.0	0.0
	Irish Examiner	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	81.8	18.2	0.0
	Ir total	**0.0**	**7.0**	**7.0**	**13.3**	**63.2**	**9.4**	**0.0**
	Eu total	**0.0**	**5.5**	**13.8**	**3.8**	**42.2**	**10.6**	**24.1**
	Irish Times	2.3	18.2	4.5	2.3	54.5	2.3	15.9
Online	Irish Independent	1.0	9.8	8.8	2.0	42.2	11.8	24.5
	Irish Examiner	2.5	9.9	8.6	1.2	45.7	1.2	30.9
	Ir mean	**1.9**	**12.6**	**7.3**	**1.8**	**47.5**	**5.1**	**23.8**
	Eu mean	**0.8**	**12.2**	**13.5**	**4.0**	**41.1**	**8.0**	**20.4**

Breaking news: Not represented in print, this category of pointer makes an appearance online, though only in low, single figure percentages.

Service information: The proportions of links targeting service information are, roughly, unchanged in both Ireland and Europe with the move online, with Ireland at 7.3% and Europe at 13.5%. Within this pattern, however, there are conflicting trends, as the *Times* reduces this category's share by over half, the *Examiner* moves from having no service pointers in print to 8.6% online, and the *Independent* effects a small decrease.

Interaction and communication: Interactive and communication-facilitating elements rise notably online, with a large increase to 18.2% in the *Times* online edition, and their introduction in the *Examiner's* website, whereas they are not present in print. The outcome online is an Irish mean of 12.6%, slightly higher than the European sample.

Advertising: Pointers generally are less used for advertising online, both nationally and across the continent, with a large fall-off in the *Examiner* online edition

accounting for much of the change in Ireland. At 5.1%, the Irish mean has roughly halved, and compares with a European score of 8.0%.

Self-promotion: Here we see a noticeable development of a particular kind of content. In Ireland, in print, self-promotion in not represented among items referred to from the front page. Online, however, it registers a very strong presence in all three titles, but especially in the *Examiner*, at almost 31%, to give a national average of 23.8%. In Europe as a whole, the trend is in the opposite direction, falling from 24.1% to 20.4%.

Entertainment: An extraordinary 40% of the *Independent's* pointers in print relate to entertainment, with only 2% online, producing a steep drop in the Irish tally online, at 1.8%. This compares with a European level of 4%, which represents little change overall. Although the *Times* and *Examiner* online levels are low, they indicate the first use of pointers to entertainment by either title.

Target content of text pointers by number

This classification, for which values are shown in Table 6.5, below, refers to text pointers. In print, these are textual references to other material inside the newspaper; online, they are standard, editable, non-graphic text on the page that functions as a link to content elsewhere. Overall, there is a large increase in this type of hyperlink.

News: The *Independent* displays strongest variation, compared with other titles, as it moves from print to online, with just 3 in the former but rising dramatically to 37 online. Whereas the *Times* and the *Examiner* register higher than the European average in print, they are closer to the online average of 23.7, while the Irish online figure stands at 29.7.

Breaking news: Not present in print, this content shows only in single items in the Irish titles. In Europe generally, the feature is less utilized, with an average score of 0.4 online.

Service information: This is one of the categories that is most boosted online. The Irish dailies' average shifts from 0.7 to 5.3, with the *Independent* and the *Examiner* running 8 and 7 such links respectively. However, from a lower count in print, the European average online outstrips the Irish equivalent, at 7.6 compared with 5.3.

	Medium	Break.	Inter.	Service	Entert.	News	Ads	Self-promo
Table 6.5: Text pointers by target content type (number of pointers)								
Print	Irish Times	0	1	1	0	7	0	0
	Irish Independent	0	1	1	4	3	1	0
	Irish Examiner	0	0	0	0	9	2	0
	Ir average	**0.0**	**0.7**	**0.7**	**1.3**	**6.3**	**1.0**	**0.0**
	Eu average	**0.0**	**0.4**	**0.9**	**0.3**	**3.9**	**1.4**	**0.5**
Online	Irish Times	1	8	1	1	23	0	5
	Irish Independent	1	9	8	2	37	11	24
	Irish Examiner	1	8	7	1	29	1	25
	Ir average	**1.0**	**8.3**	**5.3**	**1.3**	**29.7**	**4.0**	**18.0**
	Eu average	**0.4**	**6.4**	**7.6**	**2.0**	**23.7**	**3.5**	**10.3**

Interaction and communication: Here, the shift is even more pronounced, with the Irish average rising from 0.7 to 8.3 online, where the EU figure lags slightly, at 6.4. There is an even spread across the Irish titles online, at 8 each for the *Times* and *Examiner* and 9 in the case of the *Independent*.

Advertising: Text pointers to adverts are relatively rare across platforms, but nevertheless show a significant relative increase online compared with print, in Europe up from 1.5 to 3.5, and in Ireland up from 1 to 4. All of this increase is accounted for by the *Independent*, with 11 links to ads, while the *Times* and *Examiner* remain static or fall.

Self-promotion: Links to content promoting the news organization itself or its products and services rise steeply online, from total absence in print in Ireland (though with a trace of activity showing for Europe) to an average of 18 online. Such links make a relatively modest entry in the *Times's* online edition, at 5, but the *Independent* and the *Examiner* heavily exploit this feature and carry several multiples of that, with 24 and 25 respectively. Hence, the Irish mean is raised to 18, compared with 10.3 for Europe.

Entertainment: Once again, the *Independent* figures most strongly in terms of movement, but this time decreasing its links in the category. Overall numbers are low, with 1.3 for Ireland in print and online, but with a higher European score of 2.

Target content of text pointers by percentage

Table 6.6 represents how the text pointers are distributed between the content categories, as a proportion of the number of pointers (as distinct to the space dedicated to them).

Table 6.6: Text pointers by target content type (% of number)								
	Medium	**Break.**	**Inter.**	**Service**	**Enter.**	**News**	**Ads**	**Self-promo**
Print	Irish Times	0.0	11.1	11.1	0.0	77.8	0.0	0.0
	Irish Independent	0.0	10.0	10.0	40.0	30.0	10.0	0.0
	Irish Examiner	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	81.8	18.2	0.0
	Ir average	**0.0**	**7.0**	**7.0**	**13.3**	**63.2**	**9.4**	**0.0**
	Eu average	**0.0**	**5.0**	**9.9**	**3.6**	**36.6**	**7.5**	**8.3**
Online	Irish Times	2.6	20.5	2.6	2.6	59.0	0.0	12.8
	Irish Independent	1.1	9.8	8.7	2.2	40.2	12.0	26.1
	Irish Examiner	1.4	11.1	9.7	1.4	40.3	1.4	34.7
	Ir average	**1.7**	**13.8**	**7.0**	**2.0**	**46.5**	**4.5**	**24.5**
	Eu average	**0.7**	**12.6**	**13.8**	**3.6**	**43.9**	**6.5**	**19.0**

News: Overall, news shows a significant drop in its share of text pointers, with the Irish average falling from 63.2% to 46.5% – this in spite of the large rise in the number of pointers for this content type. The *Times* and the *Examiner* come down from highs of 77.8 and 81.8 respectively in print, while the *Independent*, which in print registers a more modest 30%, is the only title to increase its share. The Irish average in print, influenced by the front page indices of the *Times* and *Examiner*, comes out at 63.2%, almost double the European mean. However, online, the national and international values converge, at 46.5% (Ireland) and 43.9% (Europe).

Breaking news: As numbers of items of this type are small online (there is none in print), so also are the proportions, although the *Times* gives considerably more space to its single item, and the Irish average online is notably higher than the European.

Service information: The proportion of text pointers of this type remains static overall in Ireland, at 7% for both print and online, though two titles shift considerably in opposite directions, with the *Times* dropping from 11.1% in print to 2.6% online and the *Examiner* increasing from 0 to 9.7%, with the *Independent* relatively stable. The European average, already higher in print, increases the gap as newspapers move online, up to 13.8%, almost double the Irish figure.

Interaction and communication: The *Times* shows a strong shift in this category, increasing the proportion of its pointers from an already relatively high 11.1% in print to a striking 20.5% online. The *Independent* remains relatively unchanged, while the *Examiner*, with no such links in print, increases its quotient online to 11.1%. In spite of these large additions, the Irish average online is only marginally higher than that in Europe, the print average of which is lower.

Advertising: There is also relatively large movement in advertising pointers, with the *Examiner* dropping from 18.2% in print (based on just two pointers) to 1.4% online. However, the *Independent* sees less change, with 10% in print growing to 12% online, and the *Times* with no such pointer in either format. While the Irish average drops significantly, the proportions at European level remain of the same order, decreasing from 7.5% to 6.5%.

Self-promotion: There is a strong increase in this category's presence as measured in this way. The European average rises from 8.3% in print to 19% online; but the Irish shift is stronger again, from 0 to 24.5%. The Irish titles vary greatly in their implementation, with the *Times* the most modest at 12.8% but with the *Examiner* showing a dramatic change, with more than a third of pointers, at 34.7%, used in this way.

Entertainment: Once again, this category shows a drop in the Irish context, from 13.3% in print – mainly due to the heavy contribution of the *Independent* – to 2% online. In Europe as a whole, however, the proportions online and off are the same, at 3.6%.

Table 6.7 shows the use of graphic pointers and their target content types. Irish newspapers eschew such devices entirely in print. In Europe as a whole, offline, the primary use for such pointers is for self-promotion, with an average of 1.1, although there is some use of them in relation to other forms of content.

Table 6.7: Graphic pointers by target content type (number of pointers)								
	Medium	**Break.**	**Inter.**	**Service**	**Entert.**	**News**	**Ads**	**Self-promo**
Print	Irish Times	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Irish Independent	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Irish Examiner	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Ir average	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**
	Eu average	**0.0**	**0.1**	**0.1**	**0.0**	**0.5**	**0.1**	**1.1**
Online	Irish Times	0	0	1	0	1	1	2
	Irish Independent	0	1	1	0	6	1	1
	Irish Examiner	1	0	0	0	8	0	0
	Ir average	**0.3**	**0.3**	**0.7**	**0.0**	**5.0**	**0.7**	**1.0**
	Eu average	**0.2**	**0.8**	**1.1**	**0.5**	**2.2**	**1.3**	**2.7**

News: Online, Irish newspapers make considerably greater use of graphic pointers to news, with an average of 5 compared with Europe's 2.2. Where the *Times's* role in this outcome is peripheral, since it has only one such element, the *Independent* and especially the *Examiner* strongly favour these pointers, with 6 and 8 instances respectively.

Other: Use of graphic pointers is limited in relation to other categories of content, and both European and Irish online counts are low, confined to 0 or 1 in the case of the latter, except where the *Times* deploys two such links to self-promotional material.

Advertising content

While advertising is not directly linked to journalism and editorial concerns, its manifestations in print and online are instructive as to publishers' intentions and the evolution of the web format.

Table 6.8 shows Ireland with a markedly higher proportion of page space devoted to advertising, both in print and online, although the difference is less pronounced as a proportion of items on the page.

Table 6.8: Advertising content (% of space and number)									
		% of space used on page			Number of items			% of total items on page		
	Medium	**Jobs**	**Class.**	**Comm**	**Jobs**	**Class.**	**Comm.**	**Jobs**	**Class.**	**Comm.**
Print	Irish Times	0.0	0.0	17.9	0	0	1	0.0	0.0	3.7
	Irish Independent	0.0	0.0	19.9	0	0	2	0.0	0.0	11.8
	Irish Examiner	0.0	0.0	16.9	0	0	1	0.0	0.0	12.5
	Ir average	**0.0**	**0.0**	**18.2**	**0.0**	**0.0**	**1.3**	**0.0**	**0.0**	**9.3**
	Eu average	**0.0**	**0.0**	**8.0**	**0.0**	**0.0**	**1.7**	**0.1**	**0.2**	**9.8**
Online	Irish Times	0.0	0.0	10.3	0	0	2	0.0	0.0	8.3
	Irish Independent	0.0	0.0	20.5	0	0	9	0.0	0.0	16.4
	Irish Examiner	0.0	0.0	9.1	0	0	4	0.0	0.0	14.3
	Ir average	**0.0**	**0.0**	**13.3**	**0.0**	**0.0**	**5.0**	**0.0**	**0.0**	**13.0**
	Eu average	**0.0**	**0.4**	**6.8**	**0.0**	**0.5**	**3.3**	**0.1**	**1.4**	**11.3**

It can be seen that levels of advertising other than that categorized as commercial are minor to negligible, though with the Irish titles allowing less space for jobs and classifieds in each situation. Overall, the level of commercial advertising among the titles falls back significantly online, from 18.2% to 13.3%, whereas the European average remains stable in the transition, with a slight fall to 6.8%. *The Irish*

Independent, however, maintains the importance of advertising in the online edition, and thus stands out with, at 20.5%, almost treble the European norm. Differences in advertising as a proportion of total items are less pronounced. In Ireland, print advertising is more important in terms of total content space than as expressed by the total number of items, reflecting the larger sizes of print ads. Online, the relative proportions are almost equal, as individual ad size diminishes.

Pointers to advertising

Table 6.9, below, shows the presence of pointers, both textual and graphic, linking to job, classified and print advertising respectively. In print, it can be seen that text pointers to such content are virtually absent in Irish newspapers. Online, the pattern is similar, with the *Independent* again proving the exceptional case, with 11 such pointers to classified advertising. Graphic pointers are similarly absent in print (although such pointers to classified and commercial ads do register, albeit weakly, in Europe as a whole). Online, both the *Times* and the *Independent* move to make use of graphic pointers for classifieds, bringing the Irish average well above the European for this element.

	Medium	Text pointers: jobs (no.)	Text pointers: class. (no.)	Text pointers: comm (no.)	Job %	Class. %	Comm. %	Graphic pointers: jobs	Graphic pointers: class.	Graphic pointers: comm	Job %	Class %	Comm %
Table 6.9: Pointers to advertising content (% of number)													
Print	Irish Times	0	0	0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	Irish Independent	0	1	0	0.0	10.0	0.0	0	0	0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	Irish Examiner	0	2	0	0.0	18.2	0.0	0	0	0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	Ir average	**0.0**	**1.0**	**0.0**	**0.0**	**9.4**	**0.0**	**0.0**	**0.0**	**0.0**	**0.0**	**0.0**	**0.0**
	Eu average	**0.1**	**0.9**	**0.3**	**0.7**	**5.4**	**1.4**	**0.0**	**0.1**	**0.0**	**0.1**	**2.1**	**1.5**
Online	Irish Times	0	0	0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0	1	0	0.0	20.0	0.0
	Irish Independent	0	11	0	0.0	12.0	0.0	0	1	0	0.0	10.0	0.0
	Irish Examiner	1	0	0	1.4	0.0	0.0	0	0	0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	Ir average	**0.3**	**3.7**	**0.0**	**0.5**	**4.0**	**0.0**	**0.0**	**0.7**	**0.0**	**0.0**	**10.0**	**0.0**
	Eu average	**0.7**	**1.7**	**1.1**	**1.4**	**3.0**	**2.1**	**0.2**	**0.3**	**0.8**	**4.0**	**3.2**	**6.7**

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<u>Access and revenue</u>

Table 6.10 refers to alternative methods deployed to 'monetize' websites (with no values recorded for print editions, other than subscription).

Table 6.10: Other types of advertising and revenues						
	Medium	**Pop-up ads**	**Classified site**	**Archive costs**	**Classified costs**	**Reg. fee**
Online	Irish Times	0	1	4	1	6
	Irish Independent	0	1	2	2	2
	Irish Examiner	1	0	1	0	1
	Ir average	**0.3**	**0.7**	**2.3**	**1.0**	**3.0**
	Eu average	**0.3**	**0.7**	**2.5**	**1.1**	**1.7**

Values here represent scales of access, from free to subscription, or else values ascribed no/yes (0/1) answers indicating the absence or presence of the relevant feature. Only the *Examiner* has pop-up ads; conversely, it is alone in not having a classified ads site. The *Times* requires a subscription for use of its archives, while the *Independent* requires registration, but no fee, and the *Examiner* allows free access to all. The value of 2 accorded the *Independent* under Classifieds indicates that users must be registered to use this feature, whereas access is free at the *Times*. The *Times* requires a subscription fee for viewing the website other than the home page (and a few unrestricted items), while the *Examiner* allows free access to news for everyone, and the *Independent* takes a position between the two, requiring registration but not payment. Irish sites' averages track European norms quite closely, except in registration: here, where the European norm approximates to a requirement for registration, the *Times's* subscription model (since abandoned), and consequently the Irish value, stand apart.

<u>Self promotion items and pointers</u>

Table 6.11 shows the incidence of self-promotion items on the front page, as well as text and graphic pointers to self-promotion elsewhere within newspapers and websites.

Table 6.11: Self-promotion items, text pointers, and graphic pointers								
	Medium	**% of space***	**Item no.**	**% of items**	**text pointer no.**	**% text pointers**	**graphic pointers no.**	**% graphic pointers**
Print	Irish Times	5.5	3	11.1	0	0.0	0	0.0
	Irish Independent	6.6	2	11.8	0	0.0	0	0.0
	Irish Examiner	5.2	3	37.5	0	0.0	0	0.0
	Ir average	**5.8**	**2.7**	**20.1**	**0.0**	**0.0**	**0.0**	**0.0**
	Eu average*	**12.9**	**3.8**	**22.1**	**0.5**	**8.4**	**1.2**	**35.8**
Online	Irish Times	1.5	1	4.2	5	12.8	2	40.0
	Irish Independent	5.5	3	5.5	24	26.1	1	10.0
	Irish Examiner	0.0	0	0.0	25	34.7	0	0.0
	Ir average	**2.3**	**1.3**	**3.2**	**18.0**	**24.5**	**1.0**	**16.7**
	Eu average*	**6.6**	**3.7**	**12.3**	**10.5**	**18.6**	**2.9**	**37.2**

While levels in Irish titles are low at the outset in print, they drop markedly online, with none in the *Examiner*. Online, according to all measurements, Irish titles online carry much fewer items than the European norm. However, Irish news sites make greater use of text pointers in this category. With none in their print editions, the *Examiner* and *Independent* carry 25 and 24 respectively, while the *Times* registers a more modest 5, counterbalanced by a greater presence of graphic pointers. Overall, graphic pointers can be seen to be less utilized by Irish newspapers compared with the European average (which in this table excludes Germany).

News characteristics

This section is focused on reporting of data collected in respect of the news content of the print and online editions.

Type of news item on front page (% of items)

The number of news items from the 15 most important elements on the front page,
and the proportion of them represented by standalone headlines, teasers, briefs, and
caption stories is shown in Table 6.12. The *Irish Examiner* print edition can be seen to
be an outlier due to its low count of news items foregrounded on its first page (it does
not carry an index blurbing inside stories) but its practice converges with the norm
online, rising to 15, which is consistent with all of the Irish titles but significantly
higher than the European average, at 12.

Table 6.12: Type of news item on front page (% of selected items in outlet, mean)								
	Medium	**No. of items**	**Full article**	**Headline**	**Teaser**	**Brief**	**Caption**	**Other**
Print	Irish Times	15	3	0.0	73.3	0.0	6.7	20.0
	Irish Independent	14	4	0.0	71.4	0.0	0.0	28.6
	Irish Examiner	5	3	0.0	0.0	20.0	20.0	60.0
	Ir average	**11.3**	**3.3**	**0.0**	**48.3**	**6.7**	**8.9**	**36.2**
	Eu average	**10.5**	**n/a**	**12.9**	**38.7**	**10.3**	**7.9**	**30.3**
Online	Irish Times	15	0	0.0	93.3	0.0	6.7	0.0
	Irish Independent	15	0	73.3	26.7	0.0	0.0	0.0
	Irish Examiner	15	0	53.3	40.0	0.0	6.7	0.0
	Ir average	**15**	**0.0**	**42.2**	**53.3**	**0.0**	**4.4**	**0.0**
	Eu average	**12.4**	**n/a**	**25.5**	**53.4**	**8.9**	**6.7**	**5.1**

It is worth bearing in mind when assessing the data that a shift in the *Examiner's* story
count can impact strongly on the Irish average, and so it should be emphasized that
the figures here are indicative and certainly not intended to be read as statistically
rigorous. Conversely, in each of the Irish titles online, no full news articles are
presented. Values shown in this column are absolute, where those for others represent
percentages of the overall item count. There is no European average available in the
figures extracted from the group dataset. Overall, more use is made of the generally
shorter forms of news items as the editions move online, although items defined as
briefs are fewer in number. The *Independent* shifts its emphasis from teasers to

headlines only, and the *Examiner* adopts both, where its print edition has neither. However, Irish implementation of such features remains markedly lower than in European practice generally. European newspapers online further extend their already relatively strong use of headlines, teasers, briefs and captions.

News items on secondary pages (% of items)

Table 6.13 classifies headlines, teasers and caption stories present on the front page and then turning out to a secondary page. These values are based on a small number of incidences. However, they indicate that Irish titles generally tend to be more oriented than the European norm towards straight news, and that this aspect is reinforced online, where the most prominent articles continued off the front page are almost exclusively news. This does not mean that there is never follow-through from individual items or links to analysis, commentary or colour from Irish front pages online: what is indicated is that in each case there is none (or very few) from among the 15 most important elements as presented on the front page.

Table 6.13: Type of news item – complete item (% of 15 selected items in outlet, mean)						
	Medium	**News**	**Colour**	**Comment.**	**Anal.**	**Other**
Print	Irish Times	86.7	0.0	6.7	0.0	6.7
	Irish Independent	92.9	0.0	0.0	7.1	0.0
	Irish Examiner	60.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	40.0
	Ir average	**79.8**	**0.0**	**2.2**	**2.4**	**15.6**
	Eu average	**59.9**	**2.5**	**4.7**	**5.8**	**23.3**
Online	Irish Times*	100.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	Irish Independent	100.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	Irish Examiner	93.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	6.7
	Ir average	**97.8**	**0.0**	**0.0**	**0.0**	**2.2**
	Eu average	**67.6**	**5.5**	**2.6**	**4.3**	**17.7**
	*based on 14 items, as one item has not been coded (rule regarding C021 in codebook)					

Regional focus

The distribution of coverage by geographic focus is shown in Table 6.14, below. Perhaps the most salient feature here is the preponderance of national domestic news

in the European sample generally with, in contrast, a stronger showing for non-national (European) news in Irish titles, with the pattern more pronounced online, where the Irish outlets register 26.7% against the wider average of just 6.2%. The positions are reversed with respect to international news in print – Irish titles lag markedly in such coverage – but this gap is closed considerably online, with an increase to 13.3%, compared with 17.4% for Europe as a whole. Also noteworthy is the emphasis on local/regional news in the Irish titles, even as the proportion of content devoted to this category falls online in Ireland and in the wider sample, to 24.5% and 12.1% respectively.

Table 6.14: Regional focus of news item (% of selected items in outlet)								
	Medium	**Local reg.**	**Dom.**	**Nat. Eur.**	**Eur.**	**Nat. Int.**	**Int.**	**Other**
Print	Irish Times	20.0	33.3	6.7	26.7	0.0	13.3	0.0
	Irish Independent	28.6	35.7	0.0	28.6	0.0	7.1	0.0
	Irish Examiner	60.0	40.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	Ir average	**36.2**	**36.3**	**2.2**	**18.4**	**0.0**	**6.8**	**0.0**
	Eu average	**13.5**	**56.8**	**4.9**	**6.1**	**4.0**	**13.3**	**1.5**
Online	Irish Times	20.0	40.0	6.7	20.0	0.0	13.3	0.0
	Irish Independent	26.7	26.7	0.0	33.3	0.0	13.3	0.0
	Irish Examiner	26.7	33.3	0.0	26.7	0.0	13.3	0.0
	Ir average	**24.5**	**33.3**	**2.2**	**26.7**	**0.0**	**13.3**	**0.0**
	Eu average	**12.1**	**53.4**	**5.4**	**6.2**	**2.5**	**17.4**	**3.0**

News item topics

Some changes occur in the mix of news topics as newspapers move online, as shown in Table 6.15, below. Coverage of economics increases online, with this subject's share of Irish items at 24.5%, compared with 17.7% for Europe as a whole. Coverage of social, health and welfare issues drops across the board online, but with Irish proportions remaining higher than the wider average. Nature, environment etc. has a stronger showing in Ireland in print, dropping off slightly online, whereas the European-wide emphasis is stable. Crime, defence and politics show broadly similar movement, with lower coverage in Ireland but closing the gap or, in the case of defence, slightly overtaking the wider norm, online. However, even with an increase

online, Irish political coverage, at 8.9%, remains at a much lower level than in Europe generally, at 19.5%. Even though the *Irish Examiner* has no sports items, on average, Irish newspapers carry significantly more than the European norm, with this divergence continuing online, at 13.3% and 7.6% respectively.

	Table 6.15: Topic of news item (% of selected items in outlet)														
	Medium	**Econ.**	**Social/ health**	**Nature**	**Crime**	**Defence**	**Culture**	**Science**	**Media**	**Politics**	**Hum. int.**	**Chron.**	**Sports**	**Educ.**	**Other**
Print	Irish Times	20.0	20.0	13.3	6.7	13.3	0.0	0.0	6.7	6.7	0.0	0.0	13.3	0.0	0.0
	Irish Independent	21.4	14.3	7.1	7.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	7.1	7.1	14.3	21.4	0.0	0.0
	Irish Examiner	0.0	40.0	20.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	20.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	20.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	Ir average	**13.8**	**24.8**	**13.5**	**4.6**	**4.4**	**0.0**	**6.7**	**2.2**	**4.6**	**2.4**	**11.4**	**11.6**	**0.0**	**0.0**
	Eu average	**14.1**	**10.9**	**6.0**	**14.2**	**8.6**	**5.5**	**2.7**	**2.5**	**17.9**	**5.1**	**1.4**	**5.9**	**5.2**	**0.0**
Online	Irish Times	26.7	13.3	13.3	6.7	13.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	13.3	0.0	0.0	13.3	0.0	0.0
	Irish Independent	26.7	13.3	13.3	13.3	0.0	6.7	0.0	6.7	13.3	0.0	0.0	6.7	0.0	0.0
	Irish Examiner	20.0	13.3	6.7	13.3	13.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	13.3	0.0	20.0	0.0	0.0
	Ir average	**24.5**	**13.3**	**11.1**	**11.1**	**8.9**	**2.2**	**0.0**	**2.2**	**8.9**	**4.4**	**0.0**	**13.3**	**0.0**	**0.0**
	Eu average	**17.7**	**9.4**	**5.6**	**12.8**	**7.8**	**5.2**	**2.1**	**2.5**	**19.5**	**4.1**	**1.5**	**7.6**	**4.3**	**0.0**

The extent to which the news content of online editions reflects, or is the same as, print content, is shown in Table 6.16.

Table 6.16: Content repurposing online						
Medium	**Not in print**	**Ident.**	**Diff. headline***	**Diff. pointers***	**< print**	**> print**
Irish Times	0.0	86.7	6.7	0.0	6.7	6.7
Irish Independent	0.0	100.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Irish Examiner	33.3	13.3	0.0	0.0	6.7	46.7
Ir average	**11.1**	**66.7**	**2.2**	**0.0**	**4.5**	**17.8**
Eu average	**29.6**	**35.5**	**1.8**	**5.3**	**21.2**	**8.4**
*subset of 'Identical', therefore rows do not add up to 100						

Here, only the *Examiner* runs stories on its front page, or linked from there, which are not to be found in the print edition, and this title also runs a large proportion of items (46.7%) that are longer than the print version (> print). At the other extreme, the *Independent's* content is entirely identical; the *Times's* content, while showing slight variations in headlines and in length, with some stories longer and others shorter, also for the most part matches the paper version, with a score of 86.7%. Across the three titles, no Irish story is augmented by hyperlinks. On average, European newspapers add significantly more content to their online editions than do Irish ones (29.6% as against 11.1%), are considerably less likely to have identical texts, to add more pointers, and to edit stories and present them in a shortened format online (21.2% compared with 4.5% in Ireland). In reading and interpreting this table, it should be noted that stories with different headlines and those with different pointers are a subset of 'identical' stories; i.e. stories are assessed as identical or not only on the basis of their body text.

As can be observed from Table 6.17, the Irish national dailies devote more space online to breaking news, show more such items on the front page, carry a higher number of items in this category, and have more links to such content than the European averages.

Table 6.17: Breaking news online				
Medium	**% space**	**Number visible**	**Total number**	**Pointers 1/0**
Irish Times	0.6	1.0	16.0	1
Irish Independent	3.0	6.0	53.0	1
Irish Examiner	6.1	6.0	27.0	1
Ir average	**3.2**	**4.3**	**32.0**	**1.0**
Eu average	**1.1**	**1.0**	**7.0**	**0.3**

In each case, across the measured attributes, the Irish value is three or four times the European average. While the proportions of space are small – 3.2% in Ireland – it should be noted that a feature not captured by the coding alone is that breaking news is presented prominently, either by way of positioning near the top of the page, or by animation or other graphic treatment. The *Independent's* breaking news story count of 53 is particularly striking, with the Irish mean at 32 and the European count much lower, at 7.

Authorship

Table 6.18, below, provides a view of the authorship or origin of the articles selected for study, as identified in the news outlet. A marked distinction here is between articles authored by journalists belonging to the news outlet (although potentially including freelance reporters) and externally sourced copy. While the European average of work produced by journalists falls away noticeably, from 78.1% to 63.6%, the trend in Ireland is reversed, although this is largely due to the change evident in the singular practice of the *Irish Examiner*, and based on a small number of print items. While the *Times* shows an increase to 93.3% in stories credited to journalists,

the *Independent* registers a strong decrease, with a corresponding rise in Unknown, i.e. unattributed work, at 33.3%. On the face of it, Irish titles do not contribute to the general rise across Europe of news agency material, from 3% in print to 11.7% online.

Table 6.18: Origin (% of items by author)							
	Medium	**News agency**	**Third party**	**Journalist**	**Ind. author**	**Unknown**	**Other**
Print	Irish Times	0	0	86.7	0	6.7	6.7
	Irish Independent	0	0	85.7	0	14.3	0
	Irish Examiner	0	0	20	0	80	0
	Ir average	**0.0**	**0.0**	**64.1**	**0.0**	**33.7**	**2.2**
	Eu average	**3.3**	**0.3**	**77.7**	**1.6**	**15.8**	**1.2**
Online	Irish Times	0	0	93.3	0	6.7	0
	Irish Independent	0	0	60	6.7	33.3	0
	Irish Examiner	0	0	93.3	0	6.7	0
	Ir average	**0.0**	**0.0**	**82.2**	**2.2**	**15.6**	**0.0**
	Eu average	**11.7**	**0.4**	**63.5**	**1.8**	**21.3**	**1.2**

However, it is likely that this element is masked in the Irish context by the common practice of not declaring agency copy, thus adding to the number of items listed as Unknown, into which category falls a third of the *Independent's* story count online.

Story sources

Government and business sources, shown in Table 6.19, below, are prevalent in Europe generally, but, with the importance of this category more pronounced in Ireland, at 65.9% in print and 77.8% online, compared to European averages of 53.5% and 58.1% respectively.

The online value for *The Irish Times* in this source category is an extraordinary 93.3%. Also interesting is the consistency of Irish media in eschewing written sources, such as press releases (or at least not crediting them) with a percentage rating of 4.4% both in print and online, compared with, in the European averages, almost quadruple (print) or triple (online) those levels. Personal sources also feature strongly in print and online, in Ireland and in the European norms, while showing a rise in Irish

online newspapers to 20%, whereas the role of bystanders falls away as the Irish titles move to the web. Values for other categories are relatively minor: however, it is worth noting the lack of connection between print or online editions where each might function as a source for its corresponding outlet – as opposed to content repurposing.

Table 6.19: Source (% of items with source)

	Medium	Corresp. edition	Newspap.	Radio	TV	Online	Press conf.	Mag.	Written doc.	Personal	Govt./ bus.	NGO	News agency	Bystand.	Anon.	Other
Print	Irish Times	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	13.3	0.0	13.3	13.3	73.3	6.7	6.7	0.0	0.0	0.0
	Irish Independent	0.0	21.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	28.6	64.3	21.4	0.0	28.6	0.0	0.0
	Irish Examiner	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	60.0	20.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	20.0
	Ir average	**0.0**	**7.1**	**0.0**	**0.0**	**0.0**	**4.4**	**0.0**	**4.4**	**14.0**	**65.9**	**16.0**	**2.2**	**9.5**	**0.0**	**6.7**
	Eu average	**0.6**	**5.3**	**1.4**	**2.5**	**0.7**	**9.8**	**0.9**	**16.6**	**22.5**	**53.5**	**20.4**	**3.8**	**5.5**	**3.1**	**4.8**
Online	Irish Times	0.0	6.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	6.7	0.0	13.3	20.0	93.3	13.3	6.7	0.0	0.0	0.0
	Irish Independent	0.0	13.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	13.3	73.3	26.7	6.7	0.0	0.0	0.0
	Irish Examiner	0.0	0.0	6.7	0.0	0.0	20.0	0.0	0.0	26.7	66.7	33.3	0.0	0.0	6.7	6.7
	Ir average	**0.0**	**6.7**	**2.2**	**0.0**	**0.0**	**8.9**	**0.0**	**4.4**	**20.0**	**77.8**	**24.4**	**4.5**	**0.0**	**2.2**	**2.2**
	Eu average	**3.6**	**6.6**	**0.9**	**3.5**	**1.9**	**9.2**	**0.4**	**14.3**	**21.3**	**58.1**	**20.1**	**5.7**	**6.5**	**4.3**	**3.5**

Online characteristics

<u>Internet indices</u>

A range of features that are specifically (though not necessarily exclusively) related to the Internet and present in the front page or in articles linked from the front page, are captured in Table 6.20, with 0 as the lowest score, representing complete absence, and 1 as the highest possible score.

Table 6.20: Indices for Internet features, 0 (lowest score/not present) - 1 (highest score)							
	Medium	Fdbk.	Discuss.	Custom.	Multimed.	Links	Immed.
Print	Irish Times	0.38	0.00	0.00	0.08	0.02	
	Irish Independent	0.08	0.00	0.00	0.13	0.03	
	Irish Examiner	0.08	0.00	0.00	0.07	0.08	
	Ir average	**0.18**	**0.00**	**0.00**	**0.09**	**0.04**	
	Eu average	**0.17**	**0.02**	**0.03**	**0.10**	**0.05**	
Online	Irish Times	0.68	0.00	0.38	0.04	0.01	0.50
	Irish Independent	0.46	0.00	0.06	0.02	0.00	0.50
	Irish Examiner	0.54	0.25	0.38	0.14	0.00	0.50
	Ir average	**0.56**	**0.08**	**0.27**	**0.07**	**0.00**	**0.50**
	Eu average	**0.38**	**0.16**	**0.34**	**0.09**	**0.08**	**0.47**

User feedback: this is an index based on the publication on the front page and in articles of contact addresses, invitations to submit a query or comment, publication of author email addresses, and references to letters or messages to the editor or to other readers. *The Irish Times* registers a high score here, of 0.38, with the *Independent* and the *Examiner* considerably lower, pulling the Irish average down to slightly lower than the European, at 0.2. Online, the *Times* maintains its top slot, with its index increasing to 0.68. However, the other titles close the gap, and the Irish average is 0.56 compared to a European score of 0.4.

Discussion: this index expresses the presence of polls, various forms of forum, links to forums, and chat rooms. It can be seen that European newspapers register a score here, even in print, probably as a consequence of references (links) to the online edition. Online, the only Irish newspaper to post a positive value here is the *Examiner*, whose forums bring it above the average European practice of 0.2.

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Customization: this composite measurement expresses the reader's ability to adjust the appearance or choose between languages, to switch geographical editions, or to personalize the content. It also registers the presence of a search tool. The *Times* and the *Examiner* each score 0.38 here; the *Independent*, which has no search function, registers 0.06, while, overall, European online newspapers generally score 0.3.

Multimedia: this index represents a combination of 25 types of content or their characteristics, from photos and illustrations to sound, video and animation, their sizes and durations, and whether they are linked from the front page or articles on secondary pages. Values here are low across the board, but lower online, reflecting the sizing down of images. Only the *Examiner* shows an increase in such content, registering 0.14, with the Irish average at 0.07 and Europe overall at 0.09.

Hyperlinks: this measures the degree of linking from articles to points in the same site and to material in external sites, with the latter more heavily weighted, as such links are considered to represent a higher degree of connectedness. Perhaps contrary to intuitive expectations, the online editions are less linked than their print counterparts: both the *Independent* and the *Examiner* show zero values here, while the *Times* shows a trace level, at .01. While the European group as a whole records a mean score of just 0.08, Irish newspapers lag far behind in this respect. The low usage of hyperlinks in the context of editorial content contrasts strongly with the adoption of this simple technology for site navigation.

Immediacy: this index refers to the frequency, placement and prominence of breaking news. Each of the Irish newspapers, and with them the Irish average score, lie at 0.50 for this attribute, compared with a European level of 0.47.

Endnotes

[1] The first *independent.ie* website was an entirely corporate affair, and simply carried details of the group's Irish and international titles.

[2] While it may be tempting intuitively to attribute the absence of breaking news in paper editions to the particular limitations of print technology, it is worth bearing in mind that newspapers, even when produced in hot metal technology, were easily capable of carrying breaking news, including sports results, in short format in a designated box, and frequently did so. Breaking news, therefore, is not a novel feature that should be associated exclusively with electronic media, whether analogue or digital, although the flexibility and speed of online publishing affords the option of more regular implementation.

Chapter 7: Data reporting – description

Introduction

In the preceding chapter, one of this study's principal methodological components, the content analysis of front pages and linked materials, provides rich, principally numerical data on the composition of news outlets' prioritized presentation of news and other elements. These data are complemented in this chapter with a thorough description of the design and composition of each of the three newspapers' relevant print and online editions. While necessarily selective, this descriptive material is intended to add detail not captured by the content analysis, especially in relation to the online editions, reflecting their internal, self-referencing complexity, as well as serving as a more contextualized qualitative survey of the sites. It thus underpins more solidly the analytical discussion which follows in Chapter 9. Examination of complete online editions would potentially entail an enormous quantum of description and would serve little purpose: accordingly, as with the content analysis, this portion of the study is also confined principally to front pages and to pages directly linked from front pages, and sub-limited in turn to story pages and breaking news pages. Screenshots of relevant web pages are reproduced within this chapter. Images of print editions are not included, due to uneven access to quality reproductions of full pages.

Print editions

Each of the three print editions follows a conventional, modern, modular[1] newspaper layout, although the *Examiner's* design is more open and, therefore, more distinctive in appearance.

Irish Examiner: The front page of the *Examiner* is relatively simple in its design, with each of a limited number of elements given significant space in the layout. It is

topped, in common with the front pages of the other publications, by the newspaper's title: '*Irish Examiner*' is printed in a faux-archaic, sans serif typeface of 96pt size.[2] Immediately below, spread across the width of the page, are three large blurbs, two of them illustrated with photographs, promoting an inside news story and two competitions. Underneath the blurbs, the newspaper's website address – *www.irishexaminer.com* – is set in a reverse bar which also serves as the folio, with date, volume and price information.

The page is set on a modern, five-column grid (more traditional practice uses more columns of narrower width), dominated by a strikingly large two-column image of the aftermath of a train derailment, dramatically cropped and sized so that it covers much of the depth available, and topped with a single-line reverse headline covering its width. There are three news stories, each of them by-lined, on the page. The lead story concerns political difficulty over a forthcoming ban on smoking in public places. While the introduction of the ban by the then Minister for Health, Micheál Martin, would later come to be regarded as a seminal step in health policy, in Ireland and internationally, the story treatment here is in keeping with the *Examiner's* standard front page lead, or 'splash' style. Four lines of 72pt type over two columns are given to the headline. The story has a turn-out line indicating further coverage on pages 12 and 15. The off-lead, or second-most prominent story, occupies a single-column space to the left. It concerns health spending cutbacks, and has a headline of four lines set in 30pt. It includes a brief tinted panel stating in summary the effects of cuts in various geographic centres. The final story on the page, set over two columns, relates to residents' fears over the potential re-development of a waste landfill site in north Cork. Its headline has two lines of a light 30pt serif typeface, and there is a turnout line to page 13. All of the body text in the news stories on the page are set in Roman serif type. Where turnout lines occur, they are accompanied by a small artwork arrow.

The bottom of the page is dominated by a graphic advertisement for a group of motor dealers, which covers the five columns. Underneath is a tint block carrying, in 12pt sans serif type, section page information, along with the bar code and, again, the date. The sections referenced are news, world news, arts, features, opinion, analysis, business, sport, classified advertising, television, and death notices.

Irish Independent: Here, the broadsheet front page carries a full-width masthead, with the name of the paper in large, serif (though unfussy) type and, below, in 12pt type, the folio, dateline and cover price of €1.50, preceded by the web address of the newspaper edition (as opposed to that of the *Unison* portal). The masthead is flanked on one side by a briefly-worded, sans serif blurb in 14pt type, concerning European Parliament constituency boundaries, and by a green harp symbol on the other.

Immediately below, echoing the practice of the *Examiner*, are two large blurbs, one for a lifestyles-type feature story on the male contraceptive pill, the other for a sports story centred on a controversy involving Gaelic football manager Páidí Ó Sé. The layout is constructed on a more traditional, eight-column grid. It is dominated by a large, close-up photograph, set across 3.5 columns, of Arnold Schwarzenegger with his wife, Maria Shriver, pictured voting in the California gubernatorial election which the former actor went on to win. The photograph illustrates what, in typographic terms, is a relatively low-ranked story on the page, with a single-colum headline of four lines of light, 30pt type and with bold, ragged right body type, devices habitually used by the *Independent*, and by other newspapers, to indicate lighter content and tone. So, in spite of its size and its prominent positioning near the top of the page, it is clear to the reader that this is neither the lead nor the off-lead in this edition. Some newspapers, the *Independent* among them, will frequently carry front page images that are not related to an important news story, but which add to the visual design. The *Independent's* lead story, concerns a public dispute between the Minister for Transport, Seamus Brennan, and the national rail company, CIE, over plans for extensive temporary closures of Dublin suburban rail for upgrade work. The story is set in bastard measure (i.e. its type columns do not conform to regular widths), in three legs that comprise 3.5 standard column widths. The headline comprises four lines of 72pt type over the three legs, and there is an image of coverage of the same story from the previous day's edition, with a caption in which the newspaper claims credit for breaking the news in its print edition.

The off-lead, the second-most-important story of the day, the news value of which is expressed by its size, placement and typographical treatment, concerns a junior government minister, Frank Fahey, reported to have dissented from plans for the ban on smoking, being ordered home from holiday in Spain. Even though this story takes

up less space on the page, and is far lower and less prominent than that concerning the California election, it is clear that it is considered to have more substance and relevance for the audience, with this indicated not only by virtue of typography, but also by the presence of a highlighted blurb high in its second of three legs, directing the reader to a related analysis piece on page 16. The front page story also carries a turnout line to page 12.

The final story on the page is a short, three-paragraph item, with three lines of light, 30pt type, on Irish investment in Manchester United Football Club. This story carries references to related items on pages 14 and 16, and also to further coverage on two pages of the sports section. While the *Independent* has little room for it on its front page, the newspaper is seeking to convey to readers that this is nevertheless a significant story.

The smoking ban and the Manchester stories sit in an area formed by two double-column advertisements of equal height, one graphic, containing an image, seeking support for a children's charity, the other type-based but with reversed type on a dark background. The use of such a well is common in broadsheet newspapers, adding to the optical weight towards the bottom of the page which, otherwise, might be rather grey in appearance. Below these two stories, and supporting them, is an index, separated by a heavy rule, of stories from inside pages of the newspaper, with eight teasers, each with a small headline, a one-paragraph blurb and a reference to an inside page. The teasers are dividing under the heading of News (4), Business (2), and Sport (2). Immediately below is a list of sections – personal notices, world news, news analysis, racing, classified advertising, letters, radio and crosswords, television, and family announcements – alongside the barcode.

The Irish Times: This newspaper has the largest broadsheet page, and its masthead, set in large, all-caps serif type across the top, is the biggest of the three. Just as the other two titles run graphic promotions for internal content immediately below the title, so the *Times* has three such items which together reach across the width of the page. One advertises a new education-related page,; another, slightly narrower, highlights a story in the motoring supplement; and the third, and largest, features a foreign correspondent's report from Iraq. Each comes with a two-line, serif headline of 36pt coloured type, a follow-up line of 18pt, and an image, cut out and extending

above the top line in two cases. Above (rather than below, as is the case with the other newspapers), and separated by a moderately heavy rule, is the folio, with, in small, all-caps type, date, price and, to the right, the URL of ireland.com – the latter linking to the newspaper's portal, rather than directly to the online edition.

Although its standard grid is constructed in eight colums, the *Times's* front page grid is based on irregular measures: the main part of the page is set across six columns; however, an index, located on the left of the page and running for its full length beneath the masthead and blurbs, takes up around one and a half columns in width. As with the *Independent*, a large agency photograph of Arnold Schwarzenegger dominates the front page, though in this case it is less arrestingly cropped, and there is no accompanying story. Instead, a reverse heading and a caption provide information and herald further news to come today. As in the case of the *Independent*, and in spite of the item's prominent positioning and size, it is clear that the election in California is not the main story of the day. Rather, a two-line, five-column headline – 'Martin to sign regulations next week for smoking ban' – clearly marks the story below as the lead. The off-lead, which deals with the rail closure controversy, is run in a single column, under a four-line headline of 36pt type, while the third and final principal Page One story, about the Manchester United shares buyout, is given generous space at the bottom of the page, alongside a large three-column graphic ad for Dell PCs. All of the *Times's* front page news stories carry Roman serif headlines – there are no light variants, as with the other two titles.

The index mentioned above is called 'NewsDigest', and is led by a single-paragraph teaser, given additional prominence with a three-line, 30pt headline of heavy, sans serif, concerning political reaction to the train derailment, with a reference to page 6. Downward hierarchical progress within the index is marked by a second teaser, this time with a 16pt headline of two lines in the same typeface, dealing with restrictions on the Freedom of Information Act and with a reference to page 7. There then ensue a number of teasers, categorized under HomeNews (3), WorldNews (2), BusinessNews (2), SportsWednesday (2). Each of these stories is flagged by a few words of inline, bold, sans type, rather than by a conventional headline. Two of the stories (though not the leads in the index) are accompanied by small, headshot images, and each teaser ends with a link to the main story printed inside. There then follows Weather – also

carrying a link to more in-depth treatment – and a further Index to nine areas within the edition, with, finally, the publishers' notice and contact details, statement of recommended retail price, the *ireland.com* web address, again, and, finally, the barcode. Contact details provided include postal address, general telephone number, and separate fax numbers for Newsdesk, Sport, Business and Advertising. No email address is provided.

## Online editions

Front pages

The front pages of each title are revealing in that they provide an insight into the publishing priorities of each newspaper. This is not simply an expression of the preferences of journalists and editors, but, in an evolving environment, shows evidence of a blended outcome of online objectives balanced between editorial, the wider publishing agenda of the news organization, and the perceived capabilities of the new medium. Screenshots of the online editions are provided in this section. (Note that some advertisements, dynamically served from the host website, are not amenable to saving in a static file and are thus greyed out or blank.[3])

Irish Examiner: The home page of the *Irish Examiner* online, hosted at *irishexaminer.com*, is a relatively simple, modular construct, with most content set in one of four vertical columns. At the top of the page, above the four columns, is placed the masthead which, as in the print edition, is in a faux-antique typeface, though online it is set to the left of the page and in a considerably smaller size, in both absolute and relative terms, of approx. 24pt.[4] Its space is shared by the dateline, which is in small sans type, and set right, alongside a similarly-styled link to the home page, not practically relevant on this page, but providing a prominent anchor for users navigating through all other pages of the site.

Immediately below this masthead level are eight buttons linking to separate parts of the online edition – Ireland, World, Sport, Business, Opinions, Sections, Breaking News, and Week In News – each set left in all caps but in a slight, san typeface of no more than 12pt. The words here are part of the button image, rather than composed of text proper, as they cannot be isolated using a browser text selection cursor. The

sections button refers to additional supplements of the newspaper, rather than denoting generic divisions such as news, features, etc. This global[5] links bar is followed by a single-line weather forecast set in small, light, sans type, which traverses the inner two columns of the page layout, and which ends with a link to a more detailed forecast. The online edition places the outer left (Today's News) and right (Breaking News) sections on the same level vertically as the weather line, while the inner two columns – the first containing a search box and a large number of additional navigational links, the second carrying the main news stories on the page – are without such labels.
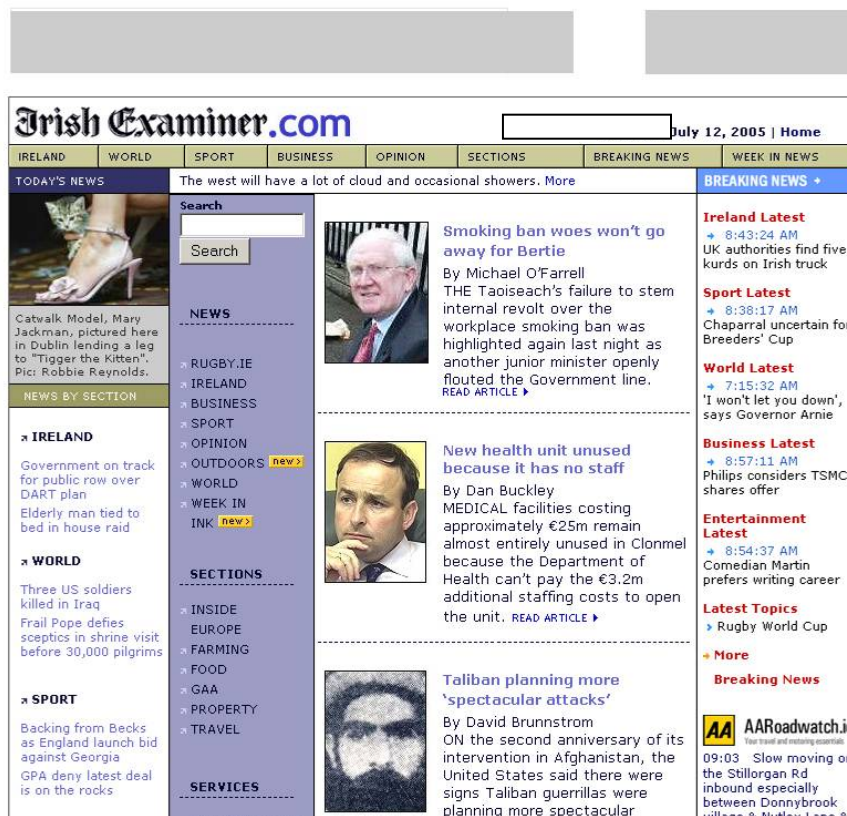
Screenshot 1: The *Irish Examiner* home page top screen. (Note that the date line has not been saved.)

The main news section is perhaps the most striking element of the *Examiner's* home page. This column carries six news stories, each with uniform design treatment: a two-line, sans, bold, blue headline linked to the story page, a thumbnail-sized image placed to the left of a single-paragraph introduction (or intro) set in sans type of about

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12pt, with a by-line above and finishing with a 'Read article' link set in a lighter sans typeface but given prominence by its contrasting blue colour. Captions are not immediately visible, but appear when the mouse is rolled over an image. Stories are separated with a dotted line. With most of the page framed by a light border, this column is allowed some white space[6] in the form of a blank area at the bottom. Four news stories come first in the column, followed by one each from business and sport. The main story on the page is the same as that in the print edition, though with a different, longer and more informally-worded headline: 'Smoking ban woes won't go away for Bertie', and with a longer intro than that published in print. The second story choice is the same as that for the print off-lead, focusing on a controversy over unused medical facilities. Again, the headline differs from the print version, reading slightly more verbosely and informally, but the intro is identical to that found in print.

The following two stories are foreign and do not appear in the print edition front page. The first concerns fears of more attacks by the Taliban in Afghanistan, the second tells of a baby kidnapping investigation in Britain. There then follows a sports story concerning the sacking of a Gaelic football manager, Páudi Ó Sé. The last item in the column relates to a banking takeover.

This column of news stories represents the highest-impact section of the page, by dint of its width and depth, but also because, while not as dynamic as breaking news, it has updated content each day, with each element accompanied by a graphic component. Nevertheless, there is little to distinguish individual stories and to set apart the lead story of the day, and list ranking is the only signal of the relative importance of each story in the eyes of the newspaper and its editors.[7] While the page carries news stories not included in the print front page, it conversely drops the very dramatic image of the trail derailment.

The only concession to purely graphical content is the inclusion of a model's high heel-clad foot, along with a kitten, at the top of the left-most column, 'Today's News'. The image or accompanying text, set on a blue background, do not include a hyperlink to any other explanatory material; no specific event is mentioned, and it is clear that the item is included on the basis of purely visual considerations in order to give optical weight to the top of the column and of the page. Immediately below this visual stop is a heading for 'News by Section', with two hyperlinked story headlines

under each of four headings – Ireland, World, Sport and Business. Each section heading is rendered in bold, sans, all-caps, with generous space top and bottom, and a small arrow graphic (or 'bug') increasing its visual impact, and each is itself a hyperlink, connecting to an index on another page. In spite of its dynamic status as hyperlink text, the type in this context is not coloured. Type for the individual story headline/hyperlinks is small, but is coloured blue and in each case comprises two or three lines, thus increasing its salience.

Overall, the *Examiner* home page runs to a depth of almost three PC screens, and the principal bordered area that encloses its main grid extends to two-and-a-half screens, but the 'News by Section' column fills little more than the first screen, leaving a large area empty and creating a dramatic design effect that further strengthens the presence on the page of these selected stories.

The second column in the page layout is topped by a search field and is otherwise filled with an array of 41 links under the headings of News, Sections, Services and Regional News. Each heading is in bold, all-caps but otherwise plain text, and each link is in Roman all-caps, with a light-coloured version of the graphic bug previously seen in the 'News by Section' column. It is worth looking in some more detail at the organization of this, the principal gathering of navigational links on the page.

News: In spite of the label, this category carries links to a disparate number of resources. *Rugby.ie* is a separate site (its presence reflecting the particular popularity of the sport in Munster); Ireland, Business, Sport, Opinion follow and can be considered self-explanatory; the next link, Outdoors, refers to content from a supplement; World (news) comes next, and last is Week in Ink, a link to a web offering of the highlights from the print edition.

Sections: Included in this category are Inside Europe, referring to content devoted to the EU; Farming; Food; GAA; Property and Travel. Comparing the designations in this category to those in News, it can be seen that there is some confusion as to the various navigational classes and levels: for example, European news is not included in News, Outdoors is not listed with other supplements, and GAA is seen as outside Sport.

Services: Here, items principally relating to the website, such as the Bulletin Board, Chat and Ezine, are listed, along with basic information such as Contacts, Subscriptions and Media Pack. Included also, however, are links to content familiar to print, such as Family Notices, Horoscopes and (again) Weather. This section essentially appears to function as a catch-all for the variety of items and features that do not fit easily into traditional newspaper divisions of content and content types.

Regional News: this category refers to the websites of nine regional newspapers that are part of the Thomas Crosbie Media group.

The page's fourth column is topped by a breaking news section already headlined as part of the horizontal group of elements discussed above. The section is further sub-divided into five sections – Ireland, Sport, World, Business, and Entertainment. The construction of each item is densely complex, in both design and site navigation terms. Each label is qualified as 'Latest' and the headline, which links to the relevant section within breaking news, is rendered in small, 9pt bold type. Directly below each is a small, blue graphic arrow, which indicates a time of publication for each story. Following on the next line is a very brief headline which links to the individual story within breaking news. The Ireland Latest item is expressed thus: 'UK authorities find five kurds (sic) on Irish truck.' The five section-labelled items are followed by one item that represents a variation on the breaking news model. 'Latest Topics' is rendered in a manner typographically similar to the labels, but carries a different graphic pointer bug. This label links to the breaking news section generally. The headline 'Rugby World Cup', which follows below in light type, is linked to a section dedicated to that topic. Next comes a link, More Breaking News, which also directs the reader to the breaking news section and also is in bold type, but accompanied by an orange arrow.

Separated from the Breaking News section by white space, there follows a traffic reports section, provided by the AA. A shallow logo which is the width of the column heads three one-sentence traffic reports, each in 9pt sans type and linked to a separate item on *aaroadwatch.ie*. Next is a larger link promoting AA membership subscriptions, and an enclosing rule. Some of the *Examiner*'s sections are then given further prominence, with a column-width graphic and, on a blue background, a link to each of Farming, Food, and Property, each accompanied by a darker blue graphic

arrow which matches those found reversed in white in the first column. The type signals also are switched again – each link is in bold caps and is followed by a non-hyperlinked short blurb.

The content in each of the page columns is allowed to fill naturally: each column runs to a different depth, creating an open, irregular impression towards the end of the page. The page's grid, which is visibly displayed with hairline rules, is tidied up with an enclosed area of white space in which the copyright notice is placed to the left in small, 6pt type. Supporting the page is a further arrangement of text hyperlinks, set in 8pt type and centred over six widely-spaced lines. These include global links similar, though not identical, to those found in the top navigation bar, along with further section links and the following site function and policy links: privacy policy, copyright information, terms and conditions, subscriptions, feedback, contact details, advertising information, text only version, WAP version, site map, and help.

Irish Independent: This newspaper's home page has a more complex and more highly developed structure and presentation than that of the *Examiner*. While its design similarly is based on four columns, its grid, and consequently each of its columns, is wider, and several significant items within the screen, other than the masthead and associated page furniture, straddle more than one leg, giving the whole a more integrated and dynamic expression. The masthead, the font of which matches that in the print edition, sits across the top of page in the conventional manner, centred and in a relatively large type size of 40pt. To the left of the title sits a hyperlinked, green *unison.ie* logo; to the right sits the green harp, the traditional symbol of Ireland long carried by print editions of the newspaper.

The masthead and associated page furniture are supported by a light grey tint bar made up of three sections. The first section carries, set out at either end, links to USelect (see explanation below, in the context of other interactive offerings), Login/Logout, and Help. The other sections hold a web search text field (the *Independent* archives are not searchable) and a dropdown menu of newspapers within the *Unison* service, including the *Irish Independent* itself, 27 regional titles, and three 'World' outlets belonging to INM, the *New Zealand Herald*, the London *Independent* and *IOL South Africa*. The visual weight of this three-piece bar is also used to append some small items set above and below in small, 8pt, sans serif type. Above, a very

brief weather line giving the expected temperature high and low for the day is accompanied by a graphic cloud that serves as a link to the weather page. A navigational breadcrumb trail indicates the user's position in the site – *unison.ie* being the designated home page, this page is Home > News > Irish Independent, with each term linked to the appropriate landing page. To the right above the bar, 'Today's Date' is carried, matched below by the 'Issue Date', an arrangement apparently intended to allow for browsing of back issues. On the other side, the user is welcomed by their registered first name.

Screenshot 2: The *Irish Independent's* home page top screen

The screen centre, made up of columns two and three, carries the main news content. The top story here is the California elections, with a short intro accompanied by a relatively large image of Arnold Schwarzenegger and his wife, the whole straddling the two columns. The lead story from the print edition, dealing with the rail closures controversy, is relegated to second position, alongside the smoking ban story. Each of

these stories occupies a single column space, while, underneath, the Manchester United investment story covers two columns. Other than single-line hyperlinks, there are no further news stories on the page, and the offering here exactly matches, in story selection if not in ordering and individual item lengths, that provided in the print edition. All of the stories are rendered in 12pt Roman, sans serif type, with the headlines, including that of the lead story, in the same size, but differentiated by their bold setting.

Immediately below this main news section is a dense grouping of promotional and functional links, with an image of the print Property section front page, under the heading Supplements. Under the heading Highlights, there are links to a number of *unison.ie* functional features. These are: 'USelect', a facility that allows readers to customize, within a limited number of options, a personalized home page within the portal; an email newsletter, DeskTop News, a link to a small web screen showing breaking news items, a tool to bookmark the site in the user's browser, and an offer to download mobile phone ringtones from a sister company of the newspaper's.[8] Both the Supplements and Highlights headings are given prominence by being reversed onto blue-grey tint blocks, and, although the type size remains the same, they are in all caps. In contrast, the Archives service, while also in all caps, is a simple black heading, and is also differentiated by a short blurb inviting readers to use the service. Supplements, Highlights and Archive are set off by a dynamically generated advertisement. There follows immediately a single grey reverse bar similar in styling to those above, with four labels that refer to content arranged underneath and set in distinctive narrow legs of small (8pt), sans, all-cap type, with links underlined. Classifieds sits atop text hyperlinks to five categories of advertising. Mobile News is accompanied by a brief blurb telling readers of the facility to receive content via PDA. ISP and Email has links to *Unison's* Internet provider service, to a tutorial for Internet beginners, to PC tech support for subscribers to the ISP service, and to a page offering for purchase a proprietary *Unison* device enabling access to the net via a television set. Media Kit refers to two links to pages addressing potential advertisers, one online and the other print.

A section titled News Headlines follows below, with two columns of hypertext headings, including National (6 items), Europe (2), Irish Business (5), Sport (5) and

Property (4). While the headlines are small, at 8pt upper and lower case, they are bold and underlined. The headings are set in the same small typeface as the sections above but differ in that they are not underlined as are the previous links. Finally, a reverse bar provides impact for a Travel Offers section that carries five promotional items, each with a brief, hyperlinked text element accompanied by a small graphic.

The first column of the layout is made up entirely of links, under nine sometimes overlapping section headings:

News

Sports Desk

Business Xtra

Entertainment

Features

ISP Section

Classifieds

USelect

Travel

The News section here refers primarily to the *Irish Independent*, with a link to the home page of the newspaper, subordinated within the *unison.ie* domain, and subsequently, in green type, to a sequence of 11 familiar content links, ranging from national news to features, but including a pdf of the print edition front page, classifieds, and archives. Appended to this list, though distinguished by a switch to black type, are links to content sections which are directly part of the *unison.ie* site rather than being accessible via the newspaper online edition. These are World News, Regional News, Breaking News and Mobile News.

The subsequent content sections carry links that similarly have destinations directly within the *unison.ie* domain, i.e. */irish_independent/*, the website sub-folder in which newspaper online edition is held, is not part of their URL. While these items are thus

presented as *unison.ie* portal content, they are for the most part re-presentations of *Irish Independent*-generated material and there is little if any expansion in output.[9] For example, the Features section, referring to *Unison* features as distinct from those which are ascribed to *the Irish Independent*, includes links to a number of individual headline topics. These are: Education, Special Olympics, War in Iraq, the Budget, the Nice Treaty, the Ansbacher Report (relating to a controversy over tax avoidance and offshore banks), the World Cup and the most recent Election. Rather than offering any actual profusion of new articles on these subjects, however, the portal brings together already published content from the daily editions of the print and online newspaper.

Some items from the portal section headings that do not appear in menus held in the central columns described above include Surf Safe, a link to a guide to protecting users online, a link to a tutorial for using *Unison* and the net, and a link to Free Content, offering a news feed of headlines, linked to *Unison* content, for publication on third party sites.

In all, this densely-presented index includes 77 links, of which eight direct the reader to editorial content within the online newspaper itself, with the balance used to provide navigation in the portal, offer functionality to readers, or to promote advertising and other services, primarily for *Unison* but also for Independent Newspapers.

The page's fourth column contains a mix of items, the first of which is a series of four links under the heading Registration Info, which is all-caps and set in red, though in a modest, 9pt, typeface. Three of these links, in grey type, allow users to change aspects of their registration with *Unison*, while a fourth points to the portal Help section. Next is a shallow, mixed graphic and text hyperlinked ad, followed by Breaking News. This section has a similarly modest headline, set in all caps on an off-white background tint, above six individually-timed story headlines, each in very small, 7pt type, with a final link pointing to the portal's breaking news section. With slight shading just perceptible in the background, this content has the appearance of a separate, active block. It is separated vertically, by another combined graphic and text advertisement similar to that previously described, from a block headed Top Stories, in similar style but with bullet points taking the place of story times. This panel includes seven items: three of them – the rail controversy, the California election, and

the Manchester United stories – match those in the main content part of the page and in the print edition, but in this case the rail story has been restored to top billing, with the football buyout second. Two more of the stories concern sport, and a new story, concerning the rock star, Bono, swearing at a pop awards ceremony, appears, while the final item is a link to a single item covering financial markets.

After this panel, a heading in bold all-caps reads 'Inside the Irish Independent'. However, this is followed immediately by a ruled text and picture element that advertises regional tourism and links externally. A similarly presented box below relates to volunteering work, but the link here refers to a portal page. The last item in the column is a self-promotion element, solely in text, advertising and linking to subscription offers for PDA content and for print editions abroad. The depths of the page's outer columns fall short of the content of the central pair, and the bottom of the page has an open, irregular aspect. However, visually supporting the edifice by dint of its spread just beyond the limits of the inner columns is a standard arrangement of corporate and functional links, with at the bottom, a credit for Internet Ireland, the separate INM subsidiary responsible for the *Unison* portal.

The *Irish Independent* home page is constructed on the same layout grid as that of *unison.ie*, with a great deal of content and individual page elements common to both. The selection of stories on the *Unison* page is lighter, and is led with a dispute developing between Manchester United and the English FA, and with only one of the *Independent* home page and print edition stories being retained. While there is a link to the *Irish Independent* at the top of the left-hand menu of News links, hypertext referring to the individual editorial sections of the newspaper are not present, and so the confusion observed earlier between references to these and to parallel sections in *Unison* is resolved. The *Unison* page also notably strips out some of the functional or 'housekeeping' links from immediately beneath its main news content and in the same space instead runs a single headline and teaser from one of the site's regional titles. Similarly, in the right-most column, the top stories panel found in the *Independent* home page is replaced by a selection of links to regional news items, while a section on business law, produced in co-operation with a legal firm, is highlighted with a graphic. The *Irish Independent* masthead is replaced by a generic *Unison* title, and its associated adorning features are absent. But a comparison of the two pages shows that

they are remarkably similar, with breaking news and most links duplicated, and that the only editorial content that is unique to the *Irish Independent* home page and which is not part of, or potentially part of, the *Unison* page are the links to newspaper sections and the top stories links.

The Irish Times: The newspaper home, or front, page occupies a similar space on the web to that of the *Independent*, in that the edition sits within a wider portal, *ireland.com*.   The front page is more complex in its construction than that of the *Examiner*, but less so than that of the *Independent*, with four columns forming the layout's grid, but with the right-most entirely taken up by advertising.

The newspaper's masthead, a replica of the print title, is rendered in a relatively modest 36pt type size, and is preceded on the page by a complex and dense graphic arrangement which is shared with the *ireland.com* home page. The principal element in this arrangement is a blue-backgrounded banner that most prominently carries a logo that combines the *ireland.com* and *The Irish Times* brands – this links only to *ireland.com* – alongside a large rotating banner advertisement.

Screenshot 3: *The Irish Times's* **home page top screen**

To the top of the blue panel sit site functional links relating to premium content – login/logout, subscribe, my account, email, search and sitemap – while the bottom carries two rows of global site navigational links. At this level, the topmost row comprises the dateline, three graphically connected, tabbed links, another link to the newspaper, and a dropdown menu. The tabbed links are Today (a section carrying fresh news content), Classifieds, and Services, each in bold all-caps of around 14pt. The link to *The Irish Times* is clearly intended as distinct from these: like the newspaper masthead further below, it is set in the same type style as that of the print edition, and, though similar in size to the tabbed links, is further differentiated by virtue of its being spaced separately and by its strongly contrasting white background. The dropdown menu replicates the principal links already visible in this row, i.e. Today, Classifieds and Services. Each of these is a heading, its higher navigational purpose indicated by all caps setting, with further links to further sub-categories. Today is followed, once again, by links to *The Irish Times* online edition, and to other content sections within *ireland.com*, such as Breaking News, Sport, Business And Weather; Classifieds is further sub-divided within the menu between Motors, Jobs And Property, while Services breaks down into Ancestors, Email, Dublin Live (a webcam trained on the city centre) and Training. Completing this graphic assembly is a row of descending tabs that once again link to sub-sections of *ireland.com*, and which also include a link to *The Irish Times*. Though similarly all caps in 14pt, these links are visually separated by being set in Roman type style.

This top-of-page element is not uniquely a part of *The Irish Times* online edition, but is common to all *ireland.com* pages and, as is apparent from the redundant, in this context, links to the online newspaper, is intended to function at a higher level in the site's navigational hierarchy. Nearly all of the subsequent, lower-placed elements of the online newspaper home page, however, are specific to the web edition.

The newspaper masthead follows immediately, set in generous white space and flanked by a further, text link to Breaking News on the left and a brief weather forecast on the right, the latter accompanied by small graphic links to the portal's weather page.

As with the *Irish Independent*, the grid's two central columns provide the principal content space. The lead story here is the same as that in the print edition, with an

identically worded headline set in sans typeface of around 30pt and set apart by its larger size from lower-positioned items. The introductory paragraph from the print edition is carried before a text link directs the reader to the story page. Most prominent, in content terms, on the page is the image of Arnold Schwarzenegger also used in the print edition, though with a different, deeper crop. Together with its caption, the image is enclosed in a light grey background. There is no headline and no link here to a story page or to any further content, so that it is clear that this is a front page-only item. The print version's two other front page stories follow immediately below, split between the two columns, and each with a one-paragraph intro and a link to its corresponding story page. The DART closure item lies in the left-hand column, with a 24pt headline; the Manchester United investment story is in the right-hand column, with an 18pt headline.

Each column continues with a News Digest selection of stories. The mix here at first, in its first several items, reflects the stories represented in the News Digest section of the print edition's front page, but other stories are included further down the page, while not all of the digest items are included. The News Digest logos are in 12pt white, sans serif type on a red background. There is no apparent reason for the use of separate such headings in each column, other than as a device to separate and highlight the higher-ranked stories from the main area of the print version. Each News Digest items has a 12pt headline, i.e. the same size as the body text, but is in bold, sans, all-caps type, with a hollow, light blue blob. Three of the stories in the rightmost of the two columns are accompanied by thumbnail, or slightly larger, photographs of their subjects. Content in the columns is separated by a grey-out thin rule. The page's left-hand column comprises links either to current or to archive destinations in the site, under the heading *In the Newspaper*, within which are the sub-categories Daily, Weekly Index, Weekly Article Index, Archive Search, and Special Reports. Each of these is ruled off, with a heading reversed onto a blue background.

Daily refers to the daily edition, and the links in this category for the most part direct the reader to the regular content sub-divisions, as follows:

Front Page (coloured red but not live as we are already in this location)

Ireland

World

Finance

Features

Sport

Opinion

Letters

Crossword

Article index

Weekly Index provides a method of navigation according to each day's special sections, as established in the print edition, e.g. Health on Monday and Education and Parenting on Tuesday, whereas Weekly Article Index provides links to all articles on each of the six publication days. Archive Search provides a blurb linked to that function's page, whereas Special Reports carries a similar-style blurb linking to full texts of speeches, official documents, and commercial reports. Each of these links is in light grey, 12pt, sans serif, upper and lower case type.

As with the other titles, the page columns run to varying depths, so that the bottom of the page is irregular in appearance, save for a unifying row of text hyperlinks set in the page's standard body text style and in this case including the copyright notice,[10] About, Privacy, Contact, Media Kit, and Terms & Conditions.

Where the *unison.ie* home page bears a close similarity, at least in surface appearance, to that of the *Irish Independent*, the *ireland.com* home page differs strongly from that of its embedded newspaper. As discussed above, the top-lying navigation bar is identical, but the page below is entirely dissimilar in both content and layout. The most prevalent single element on the four-column page is a two-column panel arrangement of three of the four main news stories from the newspaper, along with a scroll of Breaking News. This content is graphically contrasted with an arrangement below of four categories – Sports, Special Reports, Business, and Technology – each carrying links to three stories. It is worth noting here, however, that the Special

Reports section links not, as the others do, to sub-directories directly within ireland.com, but to the newspaper sub-directory so that, while they are presented graphically as separate from the newspaper, technically they are part of the newspaper online edition. The rest of the page is taken up with discreet panels, most of them with some graphic content, to various resources under, again, the broader headings of Today, Classified, and Services, along with repeated links to Premium Content-related functions; promotion for a free email news digest, a premium email service[11], and a travel section.

Story pages and breaking news

In print, most stories, especially news stories, do not fill full pages, and by convention the inside pages of the publication carry several major story elements, sometimes with a high count of briefs. By contrast, in a website, generally, each item is provided on its own, unique page, albeit with links to other stories and to other elements within the site, and the design template deployed across a very large number of individual pages can be considered even more important than the home page, section navigation pages, or site landing pages.[12] One of the most immediately evident differences between online newspaper editions and their sister print publications is in the presentation of individual stories, and this section draws attention to some of the most relevant characteristics across the subject websites. In the case of each outlet, the internal page carrying the lead story is described, as is the breaking news page, since this is a feature that is common to each site and which is not present in the print editions.

Irish Examiner: This site's internal story page is based on a three-column grid, with the wide central column carrying the story text. The masthead and global links bar are site features that are shared in common with the front page, and there is a breadcrumb navigation trail (Home > Ireland > Full Story) in the space which on the home page is occupied by the weather. The left-hand column begins with a series of links to the various domestic news beats, under the label Ireland. These links, similar typographically to the series of links found in vertical columns on the front page, are set apart and highlighted by virtue of a deep blue background. Thereafter, the elements in this column, including a search field, and further links categorized under News, Sections, Services and Regional News, are an exact replica of the home page's

second column. The right-hand column content and styling similarly is a replica of the home page's corresponding content, but without the traffic news.

The main story leads with the same thumbnail image as the front page item, followed by a dateline, with a single-line dark blue headline in 14pt, the byline and intro following in 12pt blue, bold sans type, and the rest of the story running in 12pt light blue. White space created by the placement of the picture, and generous paragraph spacing, give the page an open aspect. There are no in-text links or related links, other than a navigation link to the previous page, accompanied by a small graphic.

Screenshot 4: The *Irish Examiner's* story page layout

As with the home page, the page grid is ruled off, with column ends falling irregularly, but with the same copyright line and geometric array of text links bringing a sense of order to the bottom of the page.

The outlet's breaking news page is also topped by the site title and navigation bar, along with breadcrumb trail. The links column to the left, with a dark blue fill colour, differs both from the newspaper home page and from the internal story page. While its text hyperlinks maintain graphical continuity, all of it targets are within breaking news. With a top Breaking News link referencing the current page, they are organized without specific headings, but in the following rough categories:

News beat

Breaking news sub-divided into the conventional departments, from Ireland[13] to Entertainment

Incidentals

Lotto and weather, but also Week in View, is a listing by day of the week's top stories

Archive and Search

Format

PDA, text only site, WAP[14]

Site interactivity (providing a link to contact details, allowing readers to set the current individual page as a favourite, or bookmark it in a browser, or set it as the default page)

The wider central column provides the page's unique content, in a complex and dense arrangement. It is headed by a large, light blue tint panel with, in 30pt, then 16pt sans, Breaking News: news as it happens, all in white but for the first word, which is in contrasting dark blue. Beneath, within the panel, is a row of further links to news categories and to Search. Subsequently, a Top Stories section is labelled in bold, dark blue, 14pt sans, underlined to the width of the column with a dotted blue hair-line rule. The lead story in this section is not timed: it is an update with a result in the California election. It has a bold blue headline link and a brief blurb in light grey, each in a relatively small 10pt sans. Next, following a clear space, are three timed breaking news stories (the last of which also concerns the California result), with

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headline links only, set in bold blue, 10pt sans. Each story line is accompanied above by a time stamp and by a linked section reference. Sitting roughly square horizontally with this highlighted section is a light blue tint panel with more links, with two links to sports stories under the label Main Topics, and a News Search. This search relates not to the *irishexaminer.com* site but to the breaking news archives sub-domain of the publishing group *tcm.ie*.[15]

Following the Top Stories section, the main body of the content column is taken up by several stories under each of the five content category labels already set out in the links column, with a count of five in all except Entertainment, with three. Each label is itself a hyperlink to that section of the 'breaking' subfolder. Each story within this page sector comprises a time stamp and a 9pt sans light blue text hyperlink headline. Beyond this listing, a highly-coloured graphic offers further links, in large, distinctive type, to more entertainment and review categories, as well as to lottery results and horoscopes, but also to News.
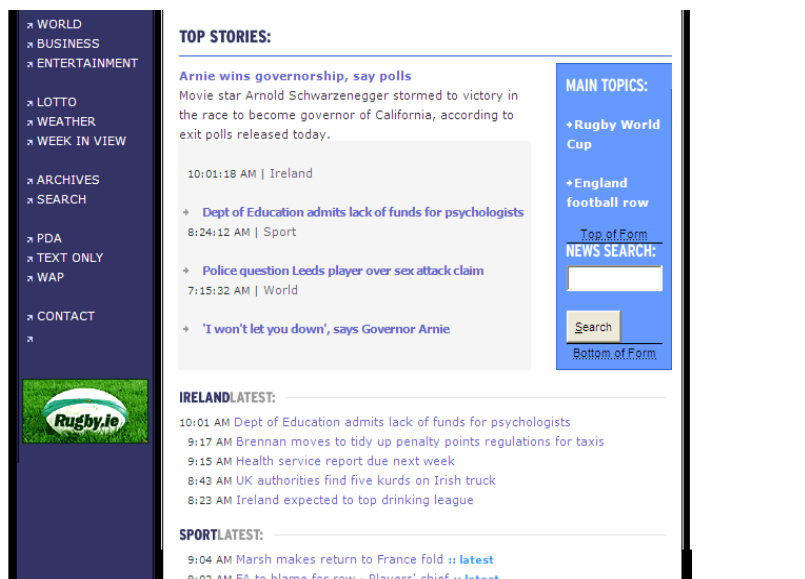
Screenshot 5: Detail from the *Examiner's* Breaking News page

The last content element is an offering of a series of traffic updates accompanied by an AA logo. By default, the screen shows Dublin traffic, but a drop-down menu allows users to view traffic reports relating to other counties (including Northern

Ireland). The last item within the page grid is, as in the front and internal story pages, a copyright notice, but here only Thomas Crosbie Media, rather than both TCH and the *Irish Examiner*, is specified. The right-hand column is empty, and the page proper terminates with the common site-wide arrangement of text links.

Irish Independent: The main item here is a syndicated story of the California gubernatorial election, and the *Independent* presents it in a simple page, the top elements of which, namely the title and associated graphics, the date, breadcrumb trail and site functions bar, are shared with the rest of the newspaper site, although the breadcrumb trail here is extended to indicate to the reader that s/he is in the International News section.

Screenshot 6: The *Independent's* story page layout

The internal page grid is made of just two columns. The first, left-most column is exactly the same as that on the newspaper home page; with an extensive listing of links to sections from both the newspaper and the portal, though with the majority to

the latter. The second space is a wide column in which are arranged the story text, an ad, and the same image as that used on the front page, although in this context embellished with a blue border and a faint graphic background. The story is typographically simple, with the headline, identical to that in the home page (and the print edition) set in 14pt bold sans type on a graphic background similar to that used for the image.

The story, unusually short for a lead item, is in 12pt sans, with very little typographic styling, save for an all-caps first word, which is a long-standing practice in the print edition of the newspaper and a common newspaper practice generally. There is no by-line at the top of the text; instead, it is given at the bottom, along with 'In Los Angeles', (the newspaper does not use standard datelines) in bold. More or less immediately above and again, duplicated, below the story text is a row of three links concerned with site interactivity – Email, Print Version, and Add to Clippings. These are rendered in small, 9pt type, underlined. Above the top row of links, and below those at the bottom, is a hair-line rule.

The chosen story's brevity means that its content and associated elements run well short of the depth of the links list to its left, and so a large white space is created in the bottom area of the page. However, the matrix of links, which already has been observed on the front page, visually supports and unites the design.

The *Independent's* Breaking News page clearly is intended to be seen as separate from the online newspaper edition and instead is presented as part of the wider *Unison* portal. It is topped by a large composite graphic, the largest visual element of which is a logo of the property website *myhome.ie* blended with an image of a person reading a print newspaper and drinking coffee, and with the words 'Breaking News in association with *myhome.ie*'.[16] Above the graphic (and not observed elsewhere in the newspaper online pages) is a row of global navigation links relating to *Unison*. Underneath it is the tint bar and functional links common to all of the pages within the *Unison* site.

Where the *Examiner's* breaking news page is complex, the *Independent's* is relatively simple, based on a two-column layout and with a modest collection of links. The links column to the left, includes the various *Unison* and USelect link categories previously

observed in *Independent* and *Unison* pages, but here, with one exception, they are in collapsed form, with no sub-categories. The exception is News, which provides links to World, Regional, Breaking (same page) and Mobile News, as well as, at the top of the list, to the online edition home page and to a pdf of the print edition front page. At the top of the content column can be observed, once again, user options for email, printing and adding to a clipping (though these functions do not apply naturally to a listing page), as well as a link to Desktop News, a device for feeding breaking news headlines to the user's screen using a small browser frame.
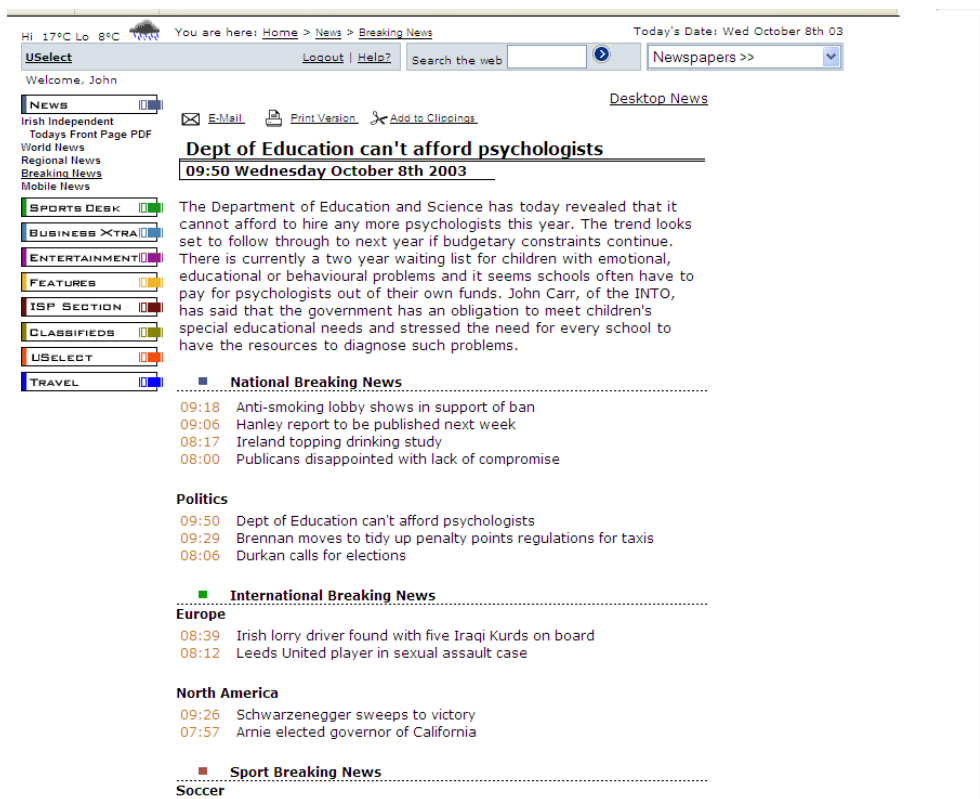
Screenshot 7: The *Independent's* breaking news layout

The story content of the page begins with a selected top story, highlighted by the use of 16pt serif type headline, with a double underline and immediately followed by a timestamp, accompanied by a dateline, in bold sans, 12pt, and a substantial story intro in regular sans. There then follow 16 breaking news stories, arranged under National Breaking News, International Breaking News, and Sport Breaking News, with these

headings further sub-divided. The main section labels are highlighted by an individually-coloured blob, and indented. Each story line, also serving as a link to the individual item, is set in standard 12pt sans, but with a coloured (red/brown) timestamp. Links direct to the *breakingnews* sub–folder in the *unison.ie* site, with no reference to the newspaper in the URL.

While the content of the page thus far scrolls a little beyond the bottom of the initial screen, it is further expanded by the inclusion of the previous day's breaking news stories in sequence below, set in a similar type style but without colour enhancements. With no grid lines visible, the page appears open and fluid, but it shares the common portal global links as a closing signal and visual support.

Irish Times: The story page for this newspaper is constructed on a three column grid, of which the third, right-most column, other than carrying a white-on-grey dateline, is reserved for advertising.
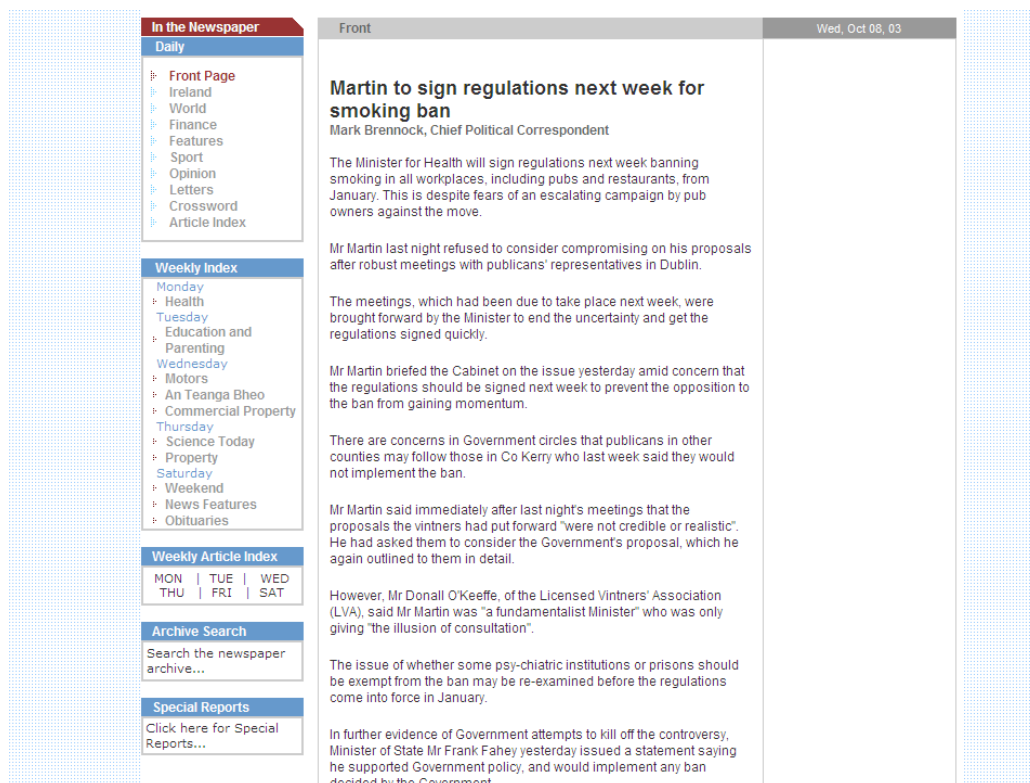

Screenshot 8: *The Irish Times's* story page layout

The grid, narrower than a standard PC screen of the time, shows in white on a light blue, pinpoint pattern, graphic background. As with the other outlets already described, the page header is a copy of that which features in the *Times's* home page, with, primarily, links to the portal content and functions, as well as breaking news and weather. The left-hand links compilation is also shared in its entirety with the newspaper front page. The story text fills the wide second column, which is topped by a light grey bar with, set left, the label Front, in 12pt bold sans. The headline, worded the same as that of the home page and the print edition, is in 16pt sans bold, while, underneath, the author's name and title is provided in 12pt sans bold. The story proper runs in standard sans of the same size, with wide paragraph spacing easing density. The text runs considerably deeper than the parallel column of links, but does not fill the ruled grid, so a gap is evident before a standalone copyright notice, '© The Irish Times', which sits inside the story space.

Below, a grey tint bar carries links to user functions as follows: print, email a friend, email the author, and back to top, the latter with a small graphic pointer. While this bar gives shape to the page and unifies it horizontally, it is not the last horizontal. Underneath, the page replicates the same row of links as that found in the home page, including an *ireland.com* copyright notice, illustrating both the embedding of the newspaper, visually but also legally, if not organizationally, within the portal.

The Times's Breaking News page is also arranged on a three-column grid, with the third similarly empty, and shares the common portal header and associated links. The right-hand links column is initially similar in graphic and typographic style to those found in the pages already discussed, and is based on graphically framed categories of links, the first of which is Breaking News itself. Here, links are provided to the news sub-categories Top Stories, Irish, Word, Business, and Sport. The subsequent block in the column, highlighted by a dark blue fill, carries a poll, asking users to answer Yes or No to the question: 'Do you think the likely election of Arnold Schwarzenegger as Governor of California is to be welcomed?' Voting here leads the reader to the comment page which will be discussed in Chapter 8. Underneath the poll, the typographic style changes, with five links, each with a ruled headline, a blurb and a graphic, to destinations all of which, other than a link to the newspaper home page, are portal content spaces.

In the central content column, directly below the standard header, is a large graphic with the Breaking News label in large, 36pt type, along with a stock image of a computer showing the world on its screen. Below that again is a bar with the label Top Stories in bold, but modestly-sized sans type, along with a dateline which allows the user to scroll backward and forward to other dates. In the Top Stories, section are three items. The first (the Californian election) is accompanied by an image and is topped with a 30pt, sans, blue-coloured headline over two lines. The item intro follows in regular sans, accompanied by a bold timestamp, and is further elaborated with a related link, set in bold, directing readers to a follow-up story. The two other stories in this premium sector of the page are rendered with one-line blue headlines of 24pt, with time-stamped intro paragraphs.
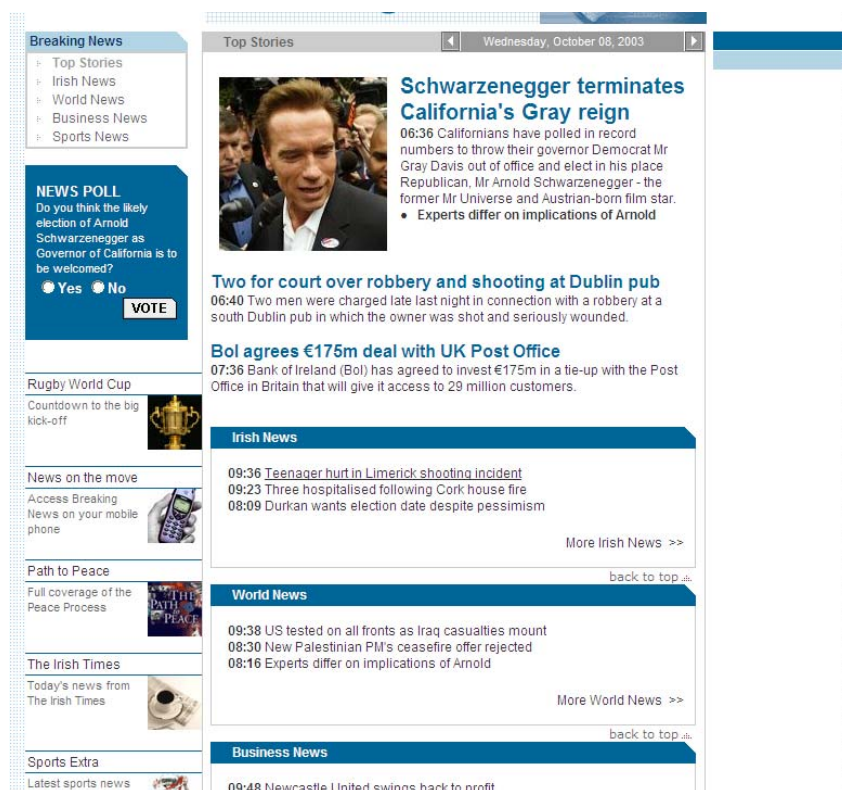
Screenshot 9: The *Times's* Breaking News section, with poll

The highlighted items section is followed by a simple listing of stories under four categories of news – Irish, World, Business, and Sport – each with three linked headlines set in regular sans and with a timestamp in bold. Each of the categories

carries a link to more news of that kind, as well as a link to the top of the page. The page ends with the standard portal text bar including the (*ireland.com*) copyright notice.

Summary

In this chapter, a detailed description has been provided of elements of the print and online editions of the titles which are the focus of this research. Such raw description of itself offers little insight, other perhaps as an expression of the density of content presentation online as a key difference in the design or otherwise of information (Parker 2006, White 2003, Harrower 2002, Rosenfeld and Morville 2002, Krug 2006, Nielsen and Loranger 2006). However, this exploration provides significant additional material to add texture to the interpretation of the coded content analysis. In particular, it draws attention to layout and typographic characteristics, along with linking patterns, that are not captured in the coding, and allows for more nuanced consideration of the construction of the web editions. Thus, the data presented here will significantly inform the analysis in Chapter 9.

Endnotes

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[1] Essentially, a modular newspaper layout is one which is based on regular patterns, with each story or item accorded its own rectangula space. These simple layouts have generally replaced traditional vertical designs, in which stories were allowed to run over long legs of type.

[2] Type sizes are assessed visually rather than measured, and so approximate values based on standard increments are used.

[3] Dynamic elements are those elements in a page in which separate, external content is drawn into the layout by means of simple coding. This content can be absent or can change without the page code changing, and cannot be saved reliably as part of the page file.

[4] There is no absolute size for an item in a web page, since screens vary in their physical dimensions and also in their composition of pixels. However, while type sizes ultimately are determined in pixels, the traditional pica and point system for sizing type remains as a legacy from print, and many authoring tools by default ascribe a point size of 12 to body text. It is this norm that is used here as a roughly indicative device for comparing the sizes of the various type elements online.

[5] Global links are links that apply to navigation throughout a site, as opposed to being implemented for more local connections between or within pages.

[6] Essentially, white space is space left deliberately fallow in order to lend a less packed look to a page and to let it breathe.

[7] In many news websites, especially those incorporating dynamic content from other sources, but also including breaking news sections in newspapers' own sites, a latest-on-top logic applies, so that a relatively unimportant story can be found higher than more significant content published earlier.

[8] These links raise a definitional problem that serves to illustrate the blurring of publication entity on the web: because these are Unison services, or even services of companies separate from that publishing the newspaper, rather than a feature of the newspaper edition, they have not been coded in the content analysis as customization facilities. Rather, they are links to such facilities that are provided by a higher-level entity, the portal, of which the *Irish Independent* is a part, albeit an important one, or by separate if related commercial entities.

[9] The *Irish Independent* at this point was the only national INM title publishing a website. In later years, the advent of the *Evening Herald* and the (now defunct) *Sunday Tribune* online editions might have offered the opportunity to aggregate a wider mix of content above regional level, but the portal model has since been abandoned.

[10] Copyright is assigned *to ireland.com*, not to *The Irish Times.*

[11] The *ireland.com* domain is marketed as a desirable email address.

[12] As explained in the classic web design manual Lynch, P.J. & Horton, S. , Web Style Guide, 3rd Edition. Available: http://webstyleguide.com/wsg3/6-page-structure/4-page-templates.html [2009, November 9]

[13] The term 'home' news would be confusing in this context.

[14] Wireless Application Protocol, a widely adopted but increasingly obsolete format for delivering web content to mobile phones, overtaken by apps for iPhone and Android 'smartphones'.

[15] The destination url is http://archives.tcm.ie/breakingnews/search/index.asp.

[16] *Myhome.ie*, described as 'probably… the biggest home-grown marketing success on the web' was bought by *The Irish Times* in 2006 for a reported price of €50m (http://tinyurl.com/yzbn6eb). Such direct content sponsorship links have been rare in Irish news media. In 2009, Independent News Ireland established the property site *globrix.ie* in a joint venture with commercial links to News International (http://tinyurl.com/yl7nxr5).

Chapter 8: Expert opinions and deeper site investigation

Introduction

This chapter adds to the content analysis coding and descriptive data, with data from two additional research phases, namely the informed survey of journalists working in the relevant outlets' newsrooms, and a further investigation of the interactive features of the sites studied. As discussed in Chapter 5, it is intended that these data will provide insight into the working practices, attitudes and opinions of journalists, so that these can be considered alongside the form and content of their work as realized in their online and print outlets.

Informed survey

Method

The informed survey sought to elicit considered responses from journalists working in the news outlets represented in with the content analysis. The aim was to seek opinions and observations from those engaged in news production in these titles, with the journalists positioned as experts in the field of news work, as opposed to random sampling, although with a volume sufficient to support frequency tables for descriptive purposes.

As noted in the earlier discussion of methodology, editors, managing editors and other senior executives supervising and directing, but not directly engaged in, news work were deliberately excluded. A set questionnaire (see Appendix B) was emailed to journalists after they had agreed to participate, and a follow-up phone call was made after an interval of at least several days in order for the journalists to read the document and to consider their responses. The work, carried out in late 2005 and early 2006, yielded a high response rate: however, a small number of journalists failed to participate: all but one of these worked at *Unison*, producer of the online edition of

the *Irish Independent*, and said they had been directed not to take part. While most of the responses were collected, as planned, in telephone conversations, some of the participants completed the questionnaire independently and returned it by email (as did some of those taking part in other countries). A decision was made at the joint project level to include such responses, and this policy was also applied to the current, Irish study. In total, 23 Irish journalists participated.

In order to help assess the role of the Internet in journalists' work, questions, most of them framed on a 1 to 5 Likert scale (several also allowing 'other' as a possible response) were set out under the following headings:

Background information on participant and participant's news outlet

Adoption of the Internet in newsrooms

Significance of the Internet in newsgathering

Future of newspaper journalism

Professional role of journalists

In addition, journalists were asked to state their degree of agreement or disagreement, again on a scale from 1 to 5, with a number of statements focused on:

Newspaper strategies

Practices

Professional roles

Ethics

Journalism and the public

The salient data arising from their responses are set out below[1], and these patterns are later interpreted further, along with other data sets generated by the research, in Chapter 9.

Table 8.1: Background of respondents		
Total	Ireland (23)	Europe (239 in 11 countries)
Age	median 33, mean 34.7	Mean 38
Gender	6f, 17m	39% f, 61%m
Years as journalist	8 median, mean 10.9	Mean 14
Years on net	median 7, mean 6.8	Mean 8
Web use per day	> 10, 17; 5 to 10, 4; 1 to 5, 2	> 10, 75%
Self-defined work profile	17 print, 3 online, 3 mixed	64% print, 12% online, 24% mixed

Participants' characteristics are set out in Table 8.1. Among the Irish group, 17 members were male, with six female, reflecting a wider preponderance of the former in newsrooms (as opposed to features departments in which females typically are the larger group). Only three people described themselves as an online journalist; the same number described themselves as both a print and an online journalist, but 17 identified themselves as a print journalist, even though their organizations had established online editions at the time. Of the six women interviewed, three described themselves as online or print and online journalists. It must be emphasized that the selection of interviewees aimed to achieve a rough balance of inputs across the various outlets, roughly equivalent to those studied in the content analysis in Chapter Six and in the further study of interactivity provided below in this chapter. In no way can it be taken to indicate or reflect, or attempt to indicate or reflect, an emerging division of labour in the industry. The median age in the group was 33, the median career span was eight years, and the same value for years since they had started using the Internet at work was seven years. The Irish journalists interviewed are younger than the average of the wider European group, and with considerably less experience, with a mean of 10.9 years compared with 14, and average years using the net for work of 6.8, compared with 8 in the larger group.

While it is important to note that no assertion is made of a statistically balanced sample, it is relevant to say here that the cohort comprised a varied group of established news workers, i.e. staff or contract, but not freelance, of varying seniority, from beat editors, to subject correspondents, to reporters, along with, from the online group, some whose main function apparently was concerned with re-purposing of content.

The majority of the Irish journalists – 17 – accessed the web more than 10 times a day for their work (roughly equivalent to the European percentage), while everyone used it at least once. While there may be little or no discernable pattern relating to age or Internet age, the six respondents who use the web fewer than 10 times a day all see themselves solely as print journalists; similarly, those who use the web less frequently come from among those with more working experience.

Asked if they were given access to audience statistical information or data, 17 said they were not, while three said they had full access and three said they had partial sight of such resources. Journalists' responses on the progress of their news outlets online and the variety of platforms in which their work is published, show similarly incomplete knowledge, with many 'don't know' answers recorded, to a degree that answers to this set of questions were deemed not reliable.[2]

Adoption of the net in newsrooms

Table 8.2, below, shows perceptions of difficulties in the implementation of Internet technology in newsrooms, focusing on cost, availability of technical support staff, availability of training, attitudes among journalists, attitudes of editors and managers, and ease of use of the technology, with 1 indicating no difficulty and 5 denoting 'very problematic'. Most of the journalists see few problems in this area, with the greater weight of responses indicating only minor problems or none, and very few saying that adoption has been problematic or very problematic, so that median values are either 1 or 2. Irish medians roughly track those of the wider European group, with just two variations: Irish journalists see fewer problems arising from the attitudes of journalists themselves, with 13 answering that this is 'no problem', but they perceive more difficulty emanating from managements, though even those who answer 'no problem' here are the biggest single category, at nine, with the weight of neutrals (6) and those

indicating a minor problem (5) shifting the balance. Five of the group say they have no opinion in relation to cost.

Table 8.2: Difficulty in implementation							
	Cost	Tech staff	Training	J. attitudes	M. attitudes	Tech ease	Other
Ir median	**1**	**2**	**2**	**1**	**2**	**2**	**0**
Eu median	**1**	**2**	**2**	**2**	**1**	**2**	**0**
0. n/a	5	2	2	2	2	2	21
1. no problem	10	5	7	13	9	7	0
2. minor problem	6	8	6	3	5	9	0
3. neutral	1	4	5	3	6	3	1
4. problematic	1	2	1	2	1	2	1
5. very problematic	0	1	2	0	0	0	0

<u>Newsgathering tools</u>

With 1 denoting 'not important at all', and 5 'very important', Table 8.3, below, sets out opinions concerning a variety of tools, net-related and otherwise, in the journalistic work of conceiving, finding and researching stories. Median values for the Irish responses very closely track European values, with the two diverging only when Irish journalists see newsfeeds and SMS services as more useful, but view public libraries as unimportant. Face-to-face communication, phone communication, and web searches all are seen as very important, while personal email, sources' websites, other news sites, input from colleagues, newsroom archives, and electronic archives register as important. Within the top ranking, the research tool that is most highly valued is the telephone, with 17 ratings as very important, followed by face-to-face communication, at 15. There is also strong endorsement, in terms of ratings as very important, of web searches (13) and, to a lesser extent, personal email (11). News

workers' colleagues also are accorded a relatively strong role, with 9 rating them important and 4 very important.

Table 8.3: Importance of tools

	Face-to-face	Phone	Fax	Telex	Personal email	Group email	Email newsletter	Web search	Sources' sites	News sites	Chat and IM	Blogs	Newsfeeds	Colleagues	Newsroom archives	Personal arch.	Electron. Arch	Public library	SMS	Other
Ir median	5	5	2	1	4	2	2	5	4	4	1	1	2	4	4	3	4	1	2	0
Eu median	5	5	2	1	4	2	2	5	4	4	1	1	2	4	4	3	4	1	2	0
n/a	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	19
1. Unimport.	0	0	7	19	0	10	3	0	0	1	18	14	8	1	3	1	1	11	10	0
2. Minor import.	1	0	5	2	1	7	9	1	0	0	2	5	6	3	5	4	1	11	2	2
3. Neutral	1	0	9	0	2	4	8	1	7	8	2	2	4	5	2	9	5	0	3	0
4. Important	5	5	1	0	8	1	2	7	8	8	0	1	3	9	7	6	8	0	4	1
5. V. import.	15	17	0	0	11	0	0	13	7	5	0	0	1	4	5	2	7	0	3	1

On the other side of the scale, there is strong rejection of now-obsolete telex[3], with 19 rating it as unimportant, but also of Internet chat and instant messaging (18), blogs (14), public libraries (11), group emails and SMS, though with the latter drawing some balancing votes as important or very important. The marked disregarding of blogs is reinforced by the reluctance to recognize their value positively, with zero ratings as very important, and just one as important, while the shunning of chat and IM technologies is complete, with no positive rating. Attracting relatively high numbers of neutral opinions are personal archives and fax (9), email newsletters and news sites (8), and sources' sites (7).

One correspondent dealing with official business added that official documents in pdf format were very important (5); another said that he felt the mobile phone should be included separately, even with a rating of minor importance (2). While no option was provided to facilitate respondents rating other news media and published media generally as a tool (on the basis that this is an ever-present background source rather than a specific tool), some were keen to specify newsgathering tools that included such outlets and publications: one crime correspondent stressed the importance of radio, giving it a rating of 4, i.e. important; while a business reporter said that books and magazines also featured, even if, in his view, they were of limited importance (2).

Utility of the net across tasks

Journalists were asked to rate the Internet's usefulness across a range of newsgathering tasks (1, not at all useful, to 5, very useful), and their responses are set out in Table 8.4, below.

 Sentiment here is strongly positive, with three median outcomes at the maximum of 5 for accessing national government reports and other government information, receiving press releases, and researching background information. In addition, there is a median of 4 (useful) in relation to four other tasks – accessing sources generally, accessing corporate reports and other information, verifying facts, and searching for service information. Only one task – that of accessing local authority reports and other local government information – attracts a neutral median rating (3), and none is rated negative, i.e. the net is not considered not useful. The Irish medians as a whole tend to be higher than their European equivalents which, although they are all positive, reach

only as high as 4 in all but one case – that of searching for service information –
where the net's utility is rated at 5.

Table 8.4: Usefulness of the net across tasks									
	Source access	National govt	Local govt	Corporate info	Press releases	Background	Verification	Service info	Other
Ir median	4	5	3	4	5	5	4	4	0
Eu median	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	5	0
n/a	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	18
1. Not useful	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	1	0
2. Of minor use	2	0	3	2	0	0	3	2	0
3. Neutral	5	4	11	6	1	2	6	5	0
4. Useful	7	6	4	8	7	6	10	6	2
5. Very useful	9	13	3	6	15	15	4	9	2

Irish journalists find the net most useful in relation to receiving press releases, and
investigating background information, with 15 'very useful' responses for each task.
The corresponding count in relation to accessing national government materials is 13.
Conversely, the net's value in accessing local government information is thought high
in only three cases, while utility in verifying facts draws a score of 4, though with 10
journalists who rate the net as useful in this regard. There is also a high count of
neutrals (11) in relation to local authority reporting, and one 'not applicable'. This
task also draws one of three explicitly negative, i.e. 'not useful' opinions, as do
accessing corporate information and searching for service information. Local
government (3), corporate (2), verification (3) and service information (2) each see
the net's value rated as only minor.

Several journalists added tasks not listed in the questionnaire. One said that the net
was very useful (score of 5) in providing access to a thesaurus and dictionary; another

rated it at 5 in respect of covering parliamentary questions, especially accessing written answers and providing background to Dáil exchanges; one said it was useful (4) for helping to generate story ideas; and another said it was useful for monitoring other media.

Platforms and formats

Table 8.5 shows journalists' assessment of the significance in the future of newspapers of a range of issues, from 'the Internet', as a broad concept, to free papers.

Table 8.5: Significance of platforms and formats						
	The net	Analogue b/cast	Digital b/cast	Mob. Devices	Free papers	Other
Ir median	5	3	4	4	3	0
Eu median	5	2	3	4	3	0
n/a	0	0	0	0	0	19
1. Not significant	0	4	0	0	2	0
2. Slightly significant	0	7	2	3	5	0
3. Neutral	2	9	7	8	5	3
4. Significant	5	1	9	3	6	1
5. Very significant	16	2	5	9	5	0

The Internet is seen as very significant by 16 of the Irish journalists, with five describing it as significant and two neutral, giving a median of 5. This is the only issue that achieves the maximum median score of 5. Digital broadcasting and mobile communications devices are considered, overall, to be significant, with a median rating of 4, while the outcome in respect of analogue television and free newspapers is a neutral 3. The larger European group of respondents also see the net as very significant in this context, and it also is the only issue that achieves a median of 5.

There are no strongly negative opinions expressed here, but there are relatively high counts of neutral assessments, with 9 for analogue broadcasting and 8 for mobile devices.

Three journalists accorded neutral assessments to other issues that they nevertheless felt were relevant: one cited the anticipated impact of pricing for access to news and information; another raised podcasting in this category, and another raised weblogs. One participant raised the prospect of new entrants to the news industry as an issue, and said he considered this significant (4).

Working without the net

Journalists were asked to assess the impact on certain aspects of their work that would result if, hypothetically, they were to return to a pre-Internet era and cease using its resources, with a scale from 1 – very negative – to 5 – very positive, and with results recorded in Table 8.6, below.

Note that a possibly counter-intuitive inverse score applies here. Four aspects of work are considered very negatively affected, according to the median outcomes: these are speed of information gathering, remote access allowing journalists to keep in touch with their newsrooms, real-time publishing and breaking news, and digital archives. This median reflects high 'very negative' counts in each case, with the highest in real-time publishing, at 17, followed by information-gathering speed and remote access, both at 15, and digital archiving at 14. In total, across the range of aspects of work, 111 very negative opinions are registered.

In contrast to those outlined thus far, this question features three neutral outcomes (score of 3) at the level of the Irish median, relating to generating ideas, to connecting with other journalists, and to cost savings. Similarly, there is noteworthy convergence around neutral opinions in relation to these aspects of work (as opposed to strong negatives balanced by strong positives): 16 are neutral regarding the net's usefulness with respect to generation ideas, 12 on contact with other journalists, 10 on cost savings, and 8 on interaction with readers. In all, across the range of sub-questions, there are 73 neutral opinions.

Another salient count appears in relation to data checking – this task draws a median of 2, i.e. overall, journalists consider that not using the net would have a negative effect – with 14 opting for the milder option on the scale. The equivalent score relating to interaction with readers is 9.

Table 8.6: Working without the net														
	Tracking topics	Getting ideas	Finding sources	Connect with other j's	Keeping up	Speed of info gathering	Investigative projects	Remote access	Real-time publishing	Digital archives	Cost savings	Reader interaction	Data checking	Other
Ir median	2	3	2	3	2	1	2	1	1	1	3	2	2	0
Eu median	2	2	2	3	1	1	3	2	1	1	2	2	2	0
n/a	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	22
1. V. negative	8	2	6	4	11	15	4	15	17	14	6	5	4	0
2. Negative	8	4	7	3	8	6	9	4	3	6	4	9	14	0
3. Neutral	6	16	6	12	3	0	6	2	0	1	10	8	2	1
4. Positive	0	1	2	3	0	0	3	0	1	1	2	1	0	0
5. V. positive	1	0	2	1	1	2	0	2	2	1	1	0	2	0

There are five instances of variation between the Irish and European journalists' opinions as expressed in the medians, though in each case the deviation is limited to one point on the scale, and overall, it can be observed that both sets agree in each aspect of work that the removal of the net would be negative or, at best, neutral, to some degree. Faced with the prospect of generating ideas without using the net, the

European group are negative (2) while their Irish counterparts express a neutral opinion; the wider group are very negative in relation to keeping up to date with the news while the Irish are moderately negative; in contrast, the Irish are negative about the effect on investigative projects, where the Europeans are neutral; the Irish are very negative concerning keeping in touch with the newsroom, where the wider group are moderately negative; and the Europeans are more concerned about cost savings, with a moderately negative median compared with neutral Irish sentiment.

While, overall, opinions concerning this fictional scenario are broadly negative (i.e. in favour of the net) though with a strong neutral element, it is worth noting the presence of some opinions welcoming the net's removal. Across the range of aspects of journalistic work, there are 15 responses saying that this would be very positive, and 14 positive.

Professional issues

Table 8.7, below, reports responses (1, very negative – 5, very positive) of journalists asked what impact they think the Internet has on a range of issues considered relevant to their professional role. Evident here is the presence of neutral observations – with a total of 105 across all items, and with medians of 3 in relation to six of them. In five of these six, the Irish journalists are in agreement with the wider European group. Highest neutral counts are registered in relation to 'Disseminate credible, objective information' (12), 'Be a watchdog for democracy' and 'Influence public opinion' (both 11), and 'Provide entertainment' (10). Just two sub-question headings – speed in reaching the audience and achieving the widest possible audience – generate very positive medians, and in each case these, too, are matched by the European value.

Nevertheless, overall, Irish journalists respond positively, with nine positive median outcomes, compared with eight in the European group. In particular, the Irish are more positive concerning providing analysis and interpretation, and about acting as a spokesperson for certain groups with, in each case, a positive outcome against a European neutral median. However, the Europeans are positive in relation to an entertainment role, while the Irish are neutral.

There are some notable counts of positive and very positive opinions across the range, at 96 and 98 respectively, with speed (16) and breadth of audience (14) drawing the

highest numbers in the latter, with aiming to 'Give people a forum to express their views' at 9. None of the sub-questions draws a negative median response, although individual negatives are present, for the most part widely distributed across the various issues, though with a count of 7 in relation to journalists' role in providing a good environment for advertisers.

Table 8.7: Relevance to professional role

	Credibility, objectivity	Analyis, interpretation	Speed	Wide audience	Demo watchdog	New trends, ideas	Contact with public	Responsiveness	Forum for views	Entertainment	Spokesperson	Political agenda	Public opinion	Advertisers	Forum for deliberation
Ir median	**3**	**4**	**5**	**5**	**3**	**4**	**4**	**4**	**4**	**3**	**4**	**3**	**3**	**3**	**4**
Eu median	**3**	**3**	**5**	**5**	**3**	**4**	**4**	**4**	**4**	**4**	**3**	**3**	**3**	**3**	**4**
n/a	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0
1. V. negative	1	0	1	1	1	0	1	1	0	1	2	0	0	0	0
2. Negative	2	2	1	2	2	2	1	2	0	2	1	5	3	7	3
3. Neutral	12	7	2	1	11	5	6	7	6	10	6	8	11	5	8
4. Positive	4	8	3	5	5	9	11	6	8	3	6	8	6	7	7
5. V. positive	4	6	16	14	4	7	4	7	9	7	7	2	3	3	5

Responses to a series of statements

Responses were sought based on a scale of agreement to a series of questions under a number of headings (1, fully disagree – 5, fully agree). Results are recorded in a series of tables below.

Newspapers' future and strategies

Table 8.8 sets out responses under this heading.

Table 8.8 Statements on newspapers' future and strategies									
	New possibilities	Multimedia	Scooping	Necessary, prog	Drain on real function	Devaluation	DIY threat	Blogs not real	Recycling
Ir median	5	5	3	4	2	2	2	4	3
Eu median	5	4	4	5	2	2	2	4	3
n/a	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
1. Fully disagree	0	0	3	0	11	8	5	1	1
2. Partly disagree	0	1	7	0	5	6	9	3	6
3. Neutral	0	2	4	5	2	4	4	7	6
4. Partly agree	6	5	2	7	5	5	5	9	5
5. Fully agree	17	15	7	11	0	0	0	3	5

Because questions are not uniformly framed as being 'for or 'against' the Internet, there is no significance to the general pattern of counts or of the medians – one cannot seek a sense here, based on total counts, of whether journalists take a mostly positive or negative stance overall. That said, the strongest responses in terms of the Irish median relate to the statements that 'The Internet has opened new journalistic

possibilities for newspapers' and that 'Multimedia is an important new component in presenting stories to the audience', both of which engender full agreement (5). There are no 'fully disagree' medians, and other statements draw either moderate agreement or moderate disagreement.

The statement that 'The Internet has opened new journalistic possibilities for newspapers' is met with the highest number of fully agreeing responses, at 17, and, with six 'Partly agree' (4) responses, it attracts no negative or even neutral opinions. The statement concerning the role of multimedia is the next most heavily supported, with 15 fully agreeing and just one journalist partly disagreeing; while there is also solid support for the sentiment that '…online journalism is a necessary and progressive strategy for newspapers'.

From the opposing end of the scale, the statement that 'The online edition is a drain on the real function of the newspaper' is most heavily rejected, with a median of 2, and 11 journalists expressing themselves as fully disagreeing. However, the sentiment is not entirely positive towards online editions, and five journalists express partial agreement here, with two neutrals. The statement that 'Publishing news free online devalues the work of journalists' similarly is met with partial disagreement (median of 2), but also with a count of five partially agreeing, and four remaining neutral. Asked if they agreed that 'DIY' journalism online is a threat to newspapers, the journalists again respond with partial disagreement overall, and a similar pattern of agreement, though with fewer fully disagreeing. The statement that 'Citizen journalism and blogs are not real journalism', though provocatively phrased, is greeted with partial agreement in the median, and with just four journalists actively disagreeing. However, this also draws the highest neutral response, at a count of 7. There is a neutral median response to the charge that 'Multi-channel publishing is just another word for the recycling of content across various channels', though with just one journalist fully disagreeing. Another practice that generates a neutral (or split) outcome is that of online editions 'scooping' their sister print editions by running stories in advance, as expressed in the statement, 'News should be published online as quickly as possible regardless of the publishing timetable of the printed newspaper.' While 3 journalists fully agree with the statement, 7 fully disagree.

Irish and European medians diverge in three instances. The Irish are more positive concerning multimedia, less positively inclined to support scooping their print editions, and less ready to endorse the necessity or progressive nature of online journalism for newspapers.

Practices

Journalists' assessments of a number of statements relating to practices are shown in Table 8.9, with largely neutral outcomes.

Table 8.9: Statements on practices						
	Story formats	More in stories	More rewarding	No new info	Tech skills	Cross-platform
Ir median	3	4	3	1	2	3
Eu median	3	4	3	2	3	3
n/a	0	0	0	0	0	0
1. Fully disagree	2	1	3	15	10	3
2. Partly disagree	3	3	2	5	8	3
3. Neutral	7	2	10	2	4	8
4. Partly agree	6	6	4	0	0	1
5. Fully agree	5	11	4	1	1	8

None of the statements put to participants results in a median representing full agreement, and only one – that the net allows journalists to get more information into their stories – draws partial agreement, based on a strong count, at 11, of journalists fully concurring. In contrast, the statement that journalists do not find information on the Internet that they wouldn't find elsewhere is heavily disputed, with a median of 1 and with 15 fully disagreeing individual opinions. Milder negative sentiment is expressed towards the statement that there is too much emphasis on journalists'

technical skills, with a median of 2: in this instance 10 journalists fully disagree and 8 partly disagree.

Three of the statements result in neutral medians. The statement that working for multiple outlets makes journalistic work more rewarding brings a high neutral value, at 10, and there are noteworthy counts for this value too in relation to the statements that 'A good print journalist is usually also a good online journalist' (Cross-platform, 8) and that 'Web publishing allows journalists to develop more attractive story-telling formats' (7). On the cross-platform statement, however, there also is a strong contingent (8) expressing full agreement. The Irish respondents are firmer than their European counterparts in rejecting the notion that no new information is found on the net, and they are more sanguine in relation to technical skills, where the Europeans register a neutral median.

Professional roles

Responses to eight statements on journalists' professional roles are shown in Table 8.10.

Table 8.10: Statements on roles								
	Mobility	Embrace the net	Tools for context	More male	Closer to audience	Info packers	Desktop job	More superficial
Ir median	4	5	3	2	3	3	4	3
Eu median	4	4	3	1	2	4	4	3
n/a	2	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
1. Fully disagree	1	2	5	8	6	3	1	8
2. Partly disagree	1	2	1	5	4	3	0	3
3. Neutral	6	3	5	8	8	6	5	6
4. Partly agree	6	4	3	0	4	8	10	4
5. Fully agree	7	12	8	2	1	3	7	2

Strong support, represented by a median of 5, is expressed for the statement that newspapers must embrace the net in order to survive, with 12 participants fully agreeing, though with 2 fully disagreeing, and a low neutral score. The statement that future journalists can enrich their work through mobility between publishing channels of their newspaper is partially supported, though with little active disagreement. However, there also is partial agreement for the statement that the net means that journalism is tending towards becoming a desk job: 7 fully agree with this; 10 partially agree and, once again, there is little active disagreement. The statement that online journalists are closer to their audience draws a neutral response overall, and receives 8 individual neutral opinions: however, 6 journalists strongly disagree with the assertion. There are neutral median responses to the statements that online journalists are more information packers than original creators of content, and that the net is rendering journalistic work more superficial but also, in contrast, for the claim that online journalism has better tools than has print for giving background information and context, though it should also be noted that there are 8 fully agreeing here. The idea that male journalists tend to use the net more frequently than their female colleagues is partially rejected, with 8 fully disagreeing but also with 8 neutrals.

On the basis of median values, Irish journalists are more certain than the European group that newspapers must embrace the net; are less resistant to the claim that online journalists are closer to the audience, and less inclined to the view that online journalism tends towards information packing. They disagree less strongly with the view that male journalists are more likely to use the net.

Ethics

Eight statements concerning journalism ethics were put to the participants, whose responses are shown in Table 8.11, below.

Irish journalists are strongly in agreement with the statement that the net allows journalists use a wider range of sources, with a median of 5 and with 15 fully agreeing. This is the only statement that draws a fully agree or fully disagree response from the group. The next strongest response relates to the statement that the Internet makes it easier to double-check information, with a median of 4 and with 10 fully

agreeing. However, the assertion that, online, journalists more often must deal with unreliable information also is met with partial agreement, while there is partial disagreement (median of 2) for the statement that distinguishing between true and false or inaccurate information is as easy on the Internet as elsewhere.

Journalists agree partially with the statement that Internet interactivity makes journalism more accountable to the public, and they partially disagree with the statement that online journalism means that media converge on a narrower news agenda. There are neutral responses, overall, to the statements that the net threatens the quality of journalism, and that online journalism has sacrificed speed for accuracy.

Table 8.11: Statements on ethics								
	Double-checking	Accountability	Truth, accuracy	Reliability	Quality threat	Speed sacrifice	Narrow agenda	Range of sources
Ir median	4	4	2	4	3	3	2	5
Eu median	4	3	2	4	2	3	3	4
n/a	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
1. Fully disagree	0	3	7	3	4	2	6	1
2. Partly disagree	3	2	8	2	6	5	6	0
3. Neutral	2	5	3	2	6	6	4	1
4. Partly agree	8	9	4	10	5	8	5	6
5. Fully agree	10	4	1	6	2	2	2	15

In comparison with their European counterparts, the Irish journalists are more of the opinion that online interactivity fosters accountability to the public, less inclined to disagree that the net threatens quality, but disagreeing more with concerns for the breadth of the news agenda. They also are more strongly convinced that the net allows for the use of a wider range of sources.

Journalism and the public:

Table 8.12, below, shows frequencies of responses to a number of statements relating to the Internet, journalism and the public. With no median outcome at either extreme, the firmest opinion overall is expressed in response to the statement that, when it comes to important issues, the public prefers print: although the median here is 4, there are 10 journalists in full agreement. The group registers a similar median result in their response to the statement that print media are more trusted than online media, but opts for a neutral position overall when it comes to the more general statement that print media serves the audience better. This latter also draws the heaviest number of individual neutral responses, at 8.

Table 8.12: Statements on the public							
	Public demand	**Link with audience**	**Improved r/ship**	**Print better**	**Print trust**	**Print preferred**	**News v interact.**
Ir median	4	4	4	3	4	4	4
Eu median	3	4	4	3	4	4	3
n/a	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
1. Fully disagree	2	0	0	3	0	1	1
2. Partly disagree	5	2	1	4	0	2	2
3. Neutral	4	5	4	8	3	4	3
4. Partly agree	9	11	10	4	13	6	12
5. Fully agree	3	5	8	4	7	10	5

The statement that the audience needs news, as opposed to interaction with journalists, is met with partial agreement overall, and with 12 individuals expressing opinions at point 4. Statements that the public demands that newspapers make use of online possibilities, that linking with the audience is an important benefit of online journalism, and that an improved relationship with the audience can be achieved

through a combination of print and online, all receive a rating of 4, or partial agreement, with individual opinions also heavily focused at this point (as opposed to the more moderate outcome resulting from a balancing of opinions).

Irish and wider European responses diverge in two instances. The Europeans are more sceptical of the public's desire for more online from newspapers, but are neutral on the view, which is supported by the Irish group, that news comes before interactivity.

Observing interactivity

Following the detailed but broadly based content analysis set out in Chapter 6, a further search for interactivity features present in daily newspaper websites was conducted by a sub-group of researchers (as discussed in Chapter 5). The date chosen in common with the other researchers was Tuesday, October 12, 2004, with the Irish features to be examined access and saved at 18:30, thus allowing time for responses to be posted by readers. Once again, the titles examined were the *Irish Examiner*, the *Irish Independent* and *The Irish Times*.

 As with the content analysis, this examination focused on items on or linked from the front page, with the aim of providing more detail on the individual features of interactivity offered, but also allowed for deeper exploration in search of forums. Many individual components or aspects of a website front page and its linked pages could be considered to qualify as an interactive feature; these would include content interactivity, such as hyperlinks themselves, the option to customize content, the option to customize presentation (e.g. type size), blogs, comment boxes, or even functional interactivity such as games. However, data collection in this instance was limited to e-mails, forums, chat, letters to the editor, polls, and/or interviews with prominent figures (found in some titles in the countries of other researchers but not in Ireland[4]). In doing so the intention was to draw a distinction between interactivities centred on personal consumption, on one hand, and those forms of human interactivity which may be considered most relevant to providing opportunities for discussion and dialogue with and between news producers and readers. Observations arising from examination of the presence or otherwise and, where possible, the nature of communications, are presented here. In effect, in the case of the three Irish titles, and with email facilities already covered in the principal content analysis, the focus

here is on the presence or otherwise of forums, chat rooms, polls, and letters to the editor, with no other form of interactivity evident.

Table 8.13, below, provides an overview of the interactive offerings of the Irish national dailies. It can be seen that two of the online outlets, the *Examiner* and the *Times*, carry Letters to the Editor from the print edition. In each case this content is presented separately from other interactive materials and is evidently intended to be received as a static reproduction of the letters page.

Table 8.13: Interactivity features online				
	Forum	**Chat**	**Poll**	**Letters**
I. Examiner	•	•		•
I. Independent			•	
I. Times			•	•

With respect to forum interactivity, the wider study established several categories defining the possible structure of discussions, as follows:

1. Journalist sets the agenda, users respond and journalist might answer

2. Moderator (webmaster, a reader or someone else) is controlling the forum and users communicate with him/her, other users or a specific user

3. Expert provides answers on a particular subject, users communicate with him/her, with other users or a specific user

4. Users communicate with each other

5. Users communicate with each other and the journalist

6. Media organisation sets the agenda, users react, and the forum is managed by an anonymous moderator.

While the *Independent* and the *Times's* particular shared format – that of a list of comments in response to a poll – raises definitional problems, it can be seen from

observation of the day in question and, necessarily in the case of the former, from adjacent dates, that in terms of traffic flow they both fit the model outlined in type 6, while the *Examiner's* forum conforms with type 4.

<u>User and organization identities</u>

Another significant characteristic of forums concerns the identities deployed by users and by the media organization, and here the study applied the following schema, which reflects the complexity of options:

User identities:

1. User identified by nickname

2. User identified by e-mail

3. User identified by signature

4. User identified by name

5. User identified by nickname and e-mail

6. User identified by name, surname and e-mail

7. User identified by name and e-mail

8. User entirely anonymous

Media identities:

a. No identification (here it is assumed that a staff member is overseeing the forum)

b. Journalist identified by signature

c. Anonymous moderator

d. Identified moderator

e. Identified experts

Table 8.14 shows the characteristics found in the Irish titles.

Table 8.14: Identities in interactive spaces		
	User identity	**Media identity**
I. Times	1,4	a
I. Independent	1,4	a
I. Examiner	1	c

Users posting in the interactive spaces in the *Times* and *Independent* are allowed use nicknames, but can choose to use their real names, as some do. Users in the *Examiner* are identified by nickname, with no real names apparent. There is no identification of any staff involved with the *Times* and *Independent* comment areas. The *Examiner's* moderators, although identified as belonging to the media organization, are individually anonymous.

Descriptive detail

Further relevant detail on the interactive spaces for each daily newspaper is provided below. Screenshots are provided at the end of the chapter.

Irish Examiner: The front page carries links to both a forum and a chat room. However, on the day of observation, the chat room is empty, with no chatters online. Chat statistics visible on the site report that 1,000 users are registered for chat, of whom 11 have been online in the past 24 hours, with an average time online per day of just 0.004 minutes. The most recent forum post is 12 days old. In the current affairs forum, the most recent post is over a month old, and dates from September 1.

Screenshot 10: The *Examiner's* live chat is empty

Screenshot 11: The *Examiner's* inactive forums

Given the absence of current discussion in the forums, their content was not recorded in detail. However, it was observed qualitatively that discussion on the forum, in which users contribute primarily under fictional user names and therefore are

effectively anonymous to the community, is not related to any specific content of the newspaper and also is disconnected from the *Examiner*, insofar as there is no evidence of involvement of identifiable journalists. The forums are moderated by 'TCM Editorial'.

The *Examiner* forums, linked from the front page of that newspaper's website, are located, not within the newspaper's web domain, but instead are hosted at a sub-domain – *forums.tcm.ie* – of the publishing group, Thomas Crosbie Holdings, along with forums associated with regional newspapers in the group – included here is the *Irish Post* in Britain – and two additional forums dedicated to motoring and rugby. A similar address change occurs in the case of the chat room. The forum is run on an installation of the popular and widely available vBulletin shareware,[5] and is sub-divided into four topic headings: 'People and Places', dealing with entertainment, and with 748 posts in 559 threads; 'Current Affairs' (253 in 114 threads); 'Business' (18/17) and 'Sport' (3/3). No indication of the number of users online is visible in the material, which relates only to the *Examiner* forums, saved on October 12. In order to manage the detail of the forums' context, and in response to the difficulty of recording all aspects of this complex setting, other pages on *tcm.ie* from near the main study date have been observed. A higher-level TCM forums page dated October 24 provides statistics, not available on the *Examiner* forums page, as follows: Threads: 11,256, Posts: 114,246, Members: 2,625, with Currently Active Users: 15 (0 members and 15 guests). The same page on the same day states that the most online was 110, on October 22, 2004.[6] On another proximate date, September 22, by far the busiest forum is *The Main Road*, a sub-forum of the motoring forum associated with *motornet.ie*, with 67,714 posts in 5448 threads.

A re-check in early 2005[7] found that the front page forum link led instead to a notice stating that the site's forum and chat functions had been shut down:

> 'Due to concerns on legal vulnerability, TCM has reluctantly decided to discontinue all forum, chat room and live poll comment facilities on our sites. To those of you who used these facilities responsibly – the vast majority of our readers – thank you for doing so. Our feedback email addresses remain open. Each of our sites has individual contact information.'

Despite the reference to a live poll, no other evidence could be found of this feature appearing in the *Examiner* website in or around October '04.

Irish Independent: With no fully-developed forum, the principal channel for reader input on this newspaper's website is via comments on a daily poll. The poll question, selected by the outlet, is present on the *unison.ie* home page, which is linked from the newspaper home page: '*Should the government recast budget priorities in favour of lower to average-paid workers?*'

Screenshot 12: : The *Independent's* poll has no comment responses

Upon voting, the reader is brought to a '*Unison* Polls' page, where the poll result so far is shown, with 77.9% in favour, 22.1% against, and with no neutral option. No absolute count is provided of votes cast. Readers are invited to submit their comments via a 'mailto' link that automatically specifies the subject heading in an emailed message. They also are warned to keep messages brief, and are told that abusive comments will not be posted. Links to other polls are carried in list form under the day's voting. By the evening of October 12, no responses have been published.

However, contributions which are cogent and relevant to the chosen topic are carried on some other close dates, although they are few in number, with usually less than 10. There is no response from journalists to comments, which are published in a list sequence, without the flexibility of a fully-fledged forum to allow more natural direct interaction between users.

The Irish Times: Like the *Independent*, *The Irish Times* does not offer a fully-functioning forum, but instead invites Yes/No responses to a single selected question each day. The poll, from which the results and commentary page title 'Your Reaction' is linked, is carried on the front page of the *ireland.com* portal and also from the portal's Breaking News page. Though it is within two hyperlinks of the newspaper proper, it neither appears on nor is linked directly from the home page. As in the case of the *Independent*, the website carries a statement intended to condition contributions:

> 'The *Irish Times/ireland.com* News Poll is a forum for people who wish to express their views on issues of topical interest. In order to represent as wide a range of opinions as possible and provide a stimulating platform for discussion, we ask all our contributors to only post comments which are relevant to the daily question.'

The poll of the day on October 12 concerns the politically sensitive question of Irish military neutrality in the context of a more active role for UN forces, and asks, *'Would you be in favour of Irish participation in so called UN hit squads?'* Responses are graphically depicted via a bar chart showing percentages (52% yes, 48% no at the time of observation) but with no tally of absolute voting numbers. Links to previous polls are carried in a left-hand sidebar.

In contrast to the *Irish Independent*, the *Times* provides readers with a forum in which they can make their contributions. Adjacent to the Submit button is a legal and editorial disclaimer, along with further instructions to contributors:

> 'The *Irish Times* and *ireland.com* take no responsibility for the opinions expressed. These polls are not intended to be scientific: they only reflect the opinions of *ireland.com* readers who have chosen to vote. Results cannot be assumed to be indicative of public opinion or of the opinions of Internet users

in general. Comments for publication on this page must be submitted before 11.30 p.m. Irish time on the day of the poll question.'

Screenshot 13: The *Times's* comments are in Breaking News

The site publishes 106 comments, most of them by users with nicknames, in a chronologically-ordered list over six pages. There is no evidence of editorial staff responding publicly to or moderating contributions. Some of the posts are serious and some substantial – the longest comprises 648 words – though there are many made up of no more than one or two short sentences. While the list format makes it difficult for contributors to engage each other in discussion, some make a deliberate effort to do so, using names or nick-names and citing each other's arguments. Of the total, 65 refer to other posts or posters. There are 47 posts that could be considered facetious or not directly on-topic, and many of these are also among those that reference others in the discussion (some such posts refer to comments in earlier polls).

Most of the posts express strongly partisan views, and some are quite combative, with the debate polarized, not only around the question and its implications concerning Irish military neutrality and capability, but also around related, spin-off topics, such as the role of the United Nations generally, American foreign policy, the invasion of Iraq, and immigration, particularly of Muslims, into Europe. Overall, it is difficult for a casual reader, who is not individually engaged or conversant with the facts of the matter, to follow the discussion.

Summary

This chapter has reported and summarized data from the survey of journalists as informed experts, and has provided further depth on online interactive features that otherwise might not have been made apparent by the content analysis applied to the web editions of the three national dailies. The additional material thus garnered will be used in the following chapter in a synthesized discussion of the evolution of online news as an output of journalistic and associated processes, and of the views and practices of journalists as revealed by practitioners themselves.

Endnotes

[1] Median values for the Irish journalists shown in tables are based on individual responses, as opposed to the counts of those responses.

[2] This followed the pattern in the wider European group.

[3] Irrelevant in Ireland, but included to ensure comprehensive coverage in the wider European survey.

[4] A related example in Ireland is the practice of interviews with prominent journalists on the RTÉ news website, though these have tended to be rather soft-focused in nature.

[5] See http://www.vbulletin.com/

[6] The statement of the most users ever online is usually unreliable because it appears from observation of a range of other pages that this figure may be continuously reset so that it sometimes reports the current number online as the maximum. However, this is not the case on the date of observation.

[7] See the legal notice, which at the time of writing is retained at http://web.archive.org/web/20050126170152/http://forums.tcm.ie (January 26, 2005).

Chapter 9: Analysis and interpretation

Introduction

Observed data have been presented in the previous three chapters relating to the content and format of print and online editions and their look and feel, with the opinions of journalists provided by means of an informed survey, along with further depth on interactivity features. This chapter provides analysis of the data thus laid out, to reach a synthesized interpretation of the evolution of Irish national newspaper journalism in the context of wider developments in Internet news and public debate.

The form of news

Chapter 6 provides detail of the patterns of how content is distributed across print and online editions, in the Irish outlets and in the European mean. The most striking change is in the steep drop in the space claimed by news, and therefore, core journalistic content, in the shift online. While news remains the biggest single category, the practice of providing teasers rather than full stories on the front page means that it requires less total space, but only at the cost of requiring the audience deliberately to select linked content, with consequential loss of readers, depending on effective usability design (Krug 2006, Nielsen and Loranger 2006). Rather than being foregrounded, therefore, news in its substantial format has been forced from the front page by the straitened media logic of the web page. The heightened mediation brought about by the replacement of actual stories with, instead, links to stories, effects a loss of prominence for individual content items. With this change online comes also a diminution in the ability of editorial staff to use the greater flexibility of print design techniques to assert a navigational and hierarchical structure, beyond a primitive listing order, on the day's news, which is one of the principal features of the evolution

of print news, both before and subsequent to the advent of digital production (Cooke 2005).

Conversely, it may be argued that this levelling of the structure of the news element on home pages serves to transfer some measure of autonomy from producer to reader, giving the latter less direction in choosing stories and thereby altering the power relations of news. However, beyond the highlighting of lead stories, this top left to bottom right ordering, even in a still-largely text-heavy context, more likely echoes the highly directive ranking of the broadcast media news bulletin. Also sacrificed is much of the non-literal navigational interactivity provided in the print grammar of page layouts in which the lead (or splash) story is followed by off-lead, and other stories are differentiated by means of placement along with a variety of typographical devices. It would be difficult to imagine tolerance, among news producers or their audiences, of such sacrifice of this important meaning in print, yet it is striking that the relatively inarticulate presentation of news online draws little adverse comment from editors or in online journalism research literature.

Closely related to this templated stripping of meaning in page presentation is the mix of content as evidenced in terms of the absolute number of items. Paradoxically, by this measure, news registers an increase in predominance, as publishers are able to fit more items onto the front page by means of hyperlinking to full content elsewhere, and as the web page layout, characterized by small font sizes, demands this volume of items. The *Independent* and the *Examiner* online each shows a dramatic increase in the number of front page news items, as does the European norm, but with the former emerging at the extreme. Notably, *The Irish Times* maintains a constant news item count, at 15: this may relate to the newspaper web edition home page's subordinate position within the *ireland.com* portal, giving it a more distinct identity as a child of the print edition.

As with the loss of navigational meaning, the generally less discriminating tendency in promoting stories to the home page represents a significant departure from the fastidiously critical selection of items for the print front page, the latter invariably being seen by news desks as an unambiguous declaration of the judgement of priorities in any one news day, according to a tacitly understood convention that is also inherent in the audience's reading. On the web, for the most part, a 'Page One

story' does not have the same standing, and no one producing news for the web in this format will ever declare 'Hold the front page!' Where in print journalists invest active, deliberative effort so that the carefully structured and customized design of a front page itself forms a primary part of the communication of news, online, at least most of the time, the effect is that of a hastily aimed blunderbuss.

None of the Irish newspapers carries a full news article on its online home page. Instead, heavy use is made of headline-only items, a type of content not seen in Irish print editions, though with a notable presence registered in European newspapers, and of short introductions, as coverage becomes terser and less discursive than the already tightly formulaic, inverted pyramid style of conventional straight reporting language. Headline-only stories dominate the *Irish Independent* online, while *The Irish Times* takes the opposite approach, with almost all of its news content rendered in intro format.

The *Irish Independent* and *The Irish Times* print editions conform clearly in their print editions to established modular layout styles that since the 1980s have come to represent the norm in conventional English language newspaper design.[1] The *Examiner* is less obviously of this genre, and it may be speculated that its rather open print layout is perhaps as much a consequence of fewer resources for investment in the governing design parameters, while its low story count may reflect its smaller newsroom. Online, the *Examiner* also has a simpler, less content-loaded presence; nevertheless, it joins the other two titles in effecting a dramatic increase in stories relative to print, and in the apparent profusion of items provided, principally through large arrays of links. On the web, much more material makes it to the front page, at least in the form of headlines or intros, and so the impression is given of vast abundance of content, though in a less differentiated format.

In evidence here is the remediation of the print news format in a new, hyper-mediated form on the web, with actual content at a further remove, both in terms of its meaning as an element on the home page and, quite literally, in its click-distance from the reader ((Bolter and Grusin 1999, Bolter 2000). Where, in a print front page, the reader typically is confronted with a story, or stories, online, the reader is provided with items which themselves are not the story, but which are about the story.

A tighter news net

If the shift towards more condensed news is manifested in the presentation and formatting of stories online, this trend is reinforced by variations in the type of story and story location chosen for publication in full in the web editions, as the already few commentary or analysis articles lose their front page status in the Irish outlets, and local and regional coverage, a strength of Irish print newspapers compared with the European norm, loses out. The constricting of the news agenda continues in terms of topic: economics (a broad category that includes business and finance), already relatively generously covered in Irish print editions, grows its share significantly in the web versions, while social and health news is almost halved in terms of the proportion of leading news items. While political coverage increases, its overall weight in the content mix remains much lower than the European norm. Patterns in sources used by journalists for their stories also show an intensified reliance on business and government, most strikingly in the case of *The Irish Times*. Similarly, against the European trend, the Irish online news outlets converge on articles identifiably authored by journalists. The *Independent's* practice of dropping authors' by-lines in the web edition provides a potentially misleading indicator here, but also in itself serves as a commentary on a highly refined version of news that speaks in the impersonal voice of the news outlet, and is by implication more objective.[2]

Visually, web pages are considerably busier and apparently more packed than those of their corresponding print outlets, and generally have more of everything, providing a superficial initial impression of greater activity and diversity. The cutting of space for news, set against the large increase in individual items, results roughly in a modest sacrifice of prominence to other types of content. In print, colour, comment and analysis articles are deployed routinely to enrich content and to provide a counterpoint to the steady tone of straight news writing. These three forms of story are represented, albeit lightly and to a lesser extent than in the European group generally, in the primary mix in Irish print news: they disappear from view entirely online in Ireland, while in Europe as a whole the fall-off is slight, and in the case of colour writing actually increases. Thus, Anderson's expectation of an increase in soft news online (2007) is not borne out in this space; rather, Irish online news converges on a narrower, less plural selection that most easily squares with the most traditional notions of news.

A similar narrowing occurs in relation to local news, as the *Irish Examiner,* in which this category ranks highly in print, spikes such material online, entirely purging the web edition's top 15 slots of any such content. Nevertheless, coverage of European affairs, other than matters directly affecting Ireland, registers a modest increase, as does coverage of purely international affairs, and so domestic news suffers a slight fall-off. It may be possible to view such movement as a deliberate broadening of the news mix with a view to catering for a wider audience and perhaps gaining international readers. However, another likely factor from the news production dimension is the easy availability of clean, pre-edited wire service copy on which Irish newspapers, with limited resources and few foreign correspondents, rely heavily, but which in print editions is subject to space constraints.

Another category of coverage in which content is in ready supply in recent years is that of economic and business journalism, and such news finds strikingly more favour in the online editions, primarily at the expense of items concerning society, health and welfare. Similarly, crime and political reporting, two beats which are well-serviced by official sources, also get a boost online, while culture remains largely absent in Irish titles, and sport roughly maintains its position: both print and digital formats in Ireland carry higher proportions of this latter category than the wider group (perhaps because of the absence here of special sports newspapers) although increasing its representation in Europe generally.

It can be seen that, in spite of the impression of an abundance and diversity, overall, when observed in terms of story types and characteristics, online front pages tend to retreat to the better-trodden paths in terms of the form of news content, its subject matter, its regional focus, its authorship and its sourcing. Even as web pages appear to offer a novel array of choice to users, news online, as packaged and re-purposed in the templates of content management systems, is more likely to converge in its formatted presentation on an emphatically homogenous offering of hard, straight, objectively-toned news, in keeping with evolved professional practices (Ward 2004).

Non-news priorities and the use of content layers

Outside of the news hole available on home pages, online editions are built around repetition and re-use.[3] While, as discussed above, there is massive density of links and

items, many of these are overlapping within the newspaper and re-occur in the associated portals. *ireland.com* and *unison.ie* are presented as something new, but much of their content extends little beyond a re-working of the newspaper content within them, and close examination of these sites reveals what is primarily an exercise in re-branding. Often, the 'new' media entity uses extensive linking to re-use content items from the online newspaper edition. The media organization effectively conjures a second media property that apparently has more to do with positioning in the market, rather than with new formats for news presentation driven by journalistic concerns to ensure the best use of the new platform.

The resulting layered content artefact, in which material is shared between the newspaper sites and their portals, or, in the case of the *Examiner*, its breaking news service, is part of a wider interplay that goes beyond the confines of the newspaper title or, indeed, journalism. Publishers are anxious to make the most of their existing commercial properties, and so newspaper websites, in addition to focusing on the individual title, are, in common with practice elsewhere (Barnhurst 2010, Barnhurst 2002) designed to provide easy pathways to other products and services provided by the publishing organization or group. Such corporate interests are heavily represented in the portals, and this is something about which their print editions are far more reticent.

 In addition to facilitating re-presentation of individual items of content across portals or other services, closer examination reveals that web technologies are used to share components such as navigation and menu panels in the templates, further eroding the distinct identity of the online editions, with at times confusing pathways to content that now resides in what are, at least on the surface, random patterns. In essence, portals, other than insofar as they seek to leverage external media and other assets, are little more than a re-packaging and re-organization of the core newspaper which they present as a sub-component. This apparent expansion is made possible by a meta-design that takes place above the level of news or journalism, and is implemented by means of database technologies that repeatedly draw content from the same ultimate source, by means of links and content placeholders. Emblematic of this double-take, engendered by partial remediation, is the confused identity of individual news content items in *The Irish Times*, which display the newspaper's familiar masthead twice,

once as part of the story's individual presentation but, above that again, though in smaller form, as a graphic link present in the *ireland.com* global navigation panel. Similarly, an individual content item in the *Irish Independent* online resides in a page which, while visually belonging unambiguously to the online edition, refers through most its tightly-packed display of navigational links to the portal page, where, in turn, items originating in the same print publication are to be found.

Within the juggling of existing material, it can be seen that online editions are, through their content re-use and though their connections beyond the newspaper proper, much more explicit in their positioning as part of publishers' wider commercial interests. While advertising does not register the increase in terms of percentage space that this might be expected to imply, it nevertheless, through more prominent placement, becomes a more intrusive and more integrated presence on online home pages. Further, while direct evidence exists only in the case of the *Independent*, it is clear that ads may also appear now that are focused on individual stories and pages. And, in the same title online, front page classified advertising, long a symbol of archaic broadsheet newspaper formats and economic dominance, in contra-distinction to modern design practice, makes a re-appearance, albeit in the form of a prominent links panel.

These online editions reflect the anxieties of their publishers to normalize the web format for the purpose of strategic defence, or hedging (Boczkowski 2004b). In this respect, even if in commercial terms they may be viewed as confused, tentative and in many respects inadequate, they conform as an instance of suppression of radical potential by incumbent actors (Winston 1998). If, on a tactical level they appear driven by the undemanding, bought-in or outsourced technologies of multi-platform content management systems which, essentially, purport to make more of the same content base, more fundamentally they are an extended expression of publishing organizations' economic concerns, concomitant primarily and freighted with the underlying political-economic dynamics of news (Curran and Seaton 2003), and much less vehicles for exploiting the potential of online platforms to extend or improve journalism.

It would seem that, at this point in their evolution, online editions, even as they reside within the portals which they almost entirely underpin, are considerably more

responsive to mixed and potentially conflicting objectives from varying constituencies within publishing houses. This configuration, in which news is commodified tangibly, indicates the failure of established editorial control to extend online, with a more passive journalistic stake in the online property, as wider institutional and strategic priorities visibly encroach in the news sphere, even as journalists provide most of the material output which forms the meat in the product. In this way, if one accepts the position that news outlets primarily exist to provide journalistic content to audiences, it can be said that the core activities of these organizations are demoted in the online realm.

Content re-purposing

As has been seen in Chapter 4, *The Irish Times*, in its early flush of enthusiasm a self-declared pioneer of online news, was one of a very few newspaper titles singled out by Hall (2001) as eschewing the shovelware route to web publishing. Early in the evolution of web news, the provision of fresh content for online editions was regarded as a litmus test for news organizations' commitment to web editions as a new medium, but in this regard most news sites have failed to fulfil expectations (Gunter 2003). It appears that this also has been the experience in Irish news.

Of the three Irish national dailies, only the *Examiner* runs stories that are to be found exclusively online, while the *Times* and the *Independent* entirely shun the opportunity presented by an enlarged or even limitless news hole to include more or different items. The fact that the *Examiner* augments its content relates, however, to the radically low story count of its print edition front page. This therefore, can be seen as an expression of that newspaper's divergence from convention in print, rather than a deliberate extension of journalism into the new platform. Against this, it should be allowed that the *Examiner's* more highly-developed breaking news service, a separate commercial venture, permits it to achieve such change within existing structures and routines developed outside the newspaper proper, and with less adaptive effort by the newspaper. It may be argued that this more distributed model is in keeping with the de-centralizing effect of the web – news no longer needs to be identified with a single, central newsroom and, in any case, entire online editions, along with portal sites, are produced by separate commercial entities within the existing media structures or even outsourced entirely, as in the case of *Unison* and *independent.ie*. However, an

explanation that is more securely grounded in the evolving political economy of news is that breaking news represents a strong opportunity for the publishing group as a commodity producer to capitalize on the needs of other websites, such as those of ISPs, to provide 'free' content to readers, usually with advertising as the revenue objective. Once again, forces and interests other than those in the editorial offices are driving change in the online edition, and the power structures evident in the online space are not those which are materialized in print.

At the opposite extreme to that of the *Examiner*, the *Independent*'s quotient of re-purposed content is total – no item is to be found in the online edition that is not in the print paper, and each item is identical in its print and online form. The *Times* displays a little more variation, with a small proportion of items having a different headline or different length, either shorter or longer, but still with no items that are not already in print. Where the *Times's* online content offering does apparently depart from print, in the provision in an ambiguously titled 'Special Reports' section, the content is not original; rather, this section provides links to the original documents, hosted, not on third party websites, but on *ireland.com*'s servers. This feature, which in effect is re-purposing of source material from external sources, represents a new use of two of the web's most potentially radical affordances – linking and unrestricted space – though in a highly cautious format.[4] However, it must also be taken into account that the practice extends online an already existing and quite distinctive characteristic of this newspaper in print, which, in spite of the space demanded, routinely has carried long extracts or unedited versions of important speeches, economic reports and other official documents, in keeping with the *Times's* self-proclaimed role as Ireland's paper of reference. In doing so, the online edition further reinforces an already quite distinctive attachment to established sources and practices connected with them. Online, one could say that in respect of content originality *The Irish Times* uses web technologies not to change, but to become even more like *The Irish Times* or, at least, a concentrated and truncated version of itself.

None of the repurposed stories in the Irish web editions has hyperlinks (links are discussed in more detail below). If European newspapers are shown in the main to take an at most mixed view of augmenting news online, with a significant minority of articles appearing only in the web edition, and fewer identical stories, Irish national

news titles are much more heavily wedded to the output of their traditional medium. Their websites, are effectively, little more than alternative digital mirrors for the delivery of news produced for print. In this, they fall well short of the normative ideals which we have seen set out in the more progressively-oriented contributors to the literature (Hall 2001, Pavlik 2001, Kawamoto 2003).

In keeping with the Internet's loosening of the boundaries of space and time and the situating of news in Manuel Castells' space of flows (Stalder 2006), one might expect to have observed some movement in the length of stories and in their format. However, it is clear from the data that, other than in the case of the *Examiner*, which has a special reason to increase its front page story count, stories in the Irish online outlets are published in the expectation that they will be read according to the convention of inverted pyramid news stories, without links to additional resources, and that there is no clear impetus to challenge the restraint, in traditional media expressed in terms of physical capacity, that necessitates, justifies and governs news selection and gatekeeping. This is the case in spite of individual story pages' capacity to provide expanded content at no additional technical cost and with little effort in labour, either technical or journalistic.

Given that most print stories will have been cut to fit, it is worth noting that online stories are not re-assessed to include additional material included in reporters' original copy. Indeed, the existence of some very small variations in the length of items in *The Irish Times's* print and web editions, even if some are longer online and some shorter, serves to indicate that those limits are not immovable. Nor, as shown by the almost total match between content types online and off, is there any meaningful attempt, within this new, flexible news space, to vary the news diet for a different audience with potentially different demands and purposes, and different ways of reading.[5] If the news in print is linear, so also, against the expectations and wishes of the progressives (Rosenberg 2010), is news on the web.

Breaking news

The apparent stasis in the principal content of the sites is overthrown in the case of breaking news: each of the Irish sites carries this feature, and it is much more heavily implemented than in the wider European context. *The Irish Times* is by far the most

timid in its deployment of this feature, carrying only one such item in under 1% of its home page space, but the *Independent* and the *Examiner* revel in it, with six items visible in the online front page of each, and with much more available on the dedicated breaking news page. However, this is not to say that these online editions at this point are using the web to advance the timeliness of news generally. In each case, apparent on visual inspection, the breaking news section is relatively small and is distinctively corralled in its layout away from the main news sections, which are closer to the print sequence. This counter-balancing downplaying is also reflected in the coded data: in spite of the higher number of items, the Irish collective score for immediacy, a measure also taking placement and prominence into account, only equals that of Europe.

Breaking news, if something more than a mere gimmick, is presented as a marginal component of the web editions, and not part of the principal content or intended to be read in such manner. In the cases of both the *Independent* and the *Times*, readers selecting a link in this category are brought to a page in the corresponding portal, and not to a newly-established section of the newspaper.

While breaking news frequently is cited as a feature of online news platforms, it can also be argued that it relates to journalistic priorities that pre-date digital news platforms. Timeliness is an essential news value, and breaking news features commonly are implemented in television news, and in particular in business news broadcasts, in the form of scrolling text. Further, the staggered scheduling of print news production means that the concept of producing news throughout the news day is not alien, even to a newspaper confined to one edition. While front page news may be researched, written and edited as close as possible to deadline, the majority of stories routinely are filed, edited and processed for publication across the span of the news day. In the context of newsrooms servicing more than one publication, as with the *Independent* and the *Examiner*, this continuous process of rolling news, hidden from readers who perceive what appears, for the most part, to be a snapshot of events, historically has been almost continuous over 24 hours. Breaking news, while achieving high impact in distinguishing print news from online, is another relatively comfortable adaptation for news organizations, since it is, beneath the guise of simultaneous publication in discrete editions, in keeping with their existing routines.[6]

In the case of the *Examiner*, as seen above, breaking news is part of a larger organizational effort, the output of which is intended for syndication elsewhere and to which the individual newspaper's needs, while fitting closely into the evident synergies, are perhaps not central. Similarly, readers who venture beyond the modest breaking news content on the online newspaper home pages of the *Independent* and the *Times* find themselves reading the title's corresponding portal, interwoven, as has been discussed already, with the online newspaper. Whether consciously or not, this type of news is presented as something that, while worthy of links from the front page, is hastily published, with consequent limitations and implications for reliability (Phillips 2010) and outside the definition of the newspaper edition proper, in which a more developed and more reliable version may be provided later.[7]

Hyperlinks

Returning to the proportions of different content types represented on front pages, one of the changes most immediately apparent from the content analysis and the related exploration of news presentation is the massive allocation of space to hyperlinks, or pointers online. Irish newspapers in print make less use of pointers than their European counterparts, but on average almost catch up online. By this measure, hyperlinks fall second only to news itself, this heavy presence being achieved by visually dominant blocks of text links or through additional graphic treatment. In this respect, the online editions clearly are of the web: since hyperlinks are the means of functional navigation around the web space, they could not be otherwise.

While the *Independent* and *Examiner* are most enthusiastic in their deployment of links, the early-adopting *Times*, as in the case of breaking news, is less active in this respect, with a little over half the European norm. As in the case of breaking news, this less complete embrace of online features may be related to the separation of the newspaper online edition from its portal, so that the former more strongly reflects its print provenance.

While news is by far the most dominant linked-to content category, the principal content type gaining attention here is self-promotion of the news outlet's publishing organization, beyond the confines of the edition at hand. This practice is less salient in Irish print news than in European editions; nevertheless, such content is the second

most favoured category to which links direct readers. Irish newspapers, and in particular the *Examiner*, with again the *Times* displaying the most moderate change, show themselves anxious to display the media and other commercial strengths of their organizations extending beyond the individual newspaper. This impulse is further emphasized in the preponderance of self-promotion among high-impact graphic links: the use of this type of link is less pronounced than the European average, but it nevertheless registers the presence of a type of item that does not appear in any of the Irish print editions. In text links, while there is a general increase in the emphasis of self-promotion in European online news generally, Irish newspapers overtake the norm by some distance. Websites here are being used not only to host the output of the news organization, with a clearly defined audience in mind, but it can be seen that, as with content, the deployment of links also reflect the concerns of the publisher beyond the newsroom.

The distribution of these devices within the web editions provides some insight into how priorities in news online differ from those in print. The degree to which links from within individual stories refer to external sources is especially instructive, given the interest, discussed previously, in the potential for more interactive, non-linear and layered texts based on this defining characteristic of HTML or HTML-derived documents.[8] However, the *Times* only shows trace evidence of such practice, and the *Examiner* and *Independent*, in spite of the myriad opportunities to provide them, have no such links. This near total absence of in-content links and links to other websites – one dependant on the other, since it is from within story contents that such links are most applicable – is a clear declaration by each of the newspapers that this feature is seen not as something fundamental to their web pages, but instead as a limited device deployed as a means of site navigation and, beyond that, to directing the reader to promotions. This may be simply connected with ethical dilemmas around linking to undesirable material or organizations, or, more systemically, may relate to a fear of diverting and thus losing readers (Friend 2007a). However, it also relates to journalism routines and to the power relations between content producers and consumers.

Further, the opportunity is passed over to enrich individual stories with links to related content. Such links potentially widen and deepen readers' understanding while

allowing them to read news in a less directed manner, even if confined to the current publication. They also could increase the relevance and currency of archive content and help to overcome the inherent isolation of a stand-alone news page that is accessed not via the home page but by a hyperlink reference in a search engine or other external site. However, they are entirely absent. It is difficult not to conclude that the technically unchallenging policy of providing such links is spurned not simply because it would invoke some journalistic resourcing and, indeed, imagination, but also, on a more fundamental level, because of the ways in which such linking intervenes in journalistic culture and role perception. Nor would such effort, and such connections, fall within the easier-sold, automatically implemented category of self-promotion. Links in individual content pages, therefore, while they may extend beyond the news, and even beyond the concerns of the individual outlet in order to promote the corporate agendas of publishers, are not seen as a tool for the story to reach beyond the print-defined limits of coverage or to adapt news to the web. In these online editions, stories still are defined and limited by the professional judgement of in-house editors, and begin and end with the newspaper, as they do in print. Accordingly, the gate-keeper (Tremayne 2006, Haas 2005) is still firmly in place.

Interactivity

Excluding pointers, Irish newspapers roughly match the European norm in terms of the small space devoted to interactivity and communication with readers, this space increasing but nevertheless remaining low online. The number of links to a variety of items ranging from postal addresses, telephone numbers and email addresses to forums rises markedly in the Irish editions online, but only in line with the general predominance of hyperlinks, so that in percentage terms they are similar to the European norm. Just as in the wider group, there is no evidence here of a transformative flowering of interactivity in Irish news.

User feedback, relating to more prosaic forms of contact, registers a general increase, and email forwarding and printing facilities also add to the variety of means by which users can shape and share content. However, the more challenging discussion index, which refers to the likes of polls, forums, chat rooms, registers at zero for both the *Times* and the *Independent*. In the former, a Yes/No poll concerning the election in

California provides a semblance of user involvement, but at this point only in the *ireland.com* portal as linked from the online newspaper.

While the *Examiner's* public forum, a rare articulation of the web's radical potential in the context of discussion of public affairs, brings it above the modest European norm, on average Irish outlets have a lower score in this regard. Similarly, Irish newspapers score low on customization, extending only to the provision of archives and search tools, though the *Independent* does not offer the latter, instead providing an archive that is only can be browsed manually by day.

When the nature of interactive features extending beyond site navigation and functionality such as email, print etc is further investigated, the promise of interactivity dims further. The *Examiner's* chat room is empty, and its forums, while superficially impressive, prove inactive, with no current posts, and with those relating to news, current affairs and debate of public issues swamped with entertainment, celebrity, sport and lifestyle discussions, many of these in separate online properties of the publisher organization. Similarly, local forums set up by the publisher to focus on individual counties show little take-up.

In the case of the *Independent*, a uniquely forbidding and manual, email-based system of communication results in very few to no comments in response to its polls. The *Times's* parallel system, while harvesting a greater number of replies, lacks any engagement by journalists and is difficult to read with continuity. Rather than being a conversation between journalists and their publics, or even a conversation confined to readers, it is for the most part a loosely organized series of individual posts of variable quality that collectively offer little coherence or meaning. Both of these 'forums' fit the most restrictive category in terms of how they are structured, with the media organization setting the agenda – in this case in the most extreme way by nominating a single topic of discussion – to which largely anonymous users react and with anonymous moderation. In contrast to the apparent workings of more evolved forums, moderation is entirely opaque, with no means for the reader to understand what posts are being filtered, or even how many posts have been made in the first place. While posting successfully to such a forum has some value in terms of user gratification, since it offers readers a means of publication of one's views, it is clear that such content is of marginal relevance to the news agenda, and that, the re-publishing of

Letters to the Editor from the print edition, as in the case of *The Irish Times*, potentially adds more to enhancing public debate.

Adding a more focused comparative dimension (Fortunati, et al. 2010), it is striking how practice in Ireland lags behind that in Italy, Bulgaria and Latvia, which, while generally falling short of full interactivity, have at least some opportunities in online newspapers for more diverse and more openly moderated discussions that are more closely related to story content. In spite of the widespread discussion around new media's interactive potential, it is clear that Irish newspapers at this point regard news in non-interactive terms. In Deuze's typology (2003), in which traditional news favours content over connectivity, they are firmly in the 'old' camp of mainstream newspaper websites, where they join many others (Imfeld and Scott 2005).

Finally, one common feature of any interactive features present in the three nationals online is the degree of cautious distancing and pre-conditioning that is in evidence. Given Ireland's extraordinarily harsh and unpredictable defamation regime (Bourke 2004), the fear of libel lawyers is palpable, and that fear is realized and expressed in the starkest terms with the *Examiner's* closure of its forums. Thus, Irish online newspapers operate in an environment in which users, as has been observed elsewhere, show a hesitant appetite for interactivity (Bergström 2008), and publishers' response to the potential for such features can be characterized as defensive.

Multimedia

At the time of data collection, one of the most anticipated features of news on the web is entirely absent from the Irish editions, at least in the commonly understood sense of mixed audio and video and animation elements (Pavlik 2001, Friend and Singer 2007). Because the definition of multimedia for this study (and literally) is taken to include still images, the print editions, with their often rich pictorial treatments, emerge as richer in this respect than the online editions, in Ireland and Europe both. In spite of the seemingly seductive arguments for extending news formats on a platform that in theory has no limits on space, expressed either in terms of the length of content or digital file sizes, the web produces instead a text-centred facsimile of print news in which stories conform to given lengths. If this can be attributed in part to bandwidth considerations, they also reflect an increasingly established orthodoxy in which,

online and on-screen, short writing is preferred (Darlene Maciuba-Koppel 2002, Price and Price 2002). In online editions, pictures are reduced to largely to a head and shoulders' role, in which content items are illustrated with small images of story protagonists. Thus is lost the dramatic power and subtlety of the modern print news image and its capacity to tell a story independently of text. On the web, at this point, the picture editor has no role other than to crop and reduce content, and the video and audio editor has yet to be used.

The limited use of images may make sense in a largely pre-broadband context, but the widespread provision of faster Internet removes this choke from the variety of content forms, at least in technical terms, and re-poses the challenge to news producers. In the meantime, newspapers on the web are an overwhelmingly textual proposition, with images serving as page decoration and where multimedia is little more than an aspiration expressed in articles now hidden in the archives.[9]

Rather than showcasing the multimedia prowess or otherwise of news producers, all three sites are defined to a much greater degree by their use of typography. Where print, and in particular print news, is dependant on firmly established hierarchies signalled by type, so the web follows suit, but in the process reducing the variety of typefaces and, within them, variations in size and style, as web pages technically are forced to conform to the limited font installations of readers' machines. These restrictions are implemented by pre-ordained styles set in the site templates, providing for a much more homogenized visual diet. For example, where a colour, human interest or humorous piece might be signalled in print by a relatively subtle change to bold body type, no such variation occurs in the web edition, as story pages are served according to an unwavering formula based on a single, vertical column of text. Across all editions, the print versions of which are still strongly differentiated by typography, the overwhelming presence online is that of the ubiquitous Arial sans serif typeface. Such homogeneity, reinforced by the predominantly list-formatted layouts referred to above, forces yet more constricted and presentation of news online, even as each of these apparently forward-looking digital editions clings to its old branding by means of a heavily-serifed, faux-antique masthead.

Just as broadband will allow greater potential for use of bandwidth-hungry multimedia, if not dictate its implementation, this restriction in type options is likely

to ease with the development of more flexible technologies. However, in this period in the development of the form, in a paradoxically invisible dimension that heavily colours the presentation of news, visually impoverished online systems serve to make web editions look and behave like each other more than they act to provide a distinct presence in the new platform.

Summary

The much-celebrated potential of news online is shown to be unrealized in the context of Irish national news. Rather than extending news though the use of the web, online editions are seen to re-focus on an even tighter definition of news, with less diversity of sources, content, and presentation.

This trend is driven by highly structured but journalistically silent templates, with apparently little intervention by journalists, as editing and filtering instead are delegated to a machine or software agent according to an pre-determined formula for a mix of re-purposed content. The sense of news by algorithm, the by-product of pre-existing routines in print, is reinforced by the presentation of content as a list, and the loss of context and news hierarchies, along with other subtleties of variation, achieved in the conventions of print design, even as text dominates and the web borrows some of print's typographic conventions at a rudimentary level. Simply put, there is little if any additional journalistic agency in evidence. Instead, newspapers, or more precisely, newspaper publishers, engage with the web to promote linkages that, while real in terms of publishing organizations' structures, are absent from print editions. If print is a 'hot' medium, directing its readers in highly structured ways, the web, as applied to news in the context of the online editions, is hotter still, and so is likely to disappoint McLuhanite hopes of audience power (Levinson 1999).[10] The outcome of the apparent tension between commercial and editorial departments is a loss of the latter's control over the published 'product': it would seem that the opportunity to promote the organization over the newspaper is too tempting for publishers to resist, on the one hand, while, on the other, in spite of the rhetoric and rituals of web journalism, the actual engagement with the web as a wholly new set of potentials for communication news is minimal. It is ironic that, where layers of content are provided, contrary to Halls's 'editorial imperative' to provide more meaningful and open-ended news (Hall 2001 p71), they serve instead to establish a confused

navigation between online editions and their portals that pursue aims other than those of journalism.

There is similar potential, away from the direct concerns of publishers and focusing instead on the quality of public debate, for online newspapers to foster greater interactivity and to change the relations between news producers and the audience. However, as we have seen, this potential not only remains unrealized but, in its responses, fearfully diminished and restricted. Irish online news makes a deliberate attempt to normalize interactivity in the most restricted way, while retaining control of its own agenda-setting and gatekeeping power (Shoemaker 1991). Nothing, in reality, is up for discussion, and the news remains statically defined by its producers.

Irish national newspaper news online, therefore, is choosing not to make use of, or has not been allowed to explore and exploit, many of the declared potentialities of new digital technologies. Certainly, it does not bear out the confident declaration by Roy Greenslade that it is anachronistic to speak in terms of online newspaper editions (cited in Hall 2008, p.208). Nor, however, is the response of news organizations largely determined by journalism. Instead, other agendas which are confined to the political and economic field are clearly in view on the web. It appears that journalism, while providing much of the content on which these online vehicles depend, effectively has ignored the web, and in doing so has either yet to recognize a role for itself that is of the Internet, as opposed to traditional media, or, if any such roles are perceived, has yet to unravel how they can be expressed from within the existing base of industry structures and strategic concerns, or in ways that cohere with professional practices and values.

Informed survey of working journalists

On the whole, the Irish journalists who took part in the informed survey, results of which are reported in Chapter 8, express a mixture of selective enthusiasm threaded through with a marked ambivalence in their responses to questions concerning their work practices, their values, and their public roles.

On one level, these journalists, taken as a group, are notably Internet-friendly, just a decade after the advent of the net as a system for use by those beyond the restricted domains of academe and the US military. Regarding their use of the net, there are no candidates here for caricature as technophobic dinosaurs, and it would be difficult to lay a charge that they do not 'get' the net. Overall, in contrast to earlier, more qualitatively-focused soundings, based on interviews (O'Sullivan 2005a), their posture is one of openness to and even enthusiasm for the new possibilities offered by ICTs, although it is worth noting that the least frequent users of the net all come from those who identify themselves as solely print journalists. Respondents are regular users of the net, most more than 10 times in the working day; most have used the net for the greater part of their careers as journalists, and there is little concern over technical difficulty. This last stands in contrast to the relatively recent, in historical terms, introduction of soft setting and onscreen page make-up digital print technology in newsrooms (Smith 1980, Hodgson 1992), which for some, accustomed to the paper and lead-based environment of hot metal and rotary press production, has proved to be a career-ending, or at least career-limiting, watershed.[11]

Even if their work appears both in print and online, or else solely online, respondents self-identify emphatically as print journalists, and to an appreciably greater degree than do European journalists generally, and their knowledge of the new formats in which their output is delivered is, at best, patchy. Nevertheless, as experienced news workers, they express some broadly – and at times strongly – positive and optimistic views concerning the net's potential. Asked to respond in the context of the future of newspapers, they agree strongly that the net holds out new possibilities for journalism, and they are similarly enthusiastic about multimedia. They also strongly hold the view that newspapers must embrace the net in order to survive, and they identify the net as being more important than developments in digital broadcasting or the growth of free newspapers.

Less strategically, they show that they have come to integrate net-dependent techniques in their newsgathering processes and routines. Take away the net, they say, and the speed of information research and the efficacy of contact with newsroom colleagues would be very negatively impacted. The net is useful to them for monitoring other news sites and other media generally, for accessing sources, and for

finding background information. However, its most important facility for reporters, the web search, lags behind traditional methods, and the telephone, along with face-to-face contact, are still regarded unhesitatingly as the primary research tools. Additionally, while journalists are using the net, they are not necessarily doing so to achieve novel aims. The net is important to them for distinctly old-fashioned, prosaic purposes that relate to older journalism practices and routines, such as accessing parliamentary records, finding background information, verifying facts, accessing dictionaries and thesauruses, and finding service information. Here, new technologies provide added efficiency, and it is clear that they naturally would supplant paper-based techniques, but they do not of themselves add a different kind of journalism or even a fundamentally new way of approaching existing journalistic aims.

The reinforcement of existing or traditional methods is, however, not confined to what may seem, at least on the surface, trivial techniques at the humdrum margins of journalism routines. Verification goes to the traditional journalistic concern with accuracy and, to that end, fact-checking, and it is difficult to argue that the net is not in many ways a superior reference source. But journalists also indicated that they value the net as a news finding tool most highly in relation to access to press releases, to (national) government information, and to information about or from business corporations. This sentiment chimes with the increased concentration on official sources seen in this study's content analysis, and is in conflict, at least potentially, with journalists' more aspirational view, firmly expressed when asked about ethics, that the net allows for the use of a wider range of sources for news. Notwithstanding their enthusiasm for the net as a vehicle for press releases, when challenged as to whether the net might narrow the news agenda, journalists were inclined to disagree. Typically, more optimism is expressed in relation to abstract concerns, in the form of newspaper strategies or normative values of journalism, but opposed to such positive and progressive sentiments, when responding in relation to the finer detail of practice and routines, journalists tend more easily to endorse the net to the extent that it supports already established goals and methods.

Platforms

If Irish journalists show strong enthusiasm for the net's significance as a potential platform for news, relative to other emerging technologies or formats, including print,

and are generally approving of multimedia, their views concerning more targeted issues relating to the nature and shape of news as presented online are less definitive. They are at one with the zeitgeist in agreeing that the public demands that they make more use of the potentialities of online news; however, this prospect is not greeted without some concerns. They are more tentative in their views on content repurposing, being reluctant actively to defend multi-channel publishing as little more than recycling, something which publisher organizations have de-emphasized, often preferring instead to promote the novel dimensions of online news. While they generally agree that the online format allows journalists to get more into their stories, and allows for a greater range of sources, they also are non-committal regarding the possibilities for additional story formats and there are split views as to whether the net gives them more tools with which to provide context. These stances, which show conflict in respect of related issues, indicate that journalists as a body are uncertain and often non-committal as to the potential role that seemingly compelling aspects of online publishing may play in their work, even if some among them are happy to look to the benefits. Further, among the strongest positives favouring the online platform are those relating to speed in bringing news to the audience, and the ability to reach more of the potential audience. Once again, however, these are easy buy-ins that accord unproblematically with the aims of traditional journalism. The simplest definition of news, according to which newsrooms even in print still compete, is the bringing of first tidings, and it would be difficult to find a journalist, however traditional or however focused on a niche audience, who did not wish to swell his or her audience.

There is little sense here that journalists have a deliberate or confirmed wish to use the web to bring about new forms of story-telling, to broaden and deepen their stories, to provide them with more meaning outside the realm of the written word, or to bring to their audience a more challenging array of meaning through the simple device of the hyperlink. Instead, they are most content when they are endorsing qualities of the web that serve a broadcast, few-to-many, and very much mainstream model of news. When journalists are faced with a direct opposition between print and online as news publishing platforms as they relate to trust, they revert markedly to their original self-identification, tending strongly towards the view that the outlet is of relevance. Print,

they say, is more trusted, and the public prefers news in this format, even if they equivocate as to whether, ultimately, print serves the public better.

Views on interactivity

Interactivity, at least in the sense of meaningful dialogue between readers and journalists, is not a feature of Irish print newspapers. Letters to the Editor are strictly moderated and are uni-directional in nature, and at most form a marginal component in the news diet.[12] Nevertheless, journalists are happy to endorse the notion of increased interactivity with audiences, at least at the conceptual level. As has been seen, the idea that the Internet will impact positively on journalists' objective to provide people with a forum to express their views gets an unambiguously positive response.[13] However, it is important to differentiate here between general role perceptions and particular perceived benefits or otherwise of online news. It is reasonable to argue that providing such a forum, in general terms, is part of the at least self-declared purpose of news media in democratic societies, and that, to the extent that journalists endorse such a feature, they are in fact endorsing their existing normative values. For example, conversely, journalists express scepticism about the role of the net as a platform for advertising, perhaps because this does not come within their own definition of their role. Consequently, it is possible that it is the higher ideal that is endorsed here, in the abstract, without necessarily implying an active appetite for or approval of specific levels of development or of practices that actually facilitating such an aim would imply in the context of interactivity.

In the same way, there is some agreement, and stronger than in Europe generally, with the statement that the Internet makes journalism more accountable to the public, while the assertion that the combination of print and online makes for a better relationship with the audience also gets a positive response. However, a contradictory signal is given with tepid sentiment in relation to proximity to the audience, and it is interesting that the loss of interaction with the audience is one of the less feared consequences of life without the net. Once again, as with their responses concerning formats and platforms, journalists register mixed views that reveal conflicting priorities or even confusion as to the potential implications of online news. However, a more definitive view is evinced when the group is asked to make a direct choice based on an opposition of the provisions of content and connectivity: there is strong if not

unqualified support for the statement that the audience needs news as opposed to interaction with journalists. For the most part, journalists, forced to choose, see their role as mediators whose text is the primary concern of their media entity: they are not prepared to promote interactivity to the extent that it usurps that model.

In spite of journalists' apparently inclusive posture on more general questions relating to the audience, blogs get short shrift, along with chat rooms, as sources of information. This opinion precedes the development in Ireland of a deeper blogging and social media culture among both political actors and subject professionals, such as economists, some of which, it might be argued in light of this evolution, it would be difficult to dismiss. However, even if this establishes new layers in the relationships between the press, its sources and its publics (Allan 2006, Matheson 2004), it is uncertain whether the development of this new dimension in public discourse fundamentally alters the privileged position of mainstream news media (Reese, et al. 2007).

As has been observed, where online facilities fit unproblematically into news work processes and serve pre-existing needs, journalists have little difficulty in recognizing their value. No such sentiment is evident in relation to blogs, and there is no sense of positive anticipation of the meshed authority of a wider news ecology. Nor, however, are blogs cast by journalists, as they are by others, as a threat that in some way competes with their profession or erodes entry barriers, or as a phenomenon that must be absorbed within the mainstream (Lowrey and Mackay 2008). Instead, either they are content to view them dismissively, along with citizen journalism, as something inferior to real journalism or, at least, they are not moved to dispute a statement which explicitly challenges the opinion that blogs are indeed journalism.[14]

Work and values

Each of the questions discussed so far in this section, under the headings of media platform or interactivity, also in some way intersects with news work and professional values. However, some parts of the survey relate particularly strongly to these dimensions, and are discussed here. It is worth noting that journalists are often wary of debate concerning normative values, preferring to deal with questions of concrete immediacy to their work, indicating the tension between ideology and craft and the

pragmatic difficulty of engaging in such debate in the absence of collective power (Harcup 2001). Journalistic culture is heavily imbued with the notion of pragmatic performance against a deadline, and 'loftier' qualities pertaining to normative values such as objectivity and the public roles of journalism are seldom asserted or even alluded to by individual practitioners beyond an elite of privileged columnists.

While there is some reluctance to comment as to whether a good print journalist is also a good online journalist, there is also a strong opinion that it is indeed the case, and no one fully disagrees with this rather stark and far-reaching assertion. If journalists consider that the essential qualities of their profession are the same online, then it can be construed that they do not anticipate fundamental change arising from the development of news on the Internet.

Nevertheless, there is little disagreement with the view that the net is associated with a drift away from the traditional, out-and-about nature of reporting and towards the newsroom desk. Similarly, the assertions that online journalism work relates more to information packing than to original content creation, and that journalism tends towards superficiality on the net, are met with insipidly neutral responses – journalists do not know, or, perhaps, they are not concerned, but they are not prepared actively to rebut such notions. And, while it has been observed that they declare themselves enthusiastic with regard to multimedia, and they register some eagerness for working across multiple platforms, there is an equally strong feeling of uncertainty at this prospect.

Another relevant conflict here relates to the diversity of voices in the news. Respondents register approval for the view that the web will help journalists give more people a voice in public discourse, even though, as seen above, press releases – most often the output of professional PR firms and departments – also figure strongly in their appreciation of web affordances. They very strongly hold to the opinion that the net increases the range of their sources and aids in verifying facts, once again voicing a firmer opinion on a topic that potentially impinges on the pragmatic concerns around newsgathering, as the net offers powerful tools in this regard, while also mostly dismissing concerns about the ability to get to the truth on the web.

More closely related to normative values, there is, on balance, agreement that the net has a positive impact on the role of journalism as a watchdog in democratic societies, though with a high neutral count too. However, on the negative side, none of the journalists fully rejects the contrary assertion that online journalism narrows the news agenda, and there is even more reluctance to take a position defending the quality of news on the web, while there is also clear support for the opinion that online journalism sacrifices accuracy in pursuit of speed of publication. Finally, the idea of scooping the print edition by publishing stories online in advance elicits a split in opinion among respondents, with some strongly in favour, reflecting the place of immediacy in the news genre, but others still wishing to protect the primacy of the print edition and its consequent right to the exclusive. Here, conflict is shown relating to two established news values which, in the domain of print, are convergent. A good story demands to be published fresh, in the next available edition, and every reporter and editor wants to keep hold of a valuable story until it is printed under their name or in that edition. In a world of continuous news, it is likely that institutional imperatives will hold sway over individual professional kudos, just as in 24-hour television news stories are relayed to the audience as they break and have become a metaphor for the genre.

Where opinions crystallize on such matters, the leaning towards expressions of support for or, more commonly, acquiescence in, negative perceptions of the web indicates either a lack of clarity and certitude among respondent news workers, or perhaps even a latent anxiety.

Summary

Although this section has focused primarily on medians, or on rough balances of positives and negatives, in order to achieve a more aggregated sense of journalists' opinion, it is worthwhile isolating and noting the strongest responses registered across the array of survey questions. These are shown in Table 8.15, below.

This very highly compressed view of the data provides a rough sign-post towards the priorities of journalists when faced with myriad questions thrown up by the Internet. What is striking about this list of 11 issues, with 15 responses as the cut-off, is the absence of wider ethical concerns and the prioritizing of strategic industry concerns

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and, most markedly, concerns with the net as a set of tools to be used in generating news content. Journalists most strongly express themselves as welcoming the net insofar as it enables them to achieve existing aims with greater speed and efficiency. They are also quite content to acknowledge its strategic importance for newspapers.

Table 8.15: Highest responses from informed survey	
Total	23
Phone very important for newsgathering	17
Chat/instant messaging not important in newsgathering	18
Net useful for access to press releases	15
Net useful for researching background information	15
Net very significant to the future of newspapers	16
Neutral as to the net's usefulness for generating ideas	16
Net helps faster newsgathering	15
Net aids remote access to the newsroom	15
Net valued in terms of real-time publishing	17
Net very positively valued in relation to speed of publishing	16
Net offers new possibilities for the future of newspapers	17
Fully disagree that there is no new information on the Net	15
Fully agree that the Net increases the range of sources in news	15

The Likert scales deployed more generally in this survey are not intended to provide a statistically rigorous basis for analysis of journalists' opinions, given the size of the sample and the ordinal nature of the data.[15] It also is worth noting that such scales can engender some degree of false acquiescence. In addition, in the author's experience, both in formal interviews with journalists, in casual discussion, either in newsrooms or socially, and even in classrooms with student journalists, a certain competitive anxiety, or perhaps even denial emerges around technology, with very few wishing to betray themselves as out of touch. The social meme of the technophobe is one which

may be a source of light, exasperated amusement in relation to domestic PCs, DVD recorders and mobile devices, but it is one that potentially can threaten the professional viability of the working journalist, who must master whatever technology she or he faces in order to achieve publication by the ever-present deadline. Similarly, journalists, especially senior news executives, are conscious of the strategic necessity to be seen to embrace the Internet and other new media technologies.

In spite of such limitations, patterns in the responses provided can form the basis for indicative, descriptive insights into how news practitioners view the web, and it is unlikely that the very many neutral opinions among this complex mix of responses can be attributed in their entirety to potentially distorting factors. The principal pattern discernible in these data is that journalists' opinions are much more tentative when the net more fundamentally interrogates their professional values. There is no rush to provide immersive experiences in multimedia, and certainly no clamour to interact more closely with the audience. Instead, rather than outright opposition to such potential projects, there is a benign reluctance to engage. Working journalists, who principally identify themselves as print people, even as they have been publishing on the net for up to a decade, are not markedly exercised by such issues, and print remains, overwhelmingly, their home, both in actuality and in aspiration.

Just as online editions, as shown in the content analysis, show themselves as carriers of a mix of purposes and aims, the least of which are journalistic, and to deliver a curtailed and formulaic form of news, so also do journalists themselves tighten their focus on matters of more immediate concern to their pursuit of already existing goals. This is not to conclude critically and simplistically that Irish newspaper journalism is in some sense 'failing' to embrace the net and its potentials for the reform and extension of news according to the expectations of Hall or Pavlik (2001, 2008). Rather, they indicate, in their continuity of practice and, in quiet demurring from the giddy rhetoric of innovation, that, thus far, even as debate on the economic viability of print newspapers intensifies, many of the net's potentials are not urgently relevant to them as mainstream news producers facing daily deadlines. In consequence, it is reasonable to question, in the context of the public role of the press, to what extent they are also relevant to the quest for a more democratically inclusive media system.

Conclusion

In Evetts' understanding of professionalized knowledge workers' balance between public duty-related normative standards on one side and craft on the other (2003), it is towards the latter that the survey respondents lean. Journalists indicate that they are more willing to prioritize the tools of that craft according to its existing imperatives, and this finding complements their organizations' conservative use of the net, as shown in the content analysis and associated study of interactivity features. While journalists in their survey responses are uncertain or ambivalent regarding many ethical dimensions of news on the net, they also appear passive participants in this phase of online publishing: there are few ethical muscles being exercised here (Wilkins 2005) and they have not taken up Bill Kovach's challenge to become active in influencing decisions relating to technology (2005), or provided the human power necessary for change to occur (Zeng and Li 2006).

Internet news, for these titles, features not so much an opening of possibilities for depth, complexity, or interactivity, but instead showcases the content organizing capability of database technologies while tending towards narrowing the scope of news insofar as it conforms to existing values, processes and pressures (Redden and Witschge 2010, Karlsson 2010, Phillips 2010). If, in Tuchman's terms, news organizations function by routinizing the unexpected, the primary impulse of automated online editions is to hyper-routinize news, to the extent that there is almost no added journalistic effort required (cited in Allan 2004, p.62).

Each of the Irish news dailies online remains firmly within the traditional allocution stage, conforming with a broadcast, few-to-many model of communication, and with little or no exploration of means of moving to conversation or consultation (Gunter 2003), as their managements instead embark on a hedging strategy conforming with the suppression of radical potential of the Internet as a platform for mainstream news (Winston 1998).

This study's finding in relation to its central research question, as investigated through analysis of content and of journalists' attitudes as informed experts, is that Irish news organizations at this point in their development have not availed of the affordances of Internet publishing to extend the concept or practice of news, while news workers are

largely inactive in pursuing or considering such an agenda. Specifically, online news, far from offering more to readers, exists in a desiccated, secondary format on the web. Journalists are content to use the Internet as a collection of novel tools, but in pursuit of conventional goals, and they are hesitant and ambivalent insofar as the net impinges on norms and on professional roles.

As already stated, it is dangerous, if tempting, to frame such observations in terms of a dumb resistance, or as a failure of early 21st century journalism or mainstream media, since such an approach deterministically assumes that the application of Internet technologies in itself can address clear deficiencies in news as a public good, capable of contributing to rational debate in the public sphere.

In the following, concluding chapter, will be explored some of the more nuanced ideas, beyond notions of inevitable progress, around the interplay of traditional journalism and the Internet, and the possible focus for any fundamental adaptation by journalism. While taking into account some of the intervening developments in the Irish news sites studied and in the wider online ecology, some directions indicated for further research will be suggested.

Endnotes

[1] Newspaper design traditionally has moved slowly. However, where they once made distinctive design statements, the *Times* and the *Independent*, since around the early 90s, have converged on this modular broadsheet style, as have many other newspapers internationally.

[2] It is not clear whether the omission of bylines by the *Independent* is a deliberate policy choice or a result of inflexibility in the system. Certainly, examples readily can be found in this newspaper's web editon of a rough transition of specific pieces of content from print to type. For example, articles may include captions of photographs or references to subsidiary elements, such as fact boxes, when these items have not been carried online.

[3] The news hole is the space, varying between editions, remaining for editorial content after advertising has been allocated.

[4] Reluctance to link externally in this case may relate not merely to a desire to keep readers on the site, but to fears that hyperlinks might not persist, especially where the web presence of the organization concerned is under-developed or poorly maintained.

[5] One can contrast this absence of additional content with the augmented offerings in other media, such as bonus features in DVD. Adding or reinstating text content on the face of it would appear a trivial challenge in comparison to producing additional video packages. However, adopting such a policy across the breadth of online news stories would imply a more fundamental change; it would require a fully-fledged binary editing function possibly requiring substantial organizational change and incurring additional cost overheads.

[6] Of course, daily newspaper staff, familiar with bending time, routinely write 'yesterday' when referring to events occurring on the same day. But such devices are easily adapted, without necessarily changing the fundamental ways in which stories are approached.

[7] Breaking news will be discussed further in the following chapter, in the context of relevant changes since the conducting of this study.

[8] Content management systems may render pages in HTML, but they are more commonly dynamically constructed in PHP.

[9] Early versions of the *Times* online carried a token acknowledgement of the multimedia potential of the web in the form of a live web cam trained on Dublin's O'Connell Bridge from its then-separate online offices. As the online news outlet has matured however, the removal of this feature from the home page – it recently has been featured in the weather section – represents the realization of the distance between the novel appeal of multimedia and its practical relevance in a news site.

[10] In this respect, web news is reminiscent of clumsy print designs of the late seventies and early eighties, in which large arrows and shouting type literally directed the reader where to go next.

[11] Early installations of digital print technology did not use graphical user interfaces, but instead were operated via arcane command lines, and, unlike later writing, editing, copy flow and pagination software, were difficult to use for journalists who were not technically-minded.

[12] Correspondence or phone calls critiquing editorial policy or individual journalists are often ignored, ridiculed as 'green ink' ranting of the crank, or sometimes constitute a trophy for the reporter or writer concerned.

[13] In contrast, undergraduate and postgraduate journalism students, most of whom have grown up with advanced online interactivity, for the most part reject in classroom discussions the notion that the specific role of forum moderator is part of a new journalism.

[14] Social media and micro-blogging were not included in this study, but it would be hazardous to conclude that they would radically alter news workers' views without taking into account factors that have led journalists to their opinions relating to weblogs.

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[15] The various parts of the data must be read with caution, as it cannot be assumed that respondents see levels as equally spread across the five points.

Chapter 10: Conclusion

Introduction

This study has examined the content and format of Irish news sites in close detail, in particular with respect to news content and form, including multimediality and interactivity. It also has sought the views of Irish practitioners of journalism, as informed experts, across a wide range of questions in order to garner their views on the potentialities of the Internet. In its materialized form online, and in their responses to issues posed concerning practices and values, Irish news and news workers have been found in this research to have been, in the main, cautious and passive in relation to possible extensions of journalism online.

Mainstream news has instead exploited the Internet in a straightforwardly instrumental manner to progress routines and norms that are for the most part already established. Journalists have been relatively inactive in making use of the web, and are equivocal regarding its more radical potentialities. Other institutional interests have been seen to assert more effective claims to the online realm, as publishers' seek co-opt the net as part of their business strategies. The result largely has been a coarse re-purposing of offline editions online, in a partial remediation of print, with little or no multimedia and with Internet features such as links and interactivity deployed in a conservative and limited way. Where online news displays new properties, they often serve either existing institutional imperatives, as in the case of complex navigational structures effected by means of hyperlinks, or they largely reflect newsroom schedules or content types that pre-exist in broadcast media or which fit with relatively little adjustment into newsroom schedules, as in the case of breaking news. Certainly, given almost a decade of the wider deployment of the net, in their second phase of technical development, Irish online newspapers have not been party to the revolution in news celebrated, as we have seen, by many commentators, both popular

and academic. Rather, beyond gradual development or entropy (Gunter 2003, Eriksen and Ihlstrom 2002) news online has adopted a denser, reduced format, with less diversity of story type and of sources, thus reinforcing, rather than abolishing the role of gatekeeper.

It must be stressed again, however, that this is not to say that Irish journalism has failed to take advantage of the net, and that it has in some way been deficient in its response, while, elsewhere exemplars in global media have set benchmarks for success. To view development of online news thus would be to see it in terms only of the inevitability of improvement, of doing journalism better, using Internet technologies. As has been seen, both through cultural and political economy perspectives in Chapter 2 and in the discussion of online journalism literature in Chapter 4, this ahistorical view of progress elides the social forces shaping the success or otherwise of new technologies. In the case of online news, those forces, in addition to audience considerations, lie in the institutional power relations in play and in the evolving professional culture of journalism. From the point of view of the ever-persistent digital sublime (Gauntlett 2004), the claims that news can no longer be a lecture but instead is to become a dialogue is a seductive and compelling sales pitch, as is the promise of iridescent multimediality in which news producers provide audiences with myriad mediations of events. However, analysis of content, and of journalism practices and normative values, provides a more complex view in which a simple scale of approval or disapproval of success or failure varying with progressive adoption of technical options is inadequate and misleading.

This does not imply, however, a simplistic rejection of easy-sell technological determinism, to be replaced by an equally inflexible social shaping view that allows no agency or responsibility for journalism in responding to and exploiting networked technologies. Instead, journalism, which has shown itself to be adaptive in relation to other media technologies, such as broadcast and digital print production, must be viewed as interacting with changing technologies and, on a wider plane, the changing media ecology in which it finds itself situated.

As has been observed widely in the literature, a commonly expressed, unproblematized view has been that the news 'industry' is to be revolutionized by means of technologies, with multimedia and non-linear story-telling techniques

adding to the relevance and depth of news, and with interactivity, both within and without mainstream news sites, democratizing news and public discourse. Alongside this narrative of transformation, however, it is becoming clear that the emerging online economy featuring the separation of content from producers does not lend itself to the cross-subsidization that the print newspaper has afforded general news reporting (Starr 2009), and so, at least on this level, news organizations cannot allow themselves the luxury of declining to contemplate change. However, beyond the outcome of such struggles for survival, or debates on new models of funding, professional news journalism online faces new issues that speak to practices and norms in profound ways.

Development since the content analysis

All three websites analysed in this study have changed since the collection of data. While the scale of coding necessary precludes a second phase of analysis in order to provide matching data of relevance to a fully-fledged longitudinal analysis, as opposed to the snapshot approach taken, it is nevertheless useful for the purposes of this study to highlight briefly some of the principal changes effected in online editions. The following observations were made in early 2011.

The Irish Times

Following two re-launches centred on redesigns and a shift from paid content, in 2006 and 2008, *The Irish Times* web edition at the time of writing presents a much less cluttered home page, with the digital edition standing alone and the *ireland.com* portal, also redesigned, focusing on more commercially-oriented lifestyle and entertainment content. The most radical change in the online news edition is in its emphasis on continuously updated news, organized in major story themes, with a separate 'Latest' list. News stories posted to the site are promoted via a Twitter page. International news agency copy, usually with a U.S or British flavour, is routinely included in this running news service. An Editor's Choice panel, highlighting selected features content, operates as a measure balancing the generalized flow of hard news. While such news material dominates the home page, opinion, features and analysis content, apparently largely re-purposed from the print edition, is heavily promoted

further down the page. Most recently, the site has begun to withhold some articles, instead promoting them as being available in the print edition.

In spite of promotional promises of more multimedia, little is provided. Very rarely, stories are complemented by reporter podcasts, and there are links to YouTube videos, and it is clear that such practices are marginal and not part of the routine production of news in the online edition.[1] A more persistent change is observable in the size of images, some of which now are comparable in relative scale to those in print, though not on the home page, and the site also expands its visual content by means of slide shows on selected stories. While the site no longer replicates the print edition in its web format, it instead offers it as a paid-for 'epaper' print facsimile, and via iPhone and iPad, and the various departments within the website correspond to those of the print product. Non-editorial, commercial material is also heavily promoted on the home page, with links to motoring, employment, property, dating and other sub-sites.

Story pages now routinely carry a panel providing links to related content which appear to be externally directed, with some external links to official sites, though limited, it appears, to domain home pages rather than pointing the reader to precise URLs. No use of in-text links is apparent, even where a news item is covering an official report available online. Occasionally, when a story includes a URL, it is provided in flat text format, rather than as an active hyperlink. Story pages add a degree of interactivity, and connect with the wider social media sphere, by providing, along with an option to forward stories by email, facilities to republish via Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn and other such systems. Content interactivity also is furnished by means of a 'Most Read' and 'Most Emailed' panels. More direct, human interactivity is provided by the facility to comment on selected opinion and comment pieces taken from the print edition and on 13 blogs, of varying posting regularity, by *Times* staff. Each of the blogs specializes in a topic such as business, consumer affairs, arts or fashion: there is one politics blog and a separate occasional blog by the online site editor discussing the development of the website.

It is probably in this blog space that the first breach in true dialogical interactivity takes place, with writers sometimes engaging in discussion with readers who are allowed to include hyperlinks in their comments. In addition, a blog and an associated series of YouTube videos by a journalist based over an extended period in a Zambian

village represents a novel extension of coverage by this news outlet beyond the familiar parameters of daily edition news values.[2] However, it is significant that such relatively free interactivity mostly is reserved for topics of lightweight or marginal character, other than a politics blog written by two reporters. Consequently, there remains little room for discussion of contentious matters most represented in the publication's news coverage. Up until early 2011, the Yes/No polls provided in the older version of the site remained, and these engendered strong levels of feedback of varying quality, although once again, because of its chronological construction and frequent non-serious contributions, the discussion was difficult to follow and there is little sense of sustained dialogue. Most recently, this feature was dropped, apparently abruptly and without discussion with users.

Irish Independent

The *Irish Independent,* now separated from the defunct *unison.ie* portal, follows the same pattern of development of the *Times,* with the principal change relating to the frequency of story updating, so that the home page becomes a dynamically updated roll of the day's news as it unfolds. Again, there is a system of split prioritization, as selected stories are given larger prominence, with more use of type sizing than in the earlier front page, and with a smaller box rendering breaking news on apparently immediate basis. Stories headlined and blurbed on the main home page section comprise both newly produced breaking news content and content that is re-purposed from the print edition, which also is provided as a facsimile e-edition. The *Independent* retains its principal characteristic as a particularly busy page, with, in addition to the main news section, 10 stories and 17 sub-sections, each carrying six linked headlines. The site elides the distinction between the *Irish Independent* and its sister publication the *Sunday Independent*, which are very distinct newspapers in print[3], and a dropdown menu. As with the *Times*, an Editor's Choice panel attempts to add some focus to the variety of content on offer.

Extra functional interactivity is provided in the form of RSS feeds, Most Popular listings, options for mobile applications and email updates, and a link to Facebook and Twitter pages which appear relatively unpopulated, and which primarily are used for promotional activities such as competitions. In addition, archives are provided which can be browsed by date, and, in contrast to the older version, now are searchable.

Blogs are provided on fashion, beauty and sport, but each is considerably out of date, with almost a full year to the last post in the beauty blog. The daily poll and its associated moderated commentary appears to have been discontinued. Apart from the limited provision of blogs, there is no facility for readers to comment on content (the contacts page provides a listing of print edition editorial contacts but none for the website, where 'website enquiries only' communication is limited to a text form). An interesting comparative insight is furnished by the fact that the website of the London *Independent,* sold by Independent News and Media in 2010*,* is run on an almost identical template, but includes the facility for reader comments on many articles.

Story pages in the *Irish Independent* are now more developed, with related links provided along with additional links to unrelated national news. Occasionally, hyperlinks are included in the text; however, these are automatic links to searches of the site for the word or name in question, and frequently lead to wholly or partially irrelevant results. No use of deliberate contextual hyperlinking is in evidence.

Irish Examiner

As in its previous incarnation, the *Examiner's* home page is light on content. Like the other two titles, its typographic re-design gives added prominence to a top story, which is followed in a blog-like list format by a series of stories split into topical sections similar to divisions in the print edition. This column is interspersed with breaking news headlines, distributed across the topics. Overall, the *Examiner's* home page is remarkably light in content, with a heavy advertising and promotional presence.

Story pages also include prominent advertising, but there are no content-related hyperlinks. Interactivity is restricted to a searchable archive and format options that include RSS feeds and mobile browser and text-only options, along with a drop-down menu of other TCH newspaper titles. A multi-author sports blog allows users to comment on and rate individual posts, though reader activity appears to be sparse. One distinct innovation is in multimedia. The site provides a graphic menu of audio clips featuring contributions from spokespersons for official bodies, with, for the most part, service information relating to weather and traffic.

Summary

While each of these re-designs inevitably will have been presented as an upgrade or improvement on previous incarnations of these online editions, they also can be viewed as a retrenchment of newspapers' online strategies and, with it, further confirmation that publishing via the web, while perhaps useful to the pursuit of promotional and other commercial agendas, remains an adjunct activity that does not enhance journalism or serve the normative values of journalism, or that journalists have declined or have not been allowed to fully explore the potential of web publishing. The intensified focus on breaking news, a technical affordance not confined to the Internet, is likely to function to narrow the news agenda, as already suggested by the strong presence of agency copy in the *Times's* content. Meaningful interactivity largely has been eschewed.

Even if blogs provide some scope for reader engagement, they do so in a carefully managed space which it is clearly signalled is not at the centre of the news outlet, and, beyond the activity of those journalists who present as individual enthusiasts, there is little interplay between content producers and their online public. The busy response section linked with the *Times's* online poll perhaps had been the strongest evidence of tentative evolution towards an interactivity-rich mode of publishing. However, even if it had remained, it is questionable whether posts by mostly anonymous contributors, created in response to a rigid, single-item agenda, and left unanswered by news workers, go beyond online venting or display by, in the ironic language of the message board, 'keyboard warriors'. The limited topical scope of blogs and their emphasis on lifestyle and sports, and the near-total avoidance of more vexed political controversies, also provides a clear signal that they are not seen as providing a platform for meaningful public debate, or that the potential for such debate is looked upon defensively.

Similarly, multimedia is provided in a confined manner, as if in a box-ticking, showcasing of technical capabilities, designed to appease aspirations in this regard but ultimately demonstrating its peripheral role for these news organizations. Most significant in terms of format is the increasing promotion, in Irish sites and elsewhere, of digital editions mimicking as closely as possible, in pdf or similar format, original print editions, this process being further accelerated by their use in smart phones,

iPads, and similar devices, as evidenced in the *Scribd.com* and similar services. Overall, as has been evident in the data gathered for this study, Irish daily 'quality' news websites appear to be based on a strategy of almost totally automated publishing based on existing content or, if not, on existing resources and processes of news organizations. Accordingly, their websites provide an impoverished paradigm of print news, with less meaningful presentation of content or with content that is constricted by the now-amplified dynamics of the breaking news model. As newspaper print circulations decline, it is probable that publishers increasingly will look to online publishing as their principal strategic alternative. Thus far, what is indicated in this research is that, rather than attempting to become wholly integrated into the web in the manner of acclaimed global leaders such as *guardian.co.uk*, which, as we have seen are frequently cited in the literature by those proposing an agenda of online progress, Irish newspapers, in common with many others, will instead attempt to implement a policy that as far as possible emphasizes the continuities of news, not least through the tethered mobile and tablet devices now emerging, even as doubts have begun to be expressed about such hopes (Kiss 2011, Bunz 2010b).

Online news in a universal model

In my analysis of the responses to the survey of informed experts, I concluded that Irish journalists are content and able to embrace the Internet insofar as it maps largely onto existing journalism values and news production processes, not least as a set of newsgathering tools, but are markedly ambivalent in relating new technical competencies to concepts of news as a public good. In this, they are largely at one with journalists in the wider European context. This passivity manifests itself in the lack of development of widely predicted journalism features in Irish news websites, also allied to the thin resourcing of online editorial operations, as publishing organizations pursue more directly commercial aims in exploring the new territories.[4]

Multimedia has not materialized in a meaningful way, and it is difficult to avoid the conclusion that its limited, yet-experimental presence is related to the financial constraints of what are, compared with the scale of the large-market or emerging global Anglo-American outlets commonly referenced in the literature, rather small news operations, more akin to regional or even local newspapers in the British or

American contexts which are considered to share a similar news culture (Hallin and Mancini 2004). Similarly the presentation of news texts in a new format, with potential benefits in terms of depth and recognition of alternative understandings, is undeveloped. Perhaps most strikingly, the response to the possibilities relating to interactivity and participatory functions of journalism, while for the most part non-committal in the expressed views of journalists, is aggressively negative and controlling in the implementation in these sites.

A multi-dimensional approach

As discussed in Chapter 4, Thomas Hanitzch (2007) provides a powerfully comprehensive, etic approach to journalism culture, exposing basic characteristics through which journalism can be analysed. Although his resulting complex and inclusive model is aimed at providing a sound basis for comparative studies across cultures that are heterogeneous, as well as across time, in spite of western biases in the literature (Hallin and Mancini 2004, Jakubowicz and Sükösd 2008), it also provides a structure for assessing the changes or continuities present in Irish online and print journalism at national level. This study's research impinges most directly on journalism's institutional roles set out by Hanitzch, relating to interventionism, power distance, and market orientation, but also in terms of journalism epistemologies and ethical ideologies, and the current study has shown that such dimensions of journalism culture are exposed and operationalized at the nexus of traditional journalism and online news.

It has been shown that Irish news sites offer a skeletonized and conceptually condensed version of print news, and that within this reduced offering the core characteristics of daily news coverage are reified and intensified. Thus, at the performative level of journalistic practice, if not at the cognitive or evaluative levels, Irish websites manifest increased passivity, as opposed to interventionism, as the part played by emphatically toned, linear-shaped hard news increases. There is little or no advocacy in these stories, rather, they conform quite strictly to the professionally prized values of detached gatekeeping in which journalists act as 'disinterested transmitters of the news who contribute mostly to vertical communication in society' (Hanitzsch 2007, p372) but also in which journalists actively are encouraged to leave all doubt aside and decide what the story is and what facts or statements support that

judgement. Nor, in their expressed opinions on online news, do journalists seek to promote a change in this institutional role, preferring instead to foreground those aspects of the net that support existing practice and secure it in its changing economic and strategic setting.

Power distance, expressed on a scale delineated by journalism characterized as loyal to establishment authority at one extreme and adversarial at the other, shows a similar trend, as online news displays a greater attachment among news outlets to stories relying on official sources. This means that, to the extent that the proportion of stories that are published without reliance on such sources has diminished, online news is less likely to fit with ideal-typical portrayals of journalism of telling truth to power, or a fourth estate providing the role of watchdog. Hanitzch writes of a sort of journalism that, in Althusserian terms (ibid. p374), serves an ideological state apparatus, but in doing so refers to extreme Mexican and Ugandan examples of news as government PR. However, it is clear from the data in this study, taken in the context of other research focusing more directly on official sources, that Irish news, and in particular online news, constructed in the context of the western values of news in a liberal democracy, also gives much attention to government and business-generated stories.

Such attachment to official sources is also related to market orientation, expressed as a perhaps contentious opposition between subordination of journalism goals to the logic of the market, at one extreme, and, at the other, idealized news production in which the public interest is accorded primacy. The trend towards favouring the market is clear in the construction of Irish news sites, as commercial goals far removed from those of journalism's ideal-typical aims are clearly promoted at the expense of news, when compared with print editions, in a re-worked expression of priorities that to some extent at least echoes the advertising-filled front pages of 19th and early 20th century newspapers. Against this, if market orientation is expressed in terms of emphasizing individual, consumer needs as opposed to airing publicly relevant issues, as many print newspaper features and supplements do, then the online editions studied also show a weakening of this characteristic, to the extent that longer-form journalism generally has lost out in the templated platforms. That outcome, significantly, has been reversed, or, from the point of view of market objectives, corrected, in the latterly updated online layouts, as consumer information, entertainment and lifestyle

features are heavily promoted with graphic links. Online, journalism and commercial objectives coalesce more closely than in the corresponding print editions.

As noted above, Irish news online presents as neutral and detached insofar as it reflects prescriptive institutional roles, and this characteristic is related to the epistemological dimension of journalism's truth claims. To the extent that news sites present the day's tidings as an authoritative list of happenings, wherein what is said is what exists, the objectivist nature of journalism is clearly to the fore. With no meaningful interactivity at story level, and with little room for alternative interpretations, the kind of discourse presented is some distance removed from any notion of a 'discursive approximation of truth' emanating from the marketplace of ideas (ibid., p.377). Similarly, insofar as the straight news story in inverted pyramid format dominates these online editions, empiricism is reinforced. This is not in tune with the wider trend in print editions, in which opinion and analyses have gained an increased foothold in recent years, diminishing journalism's emphasis on facticity, though with relatively little attention in the literature (Barnhurst 2005, Duff 2008, Fahy 2009). Similarly, in terms of ethical ideology, it is reasonable to conclude that, while modern print newspapers offer a more balanced bundle of content, the online focus on hard news, even as softened to some degree in later versions, tends towards the absolutism of a hard core, standard professional approach of journalism (Plaisance 2005 and Keeble 2005, cited in Hanitzsch 2007).

Future research

This study has found that Irish professional journalism is not significantly extended or improved insofar as it is materialized in the online editions of national newspapers, which tend, along with European online newspapers generally (Fortunati, et al. 2010, O'Sullivan and Heinonen 2008, van der Wurff and Lauf 2005, Sarrica, et al. 2010) towards reinforcing existing professional journalism ideologies, ethics and practices. In addition, Irish journalists are generally in step with their European counterparts in the caution and neutrality of their approach to the Internet as expressed in their response to the informed survey.

Multimediality in mainstream online news has not been demonstrated to have application outside of the sphere of broadcast news organizations leveraging existing

professional and technical infrastructures or, as has been discussed, other than in rarefied confines of emerging global news sites celebrated for their progressive development. Where convergence of text, images, video, audio and animation have occurred, it is most likely to be found in the online presences of broadcasters, for whom the publishing of edited copy is a relatively unproblematic evolution of existing practices, since television and radio news output already is scripted, rather than a radical departure. But even here, predictions of 360-degree immersion in multiple-format and non-linear narratives, as envisaged by Pavlik (2001) or Hall (2001) have proven largely illusory. Interactivity in mainstream news similarly has not delivered widely on fervent hopes for democratization of public debate. Where participatory journalism has struggled to progress beyond the experimental (Paulussen and Ugille 2008), and remains an exotic oddity that animates discussions around making journalism more relevant to citizens (Kim and Hamilton 2006), plurality is more likely to emanate without MSM, from the observable growth of citizen journalism, blogging, and group blogging, even if, as has been observed, much of the primary material in the blogosphere originates in 'traditional' media work.

Thus, interactivity, the study of which in the context of news heretofore largely has been narrowly limited to specific affordances of websites, may be relevant in the wider context, putting professional scepticism aside, of ubiquitous, ambient journalism and metajournalism on the web, and in the blogosphere and in Web 2.0 social media. This relevance will increase as existing media organizations and new ones turn to proliferating 'mash-ups' that incorporate social media platforms such as YouTube, Facebook and Twitter in their online offerings. Research of this hyper-distributed interactivity and its relationship with mainstream media is likely to prove highly relevant, providing a more complete and complex understanding, with reference, especially, to actor network theory as applied to the news discourse, to include not only audiences, on one side of news media, but also sources and other actors in a fused socio-technical analysis (Turner 2005). Such a course of research would achieve a more synthesized view of news than those that would adopt artificially distinct producer or audience-oriented approaches, and would provide a critical framework free of hard determinisms of either the technological or social variety.

The observed absence of enhancement of journalism in online news does not imply that online newspapers and professional journalism do not carry within them the combined potential for a news system that better facilitates public debate in the evolving agora of online spaces, or that practices now possible in online news cannot contribute to the maintenance of journalism quality. If the online editions that have been the focus of this research have emerged as little more than shrunken and impoverished versions of print strategically colonizing the online space, and if Irish news practitioners, like others, are relatively un-exercised by the potentialities trumpeted by liberal cyber-utopians and still reflected in much of the academic discourse, conventional mainstream journalism still has a part to play, and the Internet remains relevant to that part.

Freedoms and unfreedoms in techno-society

In his high-level discussion of technology, liberty and enslavement, Tony Curzon Price, editor of *openDemocracy*, discusses, in the context of Benjamin Constant's 1816 formula comparing liberties of the ancients with those of moderns, the prospects for freedoms and unfreedoms emerging in techno-society (2009). This essay integrates contemporary threads of the debate concerning individual and collective notions of freedom, with the familiar determinist claims for a wired world full of libero-genic technologies set out in opposition to renewed fears of tyranny. Much of this discussion, played out in the familiar setting of the opposition of utopian and dystopian concerns, bypasses conventional journalism, instead taking for granted the establishment of a wholly networked society. This boldly compelling construction, seemingly caught up in the frenzied buzz of the 'cloud', elides many of the social, political and economic realities underpinning media and the public sphere, as discussed in earlier parts of this study. Nevertheless, keeping in mind such objections, it also provides a useful point for consideration of the role of mainstream news media in an increasingly wired society. Where the dominant and especially popular sentiment remains that of the techno-libertarian (Leadbeater 2009), Curzon Price outlines a number of what he calls potential unfreedoms. He cites Sunstein's fear of hyper-individualism, fragmentation and the loss of 'broad tent' institutions such as newspapers and political parties, thus damaging societal cohesion, as separated

communities lose the ability to negotiate compromise; he points to familiar Kafka-esque and Orwellian fears concerning government and corporate (in particular Google) control of dataphagous networks; and, he emphasizes Jonathan Zittrain's concern that the once open, generative Internet has become 'self-closing', not least through commercialization.

Such unfreedoms find expression in media terms in the emergence of the *sui generis*, consumer-driven 'Daily Me' and its attendant danger of the narrowing of individuals' horizons (Sunstein 2001), the attempt to tether communication to specific devices as a process of economic enclosure, as seen in mobile communications, games, and, most recently in the case of Ipad news editions (Bunz 2010b). Significantly, and betraying its intellectual provenance, Curzon Price's analysis does not extend as far as the perhaps more profound unfreedom of the institutionalized exploitation of users as producers of ostensibly free content in social media (Terranova 2004, Terranova 2000). For the most part, he sweepingly bypasses direct consideration of journalism – in a post-Chomskian sense, journalism in this scenario seems not only already irredeemable but irrelevant. Instead, in a 'call to action', he urges individual and collective initiatives by an idealized 'good netizen' in the arenas of citizen journalism and to the emerging practice of data journalism. Such a rallying call, based as it is to a large extent on the rather particular, if not unique, co-operative virtues of *Wikipedia*, is surprisingly naive. Good journalism, or, more realistically, a re-orienting of journalism practices towards values that reflect its role as a public good, is more likely effectively to counter-balance the power of state and corporate gigantism than is citizen, public or independent journalism alone.

For journalism rooted in print, now dismissed by Curzon Price as being of an epoch dubbed 'the Gutenberg parenthesis', evolution in an online context is most likely to occur through what he calls 'easy wins', rather than through the alluring but professionally and usually economically prohibitive challenges of full-blown multimedia and interactivity. Rather than impatiently anticipating meaningful transformation in such areas, when, as has been demonstrated, factors shaping web editions and professional roles online range from neutral to inimical to such change, journalism can instead seek ways in which technology enhances those existing characteristics that bolster its validity claims, however tarnished.

In an era of market-led interlocking of state and private interests and activities on the net globally (Gray 2002) and in formerly public functions such as health or education (Coulter 2011), of the commercialization and trivialization of news, the fragmentation of audiences into solipsistic islands, and the feared erosion of knowledge and thought (Carr 2008) and of the press release recycling of churnalism (Lewis, Williams and Franklin 2008), all of which bodes ill for the reconstitution of the public sphere, it is possible to identify potentialities in the new technologies that preserve and advance normative values of journalism and that offer new means of practising good journalism. Searchable archives are already implemented, as they fit with the database-driven basis of online content management and with online strategies to leverage existing assets (Tremayne 2006). Where, before, newspaper articles were located in obscure library clippings collections, open only to news workers, it is now a matter of trivial effort, technically, to offer them to public view. This facility provides news with a much-strengthened dimension of memory, and potentially adds to the diversity of interpretation of news, since stories from differing sources can now be grouped meaningfully, overcoming the linear constraint of the single-focus content item.[5] However, commercial considerations impinge again here, and archives, easily enclosed as a saleable asset, are prone to being locked behind subscription paywalls not applied to other content, as in the case most recently of *The Irish Times*.

Link journalism and the potential for evolution within norms

Whether charged for or not, archive material is likely to be most relevant and effective when summoned in the context of the individual, live story of the day, and one of the most commonly implemented steps in online news editions is the provision of 'related links' that with little need for adaptation deepen and enrich the meaning of news. However, such links typically refer to internal content only, and often are crudely attached to content items in separate spaces on page layouts, rather than being integrated as in-text references. Such 'link journalism', relying as it does on the powerful but simply implemented basis for the existence of the web and, in turn, social media, can potentially harness in a most direct way the benefits of the Internet as applied to newspaper journalism. A hyperlink offering the reader a path to other relevant content arguably provides more value, in terms of the public good, than a

wealth of broadcast-mimicking multimedia or endless screens of disconnected 'Have Your Say' commentary. In particular, the use of this by-now low-tech device[6] can serve to add transparency to the currently opaque system of news production and spin.

Transparency features, such as the opening to public scrutiny of editorial decision-making, already, as outlined in Chapter 4, have been the subject of some discussion, and in some instances practices such as the logging of changes to articles have been introduced (Plaisance 2007, Karlsson 2010, Craft and Heim 2009, Rupar 2006). Further, in a Dutch study said by its authors to be applicable to wider Western journalism, transparency has emerged as a key measure – not simply another standard but an overarching norm – in ensuring quality in journalism, as citizens increasingly are able to question professional work, and as experts agree that journalistic norms generally are not well observed (van der Wurff and Schönbach 2010). However, the news, even as it has come to depend on press releases and official sources, remains largely opaque. A new news culture of full declaration of sources, based on the explicit, in-text linking to the primary source, where available online, would indeed represent a development of reporting practice that would serve the aim of a better-informed polity, while re-posturing journalism as seeking its validity not from claims to absolute objectivity, but to Ward's pragmatic objectivity, based not on a single truth but focusing instead on the process of news-making (2004). An attempt to turn such a practice into an adopted routine may well present problems of inertia in the short term. But such a step would not represent a revolutionary up-ending of journalism, since clear attribution, however honoured in the breach, already is an established cornerstone of reporting and editing, with positive outcomes for news producers online (Sundar 1998, Sundar and Nass 2001).

In a crowded media environment wherein almost all texts link to others, and where openness and transparency are related, via the ethics of blogging and later forms of social media, to trust and credibility (Friend 2007b, Kovach and Rosenstiel 2010), it eventually may become incongruous for news not to evolve to conform with an ethos of routine linking to source texts and other media artefacts such as videoed parliamentary debates, even if, at present, there appears an almost wilful denial of this potential.[7] This is especially relevant given that, as Karlsson observes, truth claims are made not at the level of the media outlet, but continuously at the level of the news

story (2010). As social media develops, as political and economic actors establish their own online presences, with press releases already widely available online, and with industry and academic experts becoming self-publishers, it is unlikely that news organizations will be able to rely indefinitely for their status on privilege of access to information. Without venturing into the realm of futurism, it could be envisaged that, in such a ubiquitously networked media environment, transparency achieved via widespread adoption of considered hyperlinking would, in Curzon-Price's terms, be an 'easy win' (op. cit.), part of the response to the supervening social and professional need for informational and journalistic authority.

The emerging practice of data journalism (Cherubini 2010) serves a related need. Here, wide access to raw data and information from primary sources is already assumed. What is at issue is presentation, contextualisation and organization of super-abundant information, combined with the gatekeeping function, even if it is now more current to refer to gate-watching, refereeing or curation (Kovach 2005, Bruns 2005, Kovach and Rosenstiel 2010) answering, through the production of new levels of meaning in news, concerns of splintering of communication outlined above. Much current discussion of this fresh journalistic enterprise, while worthy of attention and further research, is suffused with familiar uncritical techno-optimism and is likely to demand significant additional resources, so that it may again be reserved for the largest-scale global outlets which have transcended their print origins. For news organizations with more limited resources, in contexts without a small core of elite nations, and for journalists with less technology-oriented skills, and, as news business models begin to falter in the absence of the extension of public service funding beyond broadcast, such transparent gatekeeping can be embedded in story content using the simple but powerful device of the hyperlink.

The implementation of this practice would require deliberate journalistic attention to online texts, recognizing such texts' news potential, and necessarily would free online news from the current model of breaking news and re-purposing via the content management database. Thus, a journalism that incorporates connectivity in its processes and its content, rather than being locked into a model of content and connectivity as necessarily opposing norms (Deuze 2003), may be evolved. As Scott Karp has argued, the link is the online equivalent of the 'standard journalistic

technique for providing context and support for assertions', which is to quote sources (2008). No revolution or paradigm shift is required for this change to take effect, and it is unlikely instantly to win the excited attention of those for whom a dramatic transformation of journalism holds dazzling appeal. Rather, even if it is in turn interpreted as a ritual aimed at normalizing the most essential feature of the web, the use of such links would occur as part of the natural extension of professional journalism in a more considered response to both technological change and wider social necessity.

Endnotes

[1] In one instance, the YouTube channel is that of an individual motoring contributor and has no explicit connection with the newspaper.

[2] The journalist was a recently graduated DCU student, recruited through the School of Communications.

[3] Where the *Irish Independent* could be categorized as a straight news vehicle, even as its bundle also includes many other genres, the *Sunday Independent* in recent decades successfully has pursued a singular policy of strongly partisan, often controversial, news reporting combined with celebrity and gossip. Though sharing the same premises and facilities, the two newspapers have strongly different cultures: there is little mobility of staff between the titles, and there is little possibity that readers would confuse the two or merge their identities. That the two newspapers could be considered easy partners in the same website is perhaps itself a commentary on the relevance thus far of the online entites to their editorial managements or, alternatively, speaks to the extent to which journalists are party to or excluded from online development.

[4] In addition to the commercial agendas logged in the content analysis, *The Irish Times's* disastrous venture into the online property enterprise *myhome.ie* is emblematic of that organization's priority in its Internet strategy. However, it must also be recognized that new print ventures beyond the core divisions of a national newspaper, such as additional supplements, are likely to be assessed by senior news executives in similarly commercial terms.

[5] The familiar duty to get both sides of the story is often simplistically reflected in the charge of bias in the case of individual news stories. The reality in practice, as journalism students and trainees quickly learn, is that opposing accounts and perspectives in an evolving story will most likely occur in discrete articles as the story evolves over time.

[6] Online journalism classes at DCU once included instruction in creating a hyperlink. In recent years, however, no such instruction is necessary. Especially via social media, the concept of the link, and the ability to construct it, has been universalized, at least in this generation.

[7] It is possible to read news items in Irish newspaper online editions in which websites are featured, or may be the primary subject of the story, but are not linked to, even if their URL is provided in plain text. Such omission is a rejection of clear and easily implementable improvement in the meaning and value of the text.

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Appendix A: Content Analysis Code Book

This code book is that developed for the European collaborative study and used in common with this research. It was compiled and updated by Richard van der Wurff and Edmund Lauf of the University of Amsterdam, in consultation primarily with the author and Tanja Oblak (Ljubljana), Leopoldina Fortunati (Udine), and Gustavo Cardoso and Pedro Pereira Neto (Lisbon).

Codebook XII as of 26/01/2004

- 2 -

➢ All variables must be coded for print and online news outlets, unless indicated otherwise.

➢ Please read and follow the instructions in italics carefully.

➢ When in doubt, choose the highest possible number/option -- unless indicated otherwise.

➢ If you discover that the coding procedure forces you to give an answer, that you know -- on the basis of other information -- is wrong, please make a note. (For example, you will be asked whether the newspaper informs the readers on the front page if it is offered in different languages. The answer might be no [there is no indication in the newspaper that is offered in different language editions], yet you might know for a fact that there are different language editions). These comments can be added to the qualitative description of the printed and online landscape in your country (part G).

➢ Please report any problems or inconsistencies that you discover during coding to the Amsterdam team.

➢ Please recall that we study newspapers as they are offered to consumers. Some newspaper publishers also offer services to business clients. These business-to-business products are not taken into account. For example, Dutch newspapers have an individual archive that I can search as interested reader/consumer. In addition, several of the largest newspapers combine their material in a professional archive to which our library subscribes. That archive is not investigated for this study.

➢ Please note that we do part A-D only for morning editions and E-F for evening editions, unless the printed newspaper only appears in the evening. In that case, we do parts A-D for the evening (print and online) editions and part E-F for the morning (online edition).

➢ In some cases, depending on the value for some variables or the type of outlet you code, you will be asked to skip variables. In the codebook, you can leave the cells for these variables empty. In all other cases, you should be able to enter a code (if necessary, codes for 'not available' or 'not relevant' are provided). If there is no appropriate code for a variable, and you did not forget to skip that variable, please let us know.

PART A: Background data

Use the coding sheet for parts A and B.

<u>Coder and outlet identification</u>

ID1 Coder ID. Please give every coder in your country a different number (starting with 1) and send us a list of coders and numbers, even if there is only one coder.

ID2 Country of outlet

1	Belgium	8	France	15	Portugal
2	Bulgaria	9	Germany	16	Slovenia
3	Croatia	10	Greece	17	Spain
4	Cyprus	11	Ireland	18	Sweden
5	Denmark	12	Italy	19	Switzerland
6	Estonia	13	Lithuania	20	UK
7	Finland	14	Netherlands	21	USA

ID3 Media outlet number. Please give every outlet in your country a different number (starting with 1) and send us a list of outlets and numbers. Please note that the print and online version of the same newspaper have the same media outlet number. The next variable identifies whether you analyse the print or online version.

ID4 Category of media

1. Newspaper

2. Online newspaper

3. Online only news service

ID4a Edition

1. Morning edition

2. Evening edition

Editions. We investigate morning and evening editions of the online newspaper (and of the printed newspaper, if available). To prevent double coding, one online and one printed edition are analysed more extensively than the other. Which editions are analysed more extensively depends on the time of the day at which the printed newspaper is published. If the printed paper is a morning paper, we code the morning editions more extensively; if the printed paper is an evening paper, we code the evening editions more extensively. Please check the following table and proceed with the parts that need to be coded for the edition that you are working on.

If ...	then code the following parts for the			
	morning print edition	evening print edition	morning online edition	evening online edition
the print paper is a morning paper	Parts A-D	n.a.	Parts A-D	Part E-F
the print paper is an evening paper	n.a.	Parts A-D	Part E-F	Parts A-D
the print paper has morning & evening eds.	Parts A-D	Part E-F	Parts A-D	Part E-F
you code the online-only edition			Parts A-D	Part E-F

General questions

A005   Date (YY/MM/DD) of analysed news outlet.

A006   *For printed newspaper only. Code 9 for online newspapers and the online-only news service.*

Has the printed newspaper one, two or more editions per day (24 hours)? Note: we do not refer to regional editions; only to morning, afternoon and evening editions.

1. One edition per day

2. Two editions (usually in the morning and afternoon)

3. More than two

8. Unknown

9. *For online services: not relevant*

A007   Time (HH:MM) of analysed news outlet. For online outlets, code the exact time at which the front page was saved (check file details in Explorer). For print newspapers, code 09:00 if you analyse a morning edition and 19:00 if you analyse an afternoon/evening edition. (Choose the appropriate code, even if there is only one edition.)

A008   Does the front page provide information on when it has last been updated? If so, code the time (HH:MM). If not available, code 99:99.

Additional services offered by the news provider

Definitions:

The front page is defined as the main page of a news service (either print or online) where the most important news is presented and hyperlinks or references (including tables of contents) to other news are presented.

The home page of a print paper is defined as the first page of that paper. The home page of a newspaper generally but not necessarily is the front page (in Finland there is a paper with only advertisements on the first = home page. The front page then will be page #2).

The home page of an online news service is defined as the top page in a hierarchy of pages that make up the website to which the front page belongs. The home page will be the page where you get when you tell your browser to go to www.name of outlet.domain *or* www.provider.domain *or any other URL that you get when you strip the URL of the front page of all additional information to get the basic address in the* www.name.domain *format. (Example: The address of the front page of the Irish Times online on a specific day in June was:* www.ireland.com/newspaper/front/2003/0806/ index.html. *The home page therefore is* www.ireland.com. *As is illustrated by this example, the front page of an online news service might or might not be the home page of (the provider of) that service. Please note that in countries such as the UK, the domain might consist of two parts (*co.uk*).*

A009   Front page distance. Please note for newspapers the page number of the front page (as defined above) minus one. If the front page is the first page, the number to be noted is zero. Please note for online editions the minimum

number of hyperlinks that have to be clicked to get from the homepage to the front page of the news service. *Look for the fastest way (least number of clicks).* If the home page is the front page, code zero.

To answer questions A010 to A027, check the front page and the home page, and follow any links on those pages <u>that seem relevant</u>. Do not go further in the website or newspaper. Always return to the home or front page, and go only one click deep in the website or one 'referral' deep in the newspaper. If you do not find the service that we ask for in this way, code No.

A010   Does the front or home page inform you that an exact electronic replica of the printed newspaper (e.g. in PDF format) can be downloaded or printed? (*When in doubt, choose the highest possible number.*)

    0.   No (service is not offered nor referred to on home or front page)

    1.   Yes, for free

    2.   Yes, for a fee

    9.   Not relevant for online-only news service

A011   Does the front page or home page inform you that you can receive an E-mail edition (which is not an exact replica of the print or online edition)? Note: an e-mail edition is a separate news service that you can decide too receive, or not. The feature that you can send articles from the online newspaper to 'a friend' via e-mail is something different. (*When in doubt, choose the highest possible number.*)

    0.   No (service is not offered nor referred to on home or front page)

    1.   Yes, for free

    2.   Yes, for a fee

A012   Does the front page or home page inform you that you can receive an edition for one or more mobile devices, e.g. for PDA or mobile phone (SMS)? Note: This should again be a separate service; and not necessarily an exact replica of the print or online version). (*When in doubt, choose the highest possible number.*)

    0.   No (service is not offered nor referred to on home or front page)

    1.   Yes, for free

2. Yes, for a fee

<u>Personalisation</u>

Please remind that questions A010-A027 should be answered for print and online outlets on the basis of information provided on the home or front page. You may follow links or references presented on the home or front page that seem relevant, but you may only go one click or one referral deep in the online or printed outlet. Otherwise you should restrict yourself to information provided on the front page.

A020 Note the number of languages in which the outlet can be read (according to information provided on the front page, including the languages of the articles published on the front page). A language will be counted, even if only one article is written in that language. In your count, include the main language of the outlet as one language. Hence, you will always code 1 or higher.

A021 If the news outlet is available in other languages than the main national language, please note down in what additional languages. Otherwise, code '99'.

A022 Note the number of geographical editions of the outlet that are available (according to information provided on the front page). The national edition that you are coding, counts as one. Geographical editions include regional and city editions, but exclude international or foreign editions.

A023 Is it possible to personalize the *front page* in terms of news content (that is, by requesting a specific selection of news items [in terms of type, geography or topic -- as described in C020, C070, C072 or similar classifications])? For printed newspapers, you would generally code No.

0. No

1. Yes

A024   Is it possible to personalize the front page on technical aspects (for specific browsers, with or without frames, with or without moving images) that may influence the speed with which pages can be accessed or the way in which they are displayed? For printed newspapers, you would generally code No.

0. No

1. Yes

A025   If the front page can be personalized in technical aspects, please write down what choices can be made. If not, code '99'.

A026   It is possible to personalize the *front page* in other ways than language, geography, topic or technical aspects? For printed newspapers, you would generally code No.

0. No

1. Yes

A027   If A026 = 1 (yes), please describe. Otherwise, code '99'.

If the front page can be personalized in any way, you are requested to assess the non- or least personalised front page for part C. If you have to choose, choose default options. If there are no default options, for language choose the dominant language in your country; for geographical editions choose the edition for the capital; for technical aspects, choose the options that reflect (to your best knowledge) the 'standard' consumer internet configuration in your country. Please write down the options that you choose.

The following questions (A030-A061) should be answered only for online newspapers and the online-only news service. If you code a print outlet, continue with part B. If you code a print outlet, you can enter code '99' (signifying 'not applicable') in the code sheet for the following variables, but this is not necessary. You can also leave the cells empty.

To answer questions A030-A061, go as deep in the online or printed newspaper or service as necessary. The 'go only one click deep' rule that applied to variables A010-A027 does not apply to A030-A061.

A030   When you access the <u>front</u> page, does pop up advertising appear? (Pop-up advertising is advertising that automatically appears in separate window when the front page is accessed). Please note: we exclude pop up advertising from the analysis of front pages in part B.

   0. No

   1. Yes

A031   Is there a tool to search the online outlet and/or the website of the news provider?

   0. No

   1. Yes

<u>Archives</u>

A040   Is there an archive with older news?

   0. No.

   1. Yes.

If A40 = No, go to the definition of classified ads, above A50. If A40 = No, you may enter the code 99 (for 'not applicable') in the code sheet for the next variables but you may also leave the cells empty.

A041   How far does the archive go back in time? Please give as exact a date as possible (YY/MM/DD, or YY/MM/99, or YY/99/99).

A042   How accessible is the archive in terms of searchability (choose the highest possible number)

1. Archive can only be searched on dates, or browsed day-by-day.

2. Archive can be searched on dates and/or on words that are part of the article itself (compare option 4). If the archive can be searched on words that are not part of the article, choose option 4.

3. Archive can be browsed topic-by-topic.

4. Archive can be searched on a combination of criteria, including content-describers that are added by the provider (meta-data, such as key words or topic codes).

A043   How accessible is the archive in terms of costs (*choose the highest possible number*)?

1. Free access for everyone.

2. Must register to access archive, but no fee required.

3. Must register, no fee required, but registration restricted to newspaper subscribers (or paying members of any other offline group).

4. Must subscribe (pay a fee) for regular access.

5. Must pay per retrieved article.

6. Must pay per search.

A044   What does the archive provide (*choose the highest possible number*)?

1. Articles

2. Front pages

3. Complete replica of newspaper

4. Articles and (complete front pages and/or replica)

A045   Do retrieved articles provide hyperlinks to related articles?

0. No

1. Yes.

<u>Classified ads</u>

Definition: Classified ads are defined as textual items that facilitate the exchange of goods and services ('help wanted'; 'codebook for sale'); that lack syntactic or visual elaboration (i.e. that are simple in text and format); that do not appear on their own but are presented in a group, as part of a collection of classified ads; and that within that group are organized in different categories (partly based on Hogben & Coupland, 2000 and Kjellmer, 1998).

A050   Is there a special (sub)site for classified advertisements that is offered by the news provider, either on its own or in cooperation with others? It does not matter whether the classified ads-site is part of the same website as the online newspaper or has belongs to a different site (with a different homepage).

   0.   No.

   1.   Yes.

If A50 = No, go to Miscellaneous, above A60. If A50 = No, you may enter the code 99 (for 'not applicable') in the code sheet for the next variables but you may also leave the cells empty.

A051   How accessible is the classified ads site in terms of searchability (*choose the highest possible number*)

   1.   Classified ads can only be searched on dates, or browsed day-by-day.

   2.   Classified ads can be searched on dates and/or on words that are part of the ad itself (compare option 4). If the archive can be search on words that are not part of the ad, choose option 4.

   3.   Classified ads can be browsed category-by-category.

   4.   Classified ads can be searched on a combination of criteria, including content-describers that are added by the provider (meta-data, such as key words or category codes).

A052   How accessible is the classified ads site in terms of costs (*choose the highest possible number*)?

1. Free access for everyone.

2. Must register to access archive, but no fee required.

3. Must register, no fee required, but registration restricted to newspaper subscribers (or paying members of any other offline group).

4. Must subscribe (pay a fee) for regular access.

5. Must pay per retrieved ad.

6. Must pay per search.

Miscellaneous

The following two questions can only be answered for <u>online newspapers</u>, not the online-only outlet. If you code an online-only outlet, continue with part B. If you code an online-only outlet, you may enter the code '99' (for 'not applicable') in the code sheet for the next two variables, but this is not necessary. You can also leave the cells empty.

A060 Compare the name/title (not the URL) of the front pages of the online edition and the printed newspaper. Consider only the text. Neglect similarities or changes in font type, colour, capitalisation. To what extent do they carry the same name?

0.   They differ completely.

1.   They differ, but I still can tell on the basis of the names that print and online outlets belong to each other.

2.   One carries the full name, the other has the abbreviation as its name (e.g., *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* and *FAZ*).

3.   One has a name, the other has the same name with some URL-type additions (e.g. *Telegraaf* and *telegraaf.nl*).

4.   Conditions 2 and 3 apply both (e.g., *Financial Times* and *FT.com*).

5.   The names are identical.

A061 Compare the design of the names/titles (use of colour, fonts, capitalisation, etc.), <u>excluding size</u>. Are the titles the same in design?

0.   No, they differ completely in design.

1.   One or more elements are the same, one or more other elements are different.

2.   They are identical in design.

PART B: Front page analysis

Continue on the same coding sheet

B001   Determine whether or not it is necessary to pay or register to access the front page, or <u>one or more</u> of the <u>news items</u> presented or hyperlinked to on the front page (thus excluding advertisements, other services, and news in other formats like PDA). Code the highest possible number; that is, when all news is free, except one article for which you have to register and pay, you code 4. Please check thoroughly by clicking randomly on 10 hyperlinks to news items.

For online outlets, we assume that the front page is free. The options below only apply to pages that you can access from the front page. If not, please make a separate note. For printed newspapers, we assume that the options apply for all pages, including the front page. Normally, you will code 6 (if subscription is possible), 5 or 1.

1.   Free access to news for everyone

2.   Must register to access news, but no fee required

3.   Must register, no fee required, but registration restricted to newspaper subscribers (or paying members of any other offline group)

4.   Must register and pay per article/view

5.   Must pay per day.

6.   Must subscribe (pay a fee for regular access).

Definition: How to measure size? The next items require measurement of size. If the front page has visible borders (lines around the front-page), we consider these lines as the boundaries of the front page. If the front page has no visible borders, we draw a virtual boundary 3 millimetres outside the text or any other printed matter. Sometimes, a combination of visible and virtual lines is necessary. The total space for coverage is the area inside the lines, including the lines themselves.

Online pages are printed and subsequently measured in the same way. Sometimes a web page is wider at the top than at the bottom. We then measure the total space by multiplying the largest length and width.

We measure articles, advertisements and pointers in the same way. If there are visible boundaries, we measure until the visual boundary (including half of the visual boundary). If there are no visible boundaries, we draw a virtual line exactly halfway between two content items and measure until that line.

Additional comments:

- *Round sizes to entire square cm. Do not enter decimals in de code sheet.*

- *Pictures that belong to a story are included when we measure size. For example, the size of the print article 'BBC leaves Gilligan out in the cold' includes the adjacent photo of Gilligan.*

- *When you measure (online) articles, please check carefully what belongs to the article and what not. For example, the article (on a secondary page) in the online Guardian 'Iraq dumped WMDs years ago, says Blix' does include the references at the bottom of the article ('Special report. Iraq', Guardian book. The war ...', until and including the textual pointers 'printable version', 'send it to a friend', 'save story'). The content items left of this article, starting with the block 'Special report. Iraq' until 'No 10 denies Straw had war doubts' are NOT part of the article. The textual pointers above the article likewise are NOT part of the article.*

- *Empty spaces between items are not measured.*

B002   Note the total space (in square cm -- no decimals) for coverage on the whole front page.

<u>Definitions</u>*. We count content items and measure how much space is devoted to various types of content items. Any content item can only fit in one content type category. If, in exceptional cases, an item fits equally in two or more categories, use the one that is <u>first</u> mentioned in the list below. Please use this option as little as possible.*

We distinguish the following categories: breaking news, interaction/communication, service information, entertainment, news items, job advertisements, classified ads, commercial advertisements, self-promotion, textual pointers, and graphic pointers.

- Breaking news. *Breaking news encompasses <u>only</u> news-tickers and news that is explicitly identified as 'breaking news'. Other types of news, including 'latest news' are NOT breaking news but belong to the category 'news items'. We check later how 'breaking' the news in the breaking news section or ticker really is. Please note that space that is measured for breaking news should not be measured again for news items.*

- Interaction/Communication*. This refers to addresses, letters to the editor, chat forums and opinion polls provided on the front page. Also includes a tool to search/navigate/interact with the news website and drop/pull-down menus. Also include archives of news articles. Other archives, like archives of movie reviews*

are not coded as interaction but on the basis of the information type; in the case of an archive of movie reviews, this is service information.

- Service information. *This encompasses reviews of food/restaurants, TV/music/movies and books; event calendars; yellow pages and phone directories; weather and traffic information; tools (calculators, exchange rate calculations, tax calculations). Does not include a tool to search the news website, but does include tools to search the web.*

- Entertainment. *Elements without narrative that are intended to draw the attention of the user and/or offer the user the opportunity to play. In the latter case, entertainment items enable users to interact with themselves. Includes comic strips, puzzles, reader contests. Please note that polls and user surveys belong to the category 'Interaction/ communication'.*

- News items. *A news item provides information on or related to current events. It includes all categories mentioned under variable C020, including headlines. News items do not include breaking news, service information or entertainment.*

- Advertising and sales. *Items that clearly promote a product, organization or brand, and/or enable users to buy products directly. Includes web shops, electronic markets and vacancies. We distinguish between four types:*

  - Job vacancies. *Must be presented under a specific heading. Otherwise job vacancies are to be included in one of the next categories.*

  - Classified advertising and consumer-to-consumer sales. *Those who want to sell or buy have very little control on the design of their message; they can only decide on the text. Generally, there are multiple small messages in similar format.*

  - Commercial advertising and e-commerce. *Items that clearly promote a product, organization or brand (other than the newspaper), and/or enable users to buy products directly from other vendors than the newspaper provider. Includes a web shop outside the newspaper's website. Commercial advertisements have different designs. They refer to pages outside the news outlet.*

  - Self-promotion and sales by the news outlet provider. *Items that clearly promote the newspaper itself (either its online or offline edition), the brand of the newspaper, or other products sold by the newspaper publisher [example removed]. Does not include graphic pointers (see below). Does include a webshop inside the newspaper's website.*

- Textual pointers. <u>*Textual*</u> *references and hyperlinks (<u>in a normal-sized font</u> - see below) that refer to other news items, service information or other content items. In printed newspapers, textual pointers include tables of contents. Online, textual pointers do not include drop/pull-down menus (they belong to interaction/communication). Textual pointers come usually in numbers and look similar. They may include small icons. <u>Images/pictures</u> that can be clicked or that refer to other information <u>are not textual pointers</u>. They are graphic pointers (see*

below). Also textual items that have much larger fonts than used in normal news items (at least twice as large), are not textual pointers but graphic pointers.

Please recall that search options are included in 'Interactivity/communication' or service information.

Please note: here we only code 'independent' textual pointers. Textual pointers that are part of a news item or of any of the other items mentioned above (e.g., a hyperlink that is part of an e-commerce item, or the announcement 'more on page ...') are not measured here, but included in the measurement of the other item. Pointers that are part of a news item will be further studied in part C.

<u>*We distinguish between textual pointers to any of the above categories*</u>*. So, we have textual pointers to breaking news, service information, entertainment, news items (includes all editorial information that is news-related and that not belongs to any of the other categories), communication (between readers or between readers and editorial staff) and to various advertising and sales option (e.g., a textual pointer 'web shop' that refers to the outlet's web shop where you can buy the latest book with columns from the outlet's editor, is classified as a 'textual pointer to self-promotion and sales by the news outlet provider').*

- Graphic pointers. *Graphical references and hyperlinks that refer to news items, service information, or other content items* in the same website. *Graphic pointers may look like advertisements. They 'promote' the content item to which they refer. Like textual pointers, graphic pointers can refer to any of the above categories (except textual pointers). So, we have graphic pointers that bring you to breaking news, to service information, to entertainment items, to news items, to communication (between readers or between readers and editorial staff) and to various advertising and sales option.*

<u>*Additional decision rules*</u>

- *The difference between graphic pointers and textual pointers is, indeed, that textual pointers are made of text, look similar, and have a normal font, whereas graphic pointers are graphics that can be clicked, that differ more from each other, and that may have extra-large fonts.*

- *Textual pointers may have different colours or differently coloured backgrounds. That doesn't matter. It doesn't matter whether the font is in upper- and/or lowercase. It doesn't matter whether the font or the background changes colour when your mouse moves over it. It does not matter whether small icons (of about the size of a letter) are added to the text. And it doesn't matter how many words/letters are in the pointer. Only two things matter: a textual pointer consists primarily of text (see below); and the font of the textual pointer cannot be extra-large. We define extra-large as at least twice as large as the largest font used in any news item (excluding headlines, if the news item consist of more than a headline) in that newspaper. Both conditions (being textual and having a normal font-size) must hold at the same time. Otherwise it is a graphical pointer.*

- *The ultimate test to decide whether a pointer is made of text or graphical is to select the item (put your cursor on one side outside of the item, press the left cursor and move across the item to the other site). Copy it and to paste it <u>as unformatted text</u> (use paste special) in a text file. If you get the text in your file, the item on the webpage is a textual item; if you get nothing, the item is a graphic. [If the site is protected, you might need to check the page source to decide whether the pointer is made of text or a graphic. Please recall that being made of text is only the first condition. The text must also have a normal sized font, before we can define it as pointer.*

- *The difference between graphic pointers and self-promotion/sales elements ON THE FRONT PAGE is that graphic pointers can be clicked and self-promotion/sales elements cannot. In addition, self-promotion elements must promote the newspaper as a whole (that is, the brand of the newspaper) or other products sold by the publisher. Again, both conditions (not-clickable, promotion for newspaper as a whole or other products) must hold. For example, the main title/logo of the newspaper itself is self-promotion if it cannot be clicked. When the main title/logo on a webpage can be clicked to go to the homepage, it is a graphic pointer (referring to news). A small heading 'sports' above a news item or a list of textual pointers is not self-promotion, because it does not promote the newspaper or other products. If it cannot be clicked, it is neither a pointer. See below, to find out how we do code these small headings.*

- *The difference between graphic pointers and commercial advertisements is that graphic pointers refer you to content inside the newspaper whereas commercial advertisements either promote a different brand or product, and/or link to information outside the newspaper. Online textual pointers do not necessarily refer to pages within the newspaper's website. If they refer to pages in another website, they are textual pointers to advertisements.*

- *Graphic pointers, like textual pointers are part of the structure of newspapers; advertisements (like news items) are part of the content put inside that structure.*

<u>Final comments</u>

- *Neutral headings (that consist primarily of words, in a 'normal' font, and that cannot be clicked [like the 'sports' heading referred to on the previous page]) are included with the nearest item (if we have to choose: under it) when we measure space. Neutral headings that can be clicked are textual pointers. When the heading is not neutral and it can be clicked, it is counted as a separate graphic pointer. Headings that are not neutral nor can be clicked generally belong to self-promotion.*

- *If a content item is accompanied by text, we include that text when we measure the space for that content item. We even do that for textual pointers. For other content items (except textual pointers) we also include pictures and additional*

textual pointers in the measurement of the space. Pointers, however, cannot include other pointers.

Breaking news (Please recall that we do not include independent textual or graphic pointers here.)

B003   Total space (in square cm -- no decimals) on the front page devoted to breaking news.

B004   Total number of breaking news items.

Interaction/communication (Please recall that we do not include independent textual or graphic pointers here.)

B005   Total space (in square cm -- no decimals) on the front page devoted interaction/communication.

B006   Total number of interaction/communication items.

Service information (Please recall that we do not include independent textual or graphic pointers here.)

B007   Total space (in square cm -- no decimals) on the front page devoted to service information.

B008   Total number of service information items.

Entertainment (Please recall that we do not include independent textual or graphic pointers here.)

B009   Total space (in square cm -- no decimals) on the front page devoted to entertainment.

B010   Total number of entertainment items.

News items (Please recall that we do not include independent textual or graphic pointers here.)

B011   Total space (in square cm -- no decimals) on the front page devoted to news items.

B012   Total number of news items.

Job vacancies (Please recall that we do not include independent textual or graphic pointers here.)

B013   Total space (in square cm -- no decimals) on the front page devoted to job vacancies.

B014   Total number of job vacancies.

Classified advertising and consumer-to-consumer sales (Please recall that we do not include independent textual or graphic pointers here.)

B015   Total space (in square cm -- no decimals) on the front page devoted to classified advertising and consumer-to-consumer sales

B016   Total number of classified advertising and consumer-to-consumer sales items.

Commercial advertising and e-commerce (Please recall that we do not include independent textual or graphic pointers here.)

B017   Total space (in square cm -- no decimals) on the front page devoted to commercial advertising and e-commerce.

B018   Total number of commercial advertising and e-commerce items.

Self-promotion and sales by news outlet provider (Please recall that we do not include independent textual or graphic pointers here.)

B019   Total space (in square cm -- no decimals) on the front page devoted to items for self-promotion and sales by the news outlet provider.

B020   Total number of items for self-promotion and sales by the news outlet provider.

Textual pointers and graphic pointers. We do not measure the space devoted to different kinds of textual or graphic pointers. We only measure the total space devoted to all textual pointers and to all graphic pointers, and count how many textual pointers and how many graphic pointers belong to the different categories. Please check each individual pointer by clicking it, and note down to what category it belongs. After coding all individual textual pointers and all individual graphic pointers, count how many belong to which category.

If a textual pointer or graphic pointer refers to a page that may belong to different categories, apply the following rules consecutively:

- For online items: If the frontpage distance is zero (the frontpage is the homepage), a pointer to the front/homepage is considered a pointer to news. If the frontpage distance is NOT zero, for example because the frontpage is part of a portal, we consider a pointer on the frontpage to the home page of a portal as a link to another product of the same provider; i.e. a pointer to self-promotion (see example in Examples2).

- For online items, code on the basis of what you see when you open the page <u>without scrolling</u> down. For example, when you click the textual pointer 'Events and offers' you see four times 'win ...' on the page that opens. This textual pointer therefore refers to reader contests and consequently to 'entertainment'.

- For online and print items, code on the basis of the category that occupies the largest space. For example, when you click the graphic pointer 'World latest' you get to a page where the smaller left column presents breaking news and the larger right column presents not breaking news. This textual pointer therefore refers NOT to breaking news but to news items.

- If two categories still apply equally, choose the category that is mentioned highest in the following list.

B030   Total space (in square cm -- no decimals) on the front page devoted to textual pointers (of all kind). Includes the space devoted to a drop/pull-down menu (without dropping/pulling it down).

B031   Total number of textual pointers to breaking news items.

B032   Total number of textual pointers to interaction/communication elements.

B033   Total number of textual pointers to service information.

B034   Total number of textual pointers to entertainment items.

B035   Total number of textual pointers to news items.

B036   Total number of textual pointers to job vacancies.

B037   Total number of textual pointers to classified advertising and consumer-to-consumer sales.

B038   Total number of textual pointers to commercial advertising and e-commerce items.

B039   Total number of textual pointers to items for self-promotion and sales by the news outlet provider.

B040   Total space (in square cm -- no decimals) on the front page devoted to graphic pointers (of all kind).

B041   Total number of graphic pointers referring to breaking news items.

B042   Total number of graphic pointers referring to interaction/communication elements.

B043   Total number of graphic pointers referring to service information.

B044   Total number of graphic pointers referring to entertainment items.

B045   Total number of graphic pointers referring to news items.

B046   Total number of graphic pointers referring to job vacancies.

B047   Total number of graphic pointers referring to classified advertising and consumer-to-consumer sales.

B048   Total number of graphic pointers referring to commercial advertising and e-commerce items.

B049   Total number of graphic pointers referring to items for self-promotion and sales by the news outlet provider.

Breaking news

Check the breaking news items measured and counted for B003 and B004 and assess the following variables. If B003 and B004 = 0, then go directly to B057 and leave B050-B056 empty (or code 99 for 'not applicable').

Normally, we study breaking news as it was presented (and saved) at the time that the front page was saved. However, when you go back to saved files to analyse the breaking news, you may discover that you need to study other pages that you did not save before. In that case, you must study the breaking news as it is provided at a later time/day than when the front page was saved. We therefore note the date and time when you saved the breaking news that is eventually analysed.

B050 a Note the date when the breaking news information that you analyse was saved (YY/MM/DD).

B050b   Note the time when the breaking news information that you analyse was saved (HH:MM).

B051   Number of breaking news items directly visible. For news-tickers count the number of stories that would be visible if the ticker would not move.

B052   Total number of stories accessible in breaking news section (e.g., by following a link, by using a scroll bar or drop/pull-down menu, by letting the news-ticker run, or by a combination of these actions).

Date and timestamp for variable B053-B056. The date and time when the breaking news item was written. This should be indicated in the article itself.

B053   Date oldest story (YY/MM/DD; 99/99/99 if not available) that is part of the breaking news section

B054   Timestamp oldest story (HH:MM; 99:99 if not available) that is part of the breaking news section

B055   Date newest story (YY/MM/DD; 99/99/99 if not available) that is part of the breaking news section

B056   Timestamp newest story (HH:MM; 99:99 if not available) that is part of the breaking news section

Advertisements

Check the advertisements measured and counted for B017 and B018 and assess the following variables:

B057   How many advertisements show an e-mail address?

B058   How many advertisements show a www-address?

Show: you can see and recognize the e-mail or www address. Here we do not count links that bring you to another website or start your e-mail programme, unless these links themselves have the format of an e-mail or

www-address. For example, a link 'for more information' does not count here.

Interactivity

Please recall that you should answer all these questions, including the following ones, irrespective of whether you assess a print or online outlet.

Please assess if the following elements are mentioned on the front page. It does not matter whether the element is displayed on the front page or referred to (linked to).

If necessary, follow hyperlinks or references to decide whether elements are referred to. Go only one click deep in the website or follow only one reference in print outlet. After that, return to the front page. Please note that in this part we check not only textual pointers (as defined above) but also pictures that include a hyperlink or references (that is, graphic pointers).

B060   An address (be it an e-mail address, telephone or fax number, or ordinary mail address) is <u>mentioned or referred to</u> on the front page for

1.   <u>The newspaper</u> (there is only one e-mail address, perhaps in combination with one phone or fax number, and/or one postal address provided for the news outlet).

2.   <u>Several offices</u> (e-mail addresses, perhaps in combination with phone or fax numbers, and/or one postal addresses are provided for different offices or people representing these offices [e.g., PR manager, city editor, sports editor]). If more names per office are mentioned, code 3.

3.   <u>Journalists</u> (e-mail addresses, perhaps in combination with phone or fax numbers, and/or one postal addresses are provided for different journalists and other people -- when only one name per office is mentioned code 2).

0.   No address at all (neither an e-mail address, nor a phone or fax number, nor a postal address) is mentioned.

Are one or more of the following elements displayed or referred to on the front page of the news outlet?

0.   No

1.   Yes

B061   WWW address for the news outlet.

B062   Letters/messages to editor or other readers.

B063   Invitation to ask a question or submit a comment to the news outlet, e.g., by offering a specific form or explicitly asking users to comment.

B064   Chat rooms (in which contributors can communicate synchronically in relation to any topic).

B065   Debate forums or discussion groups (in which contributors can communicate asynchronically in relation to one or more specific topics), provider initiated (provider sets the topic).

B066   Debate forums or discussion groups (in which contributors can communicate asynchronically in relation to one or more specific topics), user initiated. (User sets the topic).

B067   Poll/user survey.

Hypertextuality

Check all references and links (including textual pointers, pictures with hyperlink or reference (i.e. graphic pointers), and references and links inside articles). Hyperlinks on pull down menus count, too. Are there any references or links on the front page to the websites or print publications of the following organizations? If necessary, follow references or hyperlinks to determine where they refer to.

> *0. No*

> *1. Yes*

B070   Reference or link to government sites or any other public institution.

B071   Reference or link to community sites that provide community information (directories, portals); that is, to sites with information that concerns the geographical area in which readers live (bars, restaurants, weather, travel information, etc.).

B072   Reference or link to sites of radio or TV broadcasting organizations.

B073   Reference or link to corresponding print or online outlet (that is, reference in print newspaper to its online edition, or vice versa). This can be a general reference to the print or online newspaper. It can be a specific reference to specific information available *in* the other edition. It can also be a reference

to specific information *about* the other edition (e.g., subscription or advertising prices). Finally, it can be a reference to the same or another issue (e.g., of the previous day).

B074   Reference or link to another (print or online) newspapers, to wire services and press agencies. References or links to the corresponding print or online edition, or to special Sunday or weekend papers do not count. References or links to other newspapers provided by the same publisher do count.

PART C: News item

Use the coding sheet for parts C and D

Definition: News <u>items</u> include at least a headline, or a graphical element (photo, figure). News items do not include breaking news, service information or entertainment.

Restriction: We only code the fifteen most important news items. To determine what news items are the most important, we apply up to five rules consecutively. If rule one is not sufficient to select fifteen news items, we apply rule two, etc.

1. *The most important news items are news items that also contain part of the story (i.e. item types 2 and further, as described under C020). Next in line are headlines (item type 1).*

2. *The most important news items are those items that occupy the largest space on the front page.*

3. *The most important news items are those items that have AV illustrations or larger headlines.*

4. *The most important news items are those items that are positioned higher on the page.*

5. *The most important news items are those items that are positioned more to the left side of the page.*

Coder, outlet and item identification

ID1   Coder ID (same as ID1 in background information)

ID2   Country (same as ID2 in background information)

ID3   Media outlet number (same as ID3 in background information)

ID4   Category of media (same as ID4 in background information)

ID4a   Edition (same as ID4a in background information)

Definition. To define the <u>item number</u> of an item on the front page: Begin with the upper left selected news item, then go (1) right and (2) down and start coding with

the first item. Please write the item number with a pencil in the newspaper or on the print of the online front page! See example in file NRCexample.pdf

ID5   Item number

<u>General questions</u>

Date and timestamp for variable C006-C007. The date and time when the news item was written. This should be indicated in the article itself.

C006   Date stamp of news item (YY/MM/DD; 99/99/99 if not available).

C007   Timestamp of news item (HH:MM; 99:99 if not available).

C008   Code square cm of the news item as it appears on the front page only.

C009   Code square cm of the news item as it appears on the secondary (continuation) page (where the article is continued).

C010   Is the story/article part of a thematic sorted news block/section on the front page itself (e.g. sport, even if only this single item appears in the block/section).

    0.No

    1.Yes

<u>*Unless indicated otherwise, news items are coded on the basis of the full article, including a continuation of that article on another page (to which we refer as the secondary page)!*</u>

Please check carefully whether an article is indeed continued on another page, or whether the other page presents different articles on the same topic. Text on secondary pages is only included if the article that starts on the front page itself is continued on another page. For example, in the print edition of the Guardian the article 'Postal workers reject national strike' is continued on page 2; but the article 'Saudis consider nuclear bomb' is NOT continued on page 3. Page 3 provides different, additional articles on the same topic, not -- in our terminology -- a

continuation. The text on page 3 is therefore on include din the analysis, but the relevant text on page 2 is.

C020   Type of item <u>as presented on the front page</u>

C*hoose only one! When in doubt, choose a lower rather than higher numbered option. Note in particular that an item must clearly fit into one of the categories 6-12, to be not classified as a news article. See the examples in Guardian.doc.*

1. *Headline*

2. *Teaser:* Mostly a headline and a short summary – at least one sentence, maximum one paragraph – that announces a substantial item that is presented later.

3. *Brief*: A very short article or item. Maximum one paragraph.

4. *Caption story*: A graphic, photo or pictures with only a few lines of comment; the emphasis is on the pictures.

5. *News article*: A report of what has happened, presented by anchor, correspondent or reporter: when, where, who, what, sometimes also: why?

6. *Colour-writing*: A text in which the personal experience of the reporter or the public/bystanders is emphasised and vividly described (a reportage); or a text in which a person, group, or organization is presented (a portrait or obituary).

7. *Commentary, editorial*: An item, clearly intended to give evaluations and value judgments. It has to be formally distinct from the rest of the page or newscast. Includes political cartoons.

8. *Analysis*: An item that explicitly aims to explain developments and to put them in a wider context.

9. *Interview*: A text that reports upon <u>one</u> conversation (with several questions and answers) between the reporter and one or more specifically mentioned persons, or between several specifically mentioned persons. The article must be dominated by the interview. Occasional references to (spokes)persons do not make a news item into an interview. Includes group discussions.

10. *Documentation*: The item is an original text or pictures, e.g., of a treaty, contract.

11. *Column.*

12. The item is a *collection of quotes from other media* — and nothing else!

13. *Other*. Please list

C021   Type of item as presented <u>on the secondary page</u>. Remember, we only code a secondary page if the article as presented on the front page is continued on the secondary page (it should be the same article). If an article on the front page refers to a different article on a secondary page, that article is not coded! Use same categories as for C020.

<u>AV illustrations</u>

Audiovisual illustrations are audio <u>and/or</u> visual illustrations.

C030   Is the item accompanied by audiovisual illustrations on the <u>front</u> page?

        0.No.

        1.Yes.

If C030 = 0 (no), continue with C040 (and leave C031-C035 blank, or -- if you prefer -- code O for C031-C035 to indicate the absence of any illustration). If C030 = 1 (yes), measure the size of the graphical elements on the front page in square cm. Code 0 if any particular type of AV illustration is non-existing. Please recall that we code audiovisual illustrations that accompany the news item we are investigating.

C031   Size of photo(s) on front page.

C032   Size of info-graphics (graph, table, map, sketch) on front page.

C033   Size of non-informative, entertaining graphics (cartoon) on front page.

C034   Size of window showing moving images (video, news film) on front page.

C035   Size of window showing animation (moving drawings) on front page.

Does the item on the front page include textual pointers to ...

0. No.

1. Yes.

C040 .. other photo(s) (not displayed on the front page)?

C041 .. other info-graphics (graph, table, map, sketch) (not displayed on the front page)?

C042 .. other non-informative, entertaining graphics (cartoon) (not displayed on the front page)?

C043 .. moving images (video, news films) (not displayed on the front page)?

C044 .. animation (moving drawings) (not displayed on the front page)?

C045 .. sound files?

C050 Is the story accompanied by audiovisual illustrations on the secondary page?

    0.   No.

    1.   Yes.

    99. Not applicable. there is no secondary page.

If C050 = 0 (no) or 99 (not applicable), continue with C060 (and leave C051-C056 blank, or -- if you prefer -- code O for C051-C056 to indicate the absence of any illustration). If C050 = 1 (yes), measure the size of the graphical elements on the secondary page in square cm. Code 0 if any particular type of AV illustration is non-existing. Please recall that we only code audiovisual illustrations that accompany the news item we are investigating.

C051 Size of photo(s) on secondary page.

C052 Size of info-graphics (graph, table, map, sketch) on secondary page.

C053 Size of non-informative, entertaining graphics (cartoon) on secondary page.

C054 Size of window showing moving images (video, news film) on secondary page.

C055 Size of window showing animation (moving drawings) on secondary page.

C056 Length (in seconds) of sound fragment that is started automatically when secondary page is accessed.

Does the item on the secondary page include textual pointers to ...

0. No.

1. Yes.

C060 .. other photo(s) (not displayed on the secondary page)?

C061 .. other info-graphics (graph, table, map, sketch) (not displayed on the secondary page)?

C062 .. other non-informative, entertaining graphics (cartoon) (not displayed on the secondary page)?

C063 .. moving images (video, news films) (not displayed on the secondary page)?

C064 .. animation (moving drawings) (not displayed on the secondary page)?

C065 .. sound files?

Item content

C070 Is the story local/regional, domestic, European or International?

1. *Local or regional*: If the main location of the story is a region in your country and if mainly the population in that locality is affected than the story is regional.

2. *Domestic*: If the main location of the story is your country and if mainly the population of your country is affected than the story is domestic.

Please note that in some countries, events that concern the population of important and powerful cities or regions are considered of national importance, while similar events that concern the population of country towns or regions are considered as local/regional events. We follow that practice in our coding

3. *National-European*: If the story concerns the position of your country in the EU, the impact of policies/developments in the EU on the population of your country, the impact of policies/developments in another European country on the population of your country, or the impact of policies/developments in your country on the population of another European country, than the story belongs to this category.

4. *European*: If the main location of the story is another European country and/or the story is mainly about policies/developments outside your country (not necessarily inside Europe) that mainly affect the population of another European country, than the story belongs to this category.

5. *National-International*: Identical to 3, but for items that discuss the impact of policies/developments outside Europe that affect the population in your country, or policies/developments in your country that affect countries or organizations outside the EU. This includes items in which your country is related to UN organizations.

6. *International*: Identical to 4, but for countries and developments/trends that are located outside Europe.

9. *Other*: The main location is unknown and no main affected population is mentioned.

Note: when in doubt, base coding on the affected population.

If you coded 3, 4, 5 or 6 above:

C071 What country or international organization is most involved, next to your country? Please note the name. (If you coded 1 or 2, code 99 for 'not applicable' or leave empty.)

C072 Topic

Please code only the main topic of the story (in terms of prominence in the story and length). *See the examples in Guardian.doc.* If there are two equally important topics, code the one mentioned first in the story. Choose from the following list.

1. *Economics*: Financial news, e.g. shares or Dow Jones; business news, e.g. companies or industry; macro-economy, e.g. trade or unemployment; economic policy, e.g. price policy or competition policy; wages.

2. *Social, health and welfare*: Consumer policy; pensions; social subsidies; drugs and drugs regulations; health care; human rights, migration/immigration, minorities.

3. *Nature, environment and physical planning*: Agriculture; environment, e.g. global warming and animal diseases; energy, e.g. nuclear power and energy prices; infrastructure, e.g. traffic and transport; housing.

4. *Crime, safety*: Law and order, crime prevention, penal law. Court cases that concern issues that fall into one of the other categories (e.g., a court case in which an environmental organization attempts to prevent the building of a road) are coded as belonging to that other category (e.g., nature, environment and physical planning).

5. *Defence*: Defence and national security, terrorism, violent conflicts, e.g. Northern Ireland.

6. *Culture*: Culture, e.g. arts, films, music, and language; cultural policy, e.g. subsidies for theatres.

7. *Science*

8. *Media*: Media, information and education. Role of media organizations or journalists in society. Media accountability and ethics. Regulation of media. News that emphasizes financial performance or business aspects of media organizations belongs to economics (Time Warner buys AOL; British Telecom reduces debt).

9. *Politics*: Election campaigns, inter- and intra party conflicts, EU, negotiations between parties. Note: politics has to be a topic! Otherwise code the topic the conflict is about.

10. *Human interest*: Soft news about prominent persons, celebrities, anniversaries, weddings, animals, strange/funny events etc.

11. *Chronicles*: sudden events, accidents (natural, human)

12. *Sports*: Not only tennis and football, but also chess. Does include regional sports (bullfighting), but does not include shows in which the emphasis is on entertainment (the strongest man in the world contest).

13. *Education*: From kindergarten to post-doctoral programmes. Includes education by institutions and by individuals. Includes financial aspects, as long as the emphasis is on (the impact on) education. Includes educational policy and other issues concerning the organization of the education system.

14. *Other*: Only if the main topic doesn't fit in one of the above categories, classify the article as 'other' and write the topic on a separate place on the code sheet.

Origin, sources and references

C080   Main origin (who wrote the article)

    1.News agency

    2.Third party / press release

    3.   Journalist (this should be <u>explicitly</u> indicated in the news item, either because the name of the journalist is mentioned or because the article is ascribed to an anonymous reporter). A journalist writes as employee or free-lancer for the news outlet / news provider.

    4.   An independent author (mentioned by name; identified as not belonging to the news outlet, or as writing in personal capacity).

    5.Unknown source

    6.Other, please specify on a separate place on the code sheet.

What external sources (that is, external to the news outlet) are explicitly mentioned as sources in the article, from which the author derived information (facts or opinion)? For example, if an article mentions that 'according to the Financial Times, Bush has indicated his willingness to run again for president', the source is the FT. See examples in Guardian.doc.

Use the following categories:

    0. No

    1. Yes

C081   Corresponding print or online edition (i.e., in the online edition, the print edition is referred to a source, or vice versa)

C082   (Other) newspaper

C083   Radio

C084   Television

C085   (Other) online source

C086   Press conference, press statement

C087   Magazine

C088 Written documentation: parliamentary proceedings, a report (something that must be studied by the journalist).

C089 A person, mentioned by name, initials, or function who is <u>personally</u> involved (as a victim, perpetrator, or otherwise), who plays a major role in the issue presented, and who speaks in a personal capacity. For example, one bystander mentioned by name or one victim (out of many) mentioned by name does not belong to this category, but to C093.

C090 A person, mentioned by name or function who represents/speaks for a government or business organization (includes international and local governments, and industry federations).

C091 A person, mentioned by name or function, who represents/speaks for a non-governmental, non-business organization (e.g., a research institute, think tank or environmental NGO).

C092 News agency

C093 Bystanders/the public, a layperson

C094 Anonymous source

C095 Other

How many references and links does the story/article, <u>as presented on the front and secondary pages</u>, include to the following types of information? Include textual pointers and pictures with hyperlink or reference. Exclude references/links to a continuation of the news item on another page, but include references/links to related stories. Exclude references and links to audiovisual illustrations that were counted for C040-C045 and C060-C065. Code the <u>number</u> of references and hyperlinks of each category found. References or links that are found several times, count several times.

C100 References and links to information in the same or a different edition of the same news service of the same medium type. (For an article in the PRINT Guardian, the number of references to information in the same or another edition of the PRINT Guardian).

C101 Reference and links to content in the corresponding other-media outlet (the print outlet refers to the accompanying online outlet, or vice versa). (For an article in the PRINT Guardian, the number of references to information in the same or another edition of the ONLINE Guardian).

C102 Reference or link to content in another outlet of the same medium type (that is, an online source for an online item; a print source for a newspaper item). (For an article in the PRINT Guardian, the number of references to information in any print source, except the print Guardian).

C103   Reference or link to content in another outlet of another medium type (that is, a print source for an online item; an online source for a newspaper item). (For an article in the PRINT Guardian, the number of references to information in any online source, except the online Guardian).

Content interactivity

Check secondary page if necessary.

C120   Does the item provide you the option to forward the story by e-mail? For printed newspapers, choose 9 (not relevant for printed newspapers).

  0.   No

  1.   Yes

  9.   Not relevant for printed newspapers

C121   Is there an article-related poll on the same page, or a textual pointer (hyperlink or reference) to an article-related poll?

  0.   No

  1.   Yes

C122   Does the item invites you explicitly to comment on the article?

  0.   No

  1.   Yes

C123   Is the e-mail address of author mentioned? Please note: general e-mail addresses do not qualify.

  0.   No

  1.   Yes

C124 Is there a textual pointer (reference or hyperlink) to an article-related discussion forum?

      0.   No

      1.   Yes

For online newspapers only: Content repurposing

We are interested in whether the same article is used in the print and online outlets. Definition: An article is the same if it deals with the same event and provides similar types of information (e.g., two factual accounts of the same event are the same article; a factual account and an interpretative assessment, or a factual account and a collection of public responses are not the same articles.

Add secondary pages (if available) to the (fifteen) selected news items, to get (fifteen) news stories that appear or are referred to on the front page of the online newspaper. Compare these stories with all stories in the corresponding printed newspaper that is available at about the same time. (That is, if you analyse news items in the morning edition of the online newspaper, compare it with the articles in the morning edition of the printed newspaper.)

C130 Can the same article be found <u>anywhere</u> in the print outlet, too? Please check the newspaper carefully.

      0.   No

      1.   Yes

If C130 is coded Yes, continue with part D. Otherwise go to the next article and start again with part C. Recall that C130 should only be coded for online news items.

Part D: Comparison of news stories in online with stories in print outlets

Continue with the coding sheet for parts C and D.

Part D requires comparison of news stories that are published in both outlets that are available at about the same time of the day. In other words, we compare (stories in) the morning online edition with (stories in) the morning print edition; and (stories in) the evening online edition with (stories in) the evening print edition.

We start with the fifteen news <u>items</u> that we selected from the online front page. We add secondary pages, to get fifteen full/complete online news <u>stories</u>. We already checked whether these stories can be found anywhere in the print paper. We limit the analysis for part D to those full/complete stories that appear both in the online and the print version. We compare the full/complete stories; we do not limit ourselves to the texts that are presented on the front page only (neither for online, nor for printed stories).

Coder, outlet and item identification

ID5   Item number of the <u>print</u> news item, if available (same as ID5 in news item analysis); code 99 if missing.

D006   Number of page on which news item begins in printed newspaper. If different sections start with their own page number 1, please add the number of pages of the preceding sections. For example, an item that starts on page 2 of section G2 of the print Guardian is coded as page 26 (because the first section has 24 pages).

Check. Please make sure that you compare the right articles. Write down the results in the columns for the <u>online</u> news items, only.

D010   Length of text (in number of paragraphs). Please compare the text of the full/complete article. Do not include textual pointers, captions or teasers that may or may not be added. (For example, we compare the news story 'Postal workers reject national strike' as it appears on a secondary page in the online edition (http://www.guardian.co.uk/post/story/0,11489,1044469,00.html) with the

print story as it is published on page 1 and 2 together; but we do not include here the teaser to this article that can be found on the online front page or the additional references than can be found on the online secondary page. We therefore find that both articles have an identical number of paragraphs.)

1. Story has fewer paragraphs in the online outlet than in the print outlet.

2. Story has the same number of paragraphs in both outlets.

3. Story has more paragraphs in the online outlet than in the print outlet.

D011 Length of first full paragraph (in number of words).

1. Story is at least 10% shorter in the online outlet than in the print outlet.

2. Length of story is approximately the same in both outlets (less than 10% smaller or larger).

3. Story is at least 10% longer in the online outlet than in the print outlet.

D012 Number of graphics.

1. The online story has fewer AV illustrations than the print story.

2. Both stories have the same number of AV illustrations.

3. The online story has more AV illustrations than the print story.

D013 Number of references. Count also pictures with hyperlink or reference.

1. The online story has fewer references and hyperlinks to additional information than the print story.

2. Both stories have the same number of references and hyperlinks to additional information.

3. The online story has more references and hyperlinks to additional information than the print story.

D014 Story has different headlines (in terms of text, not design) in print and online outlets? Please compare the headlines of the full/complete articles.

0. No. Headlines are identical in terms of text (words, grammar).

1. Yes

D015   Order of content in story is different in print and online outlets. Please compare the text of the full/complete article. Do not include textual pointers, captions or teasers that may or may not be added.

    0.   No. Order of paragraphs and order of sentences in first paragraph are exactly identical.

    1.   Yes

D016   Writing style is different in print and online outlets. Please compare the text of the full/complete article. Do not include textual pointers, captions or teasers that may or may not be added.

    0.   No

    1.   Yes (if there are differences in 3 or more of the first 10 lines that are shared by the different outlets)

D017   Content of AV illustrations (not size) that are shared by the print and online outlets, is different. Please note: if no illustrations are shared, the answer is No.

    0.   No

    1.   Yes

Continue with part C for the next news item.

Part E: Comparison of front pages of morning and evening editions

Use the coding sheet for part E.

Part E must be done for the edition that is not extensively coded. This is the evening edition, unless the printed newspaper is an evening paper. In that case, the online morning edition is coded here. See for more information the table under variable ID4a in part A.

As in part C, we select the fifteen most important news items (or less, if the outlet has less than fifteen items). The same rules apply as in part C. Again, if rule one is not sufficient to select fifteen news items, we apply rule two, etc.

1. *The most important news items are those items that occupy the largest space on the front page.*

2. *The most important news items are those items that have AV illustrations or larger headlines.*

3. *The most important news items are those items that have are positioned higher on the page.*

4. *The most important news items are those items that have are positioned more to the left side of the page.*

Coder, outlet and item identification

ID1   Coder ID (same as ID1 in background information and news item analysis)

ID2   Country (same as ID2 in background information and news item analysis)

ID3   Media outlet number (same as ID3 in background information and news item analysis)

ID4a   Edition (same as ID4 in background information and news item analysis)

E007   Time (HH:MM) of analysed news outlet. For online outlets, code the exact time at which the outlet was saved (check file details in Explorer). For print newspapers, code 09:00 if you analyse a morning edition and 19:00 if you analyse an afternoon/evening edition.

E008   Does the front page provide information on when it has last been updated? If so, code the time (HH:MM). If not available, code 99:99.

E009   How many of the selected (fifteen) news items from this edition, are not mentioned at all in on the front page of the other edition? (If you study in this part the evening edition, read: How many of the (fifteen) news items selected from the evening edition, are not mentioned at all on the front page of the morning edition?)

E010   How many of the (fifteen) most important news items from the other edition, are not mentioned at all on the front page of this edition? (If you study in this part the evening edition, read: How many of the (fifteen) news items selected from the morning edition, are not mentioned at all on the front page of the evening edition?)

E011   How many of the (fifteen) selected news items from this edition also belong to the (fifteen) selected items from the other edition?

Breaking news

E023   Total space (in square cm) on the front page devoted to breaking news. *(Please do not include textual pointers or graphic pointers here.)*

E024   Total number of breaking news items. *(Please do not include textual pointers or graphic pointers here.)*

E031   Total number of textual pointers to breaking news items.

E041   Total number of graphic pointersreferring to breaking news items.

E050a   Note the date when the breaking news information that you analyse was saved.

E050b   Note the time when the breaking news information that you analyse was saved.

E051 Number of breaking news items directly visible. For news-tickers count the number of stories that would be visible if the ticker would not move.

E052 Total number of stories accessible in breaking news section (e.g., by following a link, by using a scroll bar or drop/pull-down menu, by letting the news-ticker run, or by a combination of these actions).

Date and timestamp for variable E053-E056. The date and time when the breaking news item was written. This should be indicated in the article itself.

E053 Date oldest story (YY/MM/DD; 99/99/99 if not available) that is part of the breaking news section

E054 Timestamp oldest story (HH:MM; 99:99 if not available) that is part of the breaking news section

E055 Date newest story (YY/MM/DD; 99/99/99 if not available) that is part of the breaking news section

E056 Timestamp newest story (HH:MM; 99:99 if not available) that is part of the breaking news section

For items that are part of the selected (most important) news items in the morning as well as the evening edition of the same-media outlet, continue with part F.

Part F: Comparison of news items in morning and evening editions

Use the coding sheet for part F.

Starting point for part F are the most important news items selected in part E from the edition that was not studied in part A-D. This is the evening online edition, unless the printed newspaper is an evening paper. (See the table under variable ID4a in part A.) We add secondary pages (if available) to these news items to get fifteen full/complete news stories. We already checked (for variables (E009-E011) whether these stories can be found anywhere in the other edition. We limit the analysis for part F to those full/complete stories that appear in both morning and evening editions. We compare the full/complete stories; we do not limit ourselves to the texts that are presented on the front page only (neither for the morning, nor for the evening edition).

Coder, outlet and item identification

ID1   Coder ID (same as ID1 in background information and news item analysis).

ID2   Country (same as ID2 in background information and news item analysis).

ID3   Media outlet number (same as ID3 in background information and news item analysis).

ID4   Category of media (same as ID4 in background information)

ID4a   Edition (same as ID4 in background information and news item analysis).

ID5   Item number of the news item in the current edition.

ID5a   Item number of the news item in the other edition (that was coded before). Code 99 if the item did not appear on the front page of the other edition and therefore has no number.

F010   Length of text (in number of paragraphs). Please compare the text of the full/complete article. Do not include textual pointers, captions or teasers that may or may not be added.

    1.   Story has fewer paragraphs in the current edition than in the other edition.

    2.   Story has the same number of paragraphs in both editions.

3. Story has more paragraphs in the current edition than in the other edition.

D011 Length of first full paragraph (in number of words).

1. Story is at least 10% shorter in the current edition than in the other edition.

2. Length of story is approximately the same in both editions (less than 10% smaller or larger).

3. Story is at least 10% longer in the current edition than in the other edition.

F012 Number of graphics

1. The current story has fewer AV illustrations than the story in the other edition.

2. Both stories have the same number of AV illustrations.

3. The current story has more AV illustrations than the story in the other edition.

F013 Number of references. Count also pictures with hyperlink or reference.

1. The current story has fewer references and hyperlinks to additional information than the story in the other edition.

2. Both stories have the same number of references and hyperlinks to additional information.

3. The current story has more references and hyperlinks to additional information than the story in the other edition.

F014 Story has different headlines (in terms of text, not design) in morning and evening editions. Please compare the headlines of the full/complete articles.

0. No. Headlines are identical in terms of text (words, grammar).

1. Yes

F015 Order of content of in story is different in morning and evening editions. Please compare the text of the full/complete article. Do not include textual pointers, captions or teasers that may or may not be added.

   0. No. Order of paragraphs and order of sentences in first paragraph are exactly identical.

   1. Yes

F016 Writing style is different in morning and evening editions. Please compare the text of the full/complete article. Do not include textual pointers, captions or teasers that may or may not be added.

   0. No

   1. Yes (if there are differences in 3 or more of the first 10 lines that are shared by the different editions)

F017 Content of AV illustrations (not size) that are shared by the morning and evening editions, is different. Please note: if no illustrations are shared, the answer is No.

   0. No

   1. Yes

PART G: Qualitative description of newspaper landscape in your country

Please add to the data a short description of the main features of the newspaper landscape in your country. Please consider the following four topics. We do not require you to collect new information to address all these topics. We do ask you to consider whether you have information on these topics, and whether the other researchers should be aware of that information to appreciate the outcome of your country study.

1. The newspaper market:

   To what extent do the printed and online newspapers included in the sample represent all newspapers? For example, we focus on national broadsheets, but regional newspapers or tabloids might have a much larger circulation in your country. Some of the newspapers included in the sample might be published by the same publisher. Some of the newspapers might be known for their innovative or badly developed online strategy.

   This part should also include some quantitative indicators, if available:

   - Circulation of the selected newspapers; total number and circulation of all newspapers, subdivided in relevant segments (e.g., national/regional, broadsheet/tabloid).

   - Ownership of the newspapers in the sample.

2. Production

   The description could include some information, if available, on the production side of printed and online newspapers. Do you have any information on the editorial teams that produce the online edition, on their training, background and relationship with the print team?

3. Regulatory framework

   Thirdly, the description could include some comments on the regulatory situation. Are there specific policies towards printed or online newspapers that we should know about? Are online experiments stimulated/subsidised? Or are they rather hindered by government policies, other regulatory arrangements, or legal problems (e.g., concerning the copyright on newspaper articles).

4. Obvious mistakes

   If the straightforward application of the codebook 'forced' you to provide information that you know or believe is wrong or misleading, please qualify your findings here. If possible, please add the sources on which you base your knowledge.

Appendix B: Informed Survey Questionnaire

This questionnaire was compiled by Ari Heinonen (Tampere) and the present author, with significant input by other members of the COST A20 newspaper sub-group.

THE COST A 20 SURVEY

THE INTERNET AND THE EUROPEAN JOURNALIST

The purpose of the questionnaire is to gather journalists' assessments about the impact of the Internet on professional role perceptions. The respondents are newspaper journalists who are, by definition, experts on journalism.

* * *

1. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

1.1 Name of the medium

1.2 Country

1.3 Respondent's name

1.4 Respondent's sex: M F

1.5 Respondent's age: ___ (years)

1.6 Respondent's professional age (= worked as journalist) ___ (years)

1.7 Respondent's Internet age (= used the Internet at work) ___ (years)

1.8 Respondent's work profile

Do you consider yourself

__ a print journalist

__ an online journalist

__ both a print and an online journalist

1.9 Web use

On average, how many times <u>a day</u> do <u>you</u> access the Web for the purposes of your job?

__ less than once a day

__ less than 5 times a day

__ 5 to 10 times a day

__ more than 10 times a day

1.10 Medium's new media profile

To which of the following publishing platforms is your newspaper producing
<u>journalistic contents</u> (journalistic contents = produced by journalists)? Since when?

web online publication   ___since ___ (year)
pdf or other digital facsimile publication

mobile devices (sms, wap, mms, pda)   ___since ___ (year)
radio   ___since ___ (year)
television (analogue)   ___since ___ (year)
teletext   ___since ___ (year)
digital tv (other contents than for analogue tv)   ___since ___ (year)

weblog   ___since ___ (year)

email (e.g. newsletters)   ___since ___ (year)

newsfeed (e.g. RSS)   ___since ___ (year)

telefax newspaper   ___since ___ (year)

other, specify _____

1.11. Does your organization provide you with information on what readers access

online?

__ Yes, I have access to detailed information on reader behaviour

__ Yes, but only in broad outline

__ No

2. ASSESSING THE ROLE OF THE INTERNET IN JOURNALISTIC WORK

Adoption of the Internet in newsrooms:

2.1 On a scale of 1 to 5, how problematic would you say the following issues have been in incorporating the Internet into your newsroom?

(scale: 1 not at all problematic – 5 very problematic)

- costs

- availability of technical support staff

- availability of training

- attitude of journalists

- attitude of editors/managers

- ease of use of technology

- other, specify ___

The significance of the Internet:

2.3 How important are the following means in gathering information in journalistic work?

(scale: 1 not at all important – 5 very important)

- face-to-face conversation

- telephone conversation

- fax

- telex

- personal e-mails

- e-mails from discussion groups

- e-mail newsletters

- www search engines

- websites of sources

- www news sites

- chat and instant messaging

- weblogs

- newsfeeds (RSS etc.)

- colleagues in the newsroom

- newsroom archives

- personal archives

- electronic archives

- public library

- SMS

- other(s), specify _____

2.4 How useful do you consider the Internet to be for journalists in the following tasks?

(scale: 1 not at all useful – 5 very useful)

- accessing sources

- accessing national government reports and other government information

- accessing local authorities reports and other information

- accessing corporate reports and other information

- receiving press releases

- investigating background information

- verifying facts

- searching for service information (phonebooks, addresses ...)

- other, specify ___

The future of newspaper journalism:

2.5 How significant are the following issues regarding the future of newspaper journalism?

(scale: 1 not at all significant – 5 very significant

- the Internet

- analogue broadcasting

- digital broadcasting

- mobile communication devices

- free papers

- other(s), specify ___

2.6 If journalists were to cease using the Internet, what effect would that have on the following aspects of journalistic work?

(scale: 1 very negative effect– 5 very positive effect)

- tracking story topics

- getting story ideas

- finding sources

- connecting with other journalists

- keeping up to date with the news

- speed of information gathering

- investigative journalism projects

- ease of keeping in touch with newsroom while away (filing stories, access to editorial system)

- real-time publishing of breaking news

- digital archives

- cost saving

- interaction with readers

- data checking

- other, specify ___

Professional role:

2.7 The following are some issues that Western journalists typically consider as important parts of their professional role. What impact does the Internet have on meeting these goals?

(scale: 1 very negative – 5 very positive impact)

- Disseminate credible (objective) information

- Provide analysis and interpretation of complex issues

- Get news to the public as quickly as possible

- Reach the widest possible audience

- Be a watchdog for democracy

- Signal new trends and ideas

- Maintain contact with the public

- Be responsive to reactions on journalistic work

- Give people a forum to express their views

- Provide entertainment

- Be a spokesperson for certain groups

- Exert influence on the political agenda

- Influence public opinion

- Create a good environment for advertisers

- Provide a forum for public deliberations

2.8 Statements

Here are some statements about journalism, journalistic work and the Internet. Do you agree or disagree with them? (Scale: 1 = fully disagree – 5 = fully agree)

2.8.1 Newspapers' future and strategies

- The internet has opened new journalistic possibilities for newspapers.

- Multimedia is an important new component in presenting stories to the audience

- News should be published online as quickly as possible regardless of the publishing time-table of the printed paper.

- In the long run, online journalism is a necessary and progressive strategy for newspapers

- The online edition is a drain on the real function of the newspaper.

- Publishing news free online devalues the work of journalists

- The public's "do-it-yourself journalism" online is a threat to newspapers.

- Citizen journalism and blogs are not real journalism

- Multi-channel publishing is just another word for re-cycling same contents across various channels.

2.8.2 Practices

- Web publishing allows journalists to develop more attractive story-telling formats.

- With the Internet, journalists can get more information into their stories than before.

- Working for multiple media outlets makes journalistic work more rewarding.

- Journalists do not find information on the Internet that they wouldn't have found otherwise.

- Alongside the development of the Internet, the importance of journalists' technological skills has increased too much.

- A good print journalist is usually also a good online journalist.

2.8.3 Professional role

- Future newspaper journalists can enrich their work by moving between different outlets (publishing channels) of their newspaper.

- Newspapers will have to embrace the Internet in order to survive

- In online journalism, journalists have better tools for giving background information and context than in print journalism.

- Male journalists tend to use the Internet more frequently than female journalists.

- Online journalists are closer to their audience than print journalists.

- Online journalists are more information packers than creators of original content.

- The Internet is leading journalism towards more of a 'desktop job'.

- The Internet is rendering journalistic work more superficial.

2.8.4 Ethics

- The Internet makes it easier to double-check information.

- The Internet's interactivity makes journalism more accountable to the public.

- Distinguishing between true and false or inaccurate information is as easy on the Internet as elsewhere.

- Online, journalists have to deal more often with unreliable information.

- The Internet threatens the quality of journalism.

- Online journalism has sacrificed accuracy for speed.

- Online journalism has meant that media converge on a narrower news agenda

- The Internet lets journalists use a wider range of sources

2.8.5 Journalism and the public

- The public demands that newspapers make use of online possibilities.

- Linking with the audience is an important benefit of online journalism.

- Combining the potentialities of print and online media results in an improved relationship with the audience.

- Print media serves audience better than online media.

- Print media is more trusted than online media

- In important issues, the audience prefers print media.

- Audience needs news, not interaction with journalists.

* * *

COST – Journalism survey

CODING INSTRUCTIONS (19.9.05)

Notes:

1) These instructions apply to every single questionnaire that you have.

2) Enter the data into the attached Excel matrix as advised in these instructions.

3) Send the matrix by e-mail...

4) …AND a copy of original questionnaire by snail-mail to Ari. Copies are needed for analyzing verbal answers (like in question 2.1). Verbal answers should be translated to English.

4) Save your original questionnaires carefully.

Fill the cells in Excel matrix as follows.

Comments:- Variable names are in red and <u>underlined</u>.

- Value alternatives are in red.

- Choose only one value.

- Choose 0 if no answer, cannot interpret, no information available; this applies to all.

- Most values alternatives are numerical (texts are there only for explanatory purposes). Pay attention to entering digits correctly.

> - Instruction in between <arrow brackets> means that you write applicable text or digits in that cell without brackets. If names (of respondents, newspapers) are long, enter only necessary: e.g. instead of surname O'Sullivan-Roussos, write only O'Sullivan; instead of Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung, write only Allgemeine.

<div align="center">* * *</div>

ID

<country acronym + respondent's number (e.g. IRL04)>

(Note: Each respondent gets his/her individual ID. Each ID gets one line in the matrix.)

1. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

1.1 Name of the medium

11 medium

0 NA

<medium's name>

1.2 Country

12 country

0 NA

<country acronym (e.g. IRL)>

1.3 Respondent's name

13 respname

0 NA

<respondent's name>

1.4 Respondent's sex: M F

14 sex

0 NA

1 male

2 female

1.5 Respondent's age: ___ (years)

15 age

0 NA

<age in years>

1.6 Respondent's professional age (= worked as journalist) ___ (years)

16 profage

0 NA

<professional age in years>

1.7 Respondent's Internet age (= used the Internet at work) ___ (years)

17 netage

0 NA

<Internet use in years>

1.8 Respondent's work profile

Do you consider yourself

__ a print journalist

__ an online journalist

__ both a print and an online journalist

<u>18 workprof</u>

0 NA

1 print

2 online

3 both

1.9 Web use

On average, how many times <u>a day</u> do <u>you</u> access the Web for the purposes of your job?

__ less than once a day

__ less than 5 times a day

__ 5 to 10 times a day

__ more than 10 times a day

<u>19 webuse</u>

0 NA

1 < once

2 < 5 times

3 5 to 10 times

4 10 >

1.10 Medium's new media profile

To which of the following publishing platforms is your newspaper producing <u>journalistic contents</u> (journalistic contents = produced by journalists)? Since when?

web online publication	___since ___ (year)
pdf or other digital facsimile publication	
mobile devices (sms, wap, mms, pda)	___since ___ (year)
radio	___since ___ (year)
television (analogue)	___since ___ (year)
teletext	___since ___ (year)
digital tv (other contents than for analogue tv)	___since ___ (year)
weblog	___since ___ (year)
email (e.g. newsletters)	___since ___ (year)
newsfeed (e.g. RSS)	___since ___ (year)
telefax newspaper	___since ___ (year)

other, specify _____

1101 webpub

0 NA

1 NO

2 yes (no year known)

<year>

(Note: Alternatives 0 and 1 should be self-evident. In alternatives 2 and <year>, answer to the question's first part determines the value. If answer is yes, mark value 2 (meaning "yes, we have web publication"). If also the year is known, mark as value the year in two digits (e.g. 1998 = 98, meaning "yes, we have had web publication since 1998). This applies to variables 1101 – 11012.

1102pdfpub

0 NA

1 NO

2 yes (no year known)

<u>1103mobpub</u>

0 NA

1 NO

2 yes (no year known)

<year>

<u>1104 radio</u>

0 NA

1 NO

2 yes (no year known)

<year>

<u>1105 tvana</u>

0 NA

1 NO

2 yes (no year known)

<year>

<u>1106 teletxt</u>

0 NA

1 NO

2 yes (no year known)

<year>

<u>1107 tvdigi</u>

0 NA

1 NO

2 yes (no year known)

<year>

1108 blogpub

0 NA

1 NO

2 yes (no year known)

<year>

1109 emailpub

0 NA

1 NO

2 yes (no year known)

<year>

11010 feedpub

0 NA

1 NO

2 yes (no year known)

<year>

11011 faxpub

0 NA

1 NO

2 yes (no year known)

<year>

11012 otherpub

0 NA

1 No

2 YES

(Note: In question 1.10 also verbal specifications are prompted. These will be collected from the questionnaires and analysed qualitatively by Ari. Even if there are several examples named in "other" alternative mark it only once. Mark no year.)

1.11. Does your organization provide you with information on what readers access online?

__ Yes, I have access to detailed information on reader behaviour

__ Yes, but only in broad outline

__ No

<u>111 userdata</u>

0 NA

1 detailed

2 outline

3 no

2. ASSESSING THE ROLE OF THE INTERNET IN JOURNALISTIC WORK

Adoption of the Internet in newsrooms:

2.1 On a scale of 1 to 5, how problematic would you say the following issues have been in incorporating the Internet into your newsroom?

(scale: 1 not at all problematic – 5 very problematic)

- costs

- availability of technical support staff

- availability of training

- attitude of journalists

- attitude of editors/managers

- ease of use of technology

- other, specify ___

<u>211 costs</u>

0 NA

1 or 2 or 3 or 4 or 5

<u>212 techstaff</u>

0 NA

1 or 2 or 3 or 4 or 5

<u>213 training</u>

0 NA

1 or 2 or 3 or 4 or 5

<u>214 jouratti</u>

0 NA

1 or 2 or 3 or 4 or 5

<u>215 managatti</u>

0 NA

1 or 2 or 3 or 4 or 5

<u>216 easyuse</u>

0 NA

1 or 2 or 3 or 4 or 5

217 otheradop

0 NA

1 or 2 or 3 or 4 or 5

(Note: In question 2.1 also verbal specifications are prompted. These will be collected from the questionnaires and analysed qualitatively by Ari. Even if there are several examples named in "other" alternative mark it only once.)

(Note: Question 2.2 was missing because of incorrect numbering. Please stick to the questionnaire's original numbering.)

The significance of the Internet:

2.3 How important are the following means in gathering information in journalistic work?

(scale: 1 not at all important – 5 very important)

- face-to-face conversation

- telephone conversation

- fax

- telex

- personal e-mails

- e-mails from discussion groups

- e-mail newsletters

- www search engines

- websites of sources

- www news sites

- chat and instant messaging

- weblogs

- newsfeeds (RSS etc.)

- colleagues in the newsroom

- newsroom archives

- personal archives

- electronic archives

- public library

- SMS

- other(s), specify _____

231 facetoface

0 NA

1 or 2 or 3 or 4 or 5

232 phone

0 NA

1 or 2 or 3 or 4 or 5

233 fax

0 NA

1 or 2 or 3 or 4 or 5

234 telex

0 NA

1 or 2 or 3 or 4 or 5

235 persemail

0 NA

1 or 2 or 3 or 4 or 5

236 groupemail

0 NA

1 or 2 or 3 or 4 or 5

237 enewsletr

0 NA

1 or 2 or 3 or 4 or 5

238 searcheng

0 NA

1 or 2 or 3 or 4 or 5

239 sourcesite

0 NA

1 or 2 or 3 or 4 or 5

2310 newssite

0 NA

1 or 2 or 3 or 4 or 5

2311 chat

0 NA

1 or 2 or 3 or 4 or 5

2312 weblog

0 NA

1 or 2 or 3 or 4 or 5

<u>2313 RSS</u>

0 NA

1 or 2 or 3 or 4 or 5

<u>2314 colleague</u>

0 NA

1 or 2 or 3 or 4 or 5

<u>2315 newsroomarch</u>

0 NA

1 or 2 or 3 or 4 or 5

<u>2316 persarch</u>

0 NA

1 or 2 or 3 or 4 or 5

<u>2317 earch</u>

0 NA

1 or 2 or 3 or 4 or 5

<u>2318 publib</u>

0 NA

1 or 2 or 3 or 4 or 5

<u>2319 SMS</u>

0 NA

1 or 2 or 3 or 4 or 5

<u>2320 othersigni</u>

0 NA

1 or 2 or 3 or 4 or 5

(Note: In question 2.3 also verbal specifications are prompted. These will be collected from the questionnaires and analysed qualitatively by Ari. Even if there are several examples named in "other" alternative mark it only once.)

2.4 How useful do you consider the Internet to be for journalists in the following tasks?

(scale: 1 not at all useful – 5 very useful)

- accessing sources

- accessing national government reports and other government information

- accessing local authorities reports and other information

- accessing corporate reports and other information

- receiving press releases

- investigating background information

- verifying facts

- searching for service information (phonebooks, addresses ...)

- other, specify ___

<u>241 accesssource</u>

0 NA

1 or 2 or 3 or 4 or 5

<u>242 accessgvmnt</u>

0 NA

1 or 2 or 3 or 4 or 5

<u>243 accesslocal</u>

0 NA

1 or 2 or 3 or 4 or 5

<u>244 accesscorpor</u>

0 NA

1 or 2 or 3 or 4 or 5

<u>245 pressrelease</u>

0 NA

1 or 2 or 3 or 4 or 5

<u>246 backinfo</u>

0 NA

1 or 2 or 3 or 4 or 5

<u>247 verify</u>

0 NA

1 or 2 or 3 or 4 or 5

<u>248 serviceinfo</u>

0 NA

1 or 2 or 3 or 4 or 5

<u>249 otheruse</u>

0 NA

1 or 2 or 3 or 4 or 5

(Note: In question 2.4 also verbal specifications are prompted. These will be collected from the questionnaires and analysed qualitatively by Ari. Even if there are several examples named in "other" alternative mark it only once.)

The future of newspaper journalism:

2.5 How significant are the following issues regarding the future of newspaper journalism?

(scale: 1 not at all significant – 5 very significant)

- the Internet

- analogue broadcasting

- digital broadcasting

- mobile communication devices

- free papers

- other(s), specify ___

<u>251 net</u>

0 NA

1 or 2 or 3 or 4 or 5

<u>252 analbroad</u>

0 NA

1 or 2 or 3 or 4 or 5

<u>253 digibroad</u>

0 NA

1 or 2 or 3 or 4 or 5

<u>254 mobile</u>

0 NA

1 or 2 or 3 or 4 or 5

<u>255 freepaper</u>

0 NA

1 or 2 or 3 or 4 or 5

<u>256 otherfut</u>

0 NA

1 or 2 or 3 or 4 or 5

(Note: In question 2.5 also verbal specifications are prompted. These will be collected from the questionnaires and analysed qualitatively by Ari. Even if there are several examples named in "other" alternative mark it only once.)

2.6 If journalists were to cease using the Internet, what effect would that have on the following aspects of journalistic work?

(scale: 1 very negative effect– 5 very positive effect)

- tracking story topics

- getting story ideas

- finding sources

- connecting with other journalists

- keeping up to date with the news

- speed of information gathering

- investigative journalism projects

- ease of keeping in touch with newsroom while away (filing stories, access to editorial system)

- real-time publishing of breaking news

- digital archives

- cost saving

- interaction with readers

- data checking

- other, specify ___

261 topic

0 NA

1 or 2 or 3 or 4 or 5

262 idea

0 NA

1 or 2 or 3 or 4 or 5

263 sources

0 NA

1 or 2 or 3 or 4 or 5

264 connectjourno

0 NA

1 or 2 or 3 or 4 or 5

265 update

0 NA

1 or 2 or 3 or 4 or 5

266 speed

0 NA

1 or 2 or 3 or 4 or 5

<u>267 investigate</u>

0 NA

1 or 2 or 3 or 4 or 5

<u>268 connectnewsroom</u>

0 NA

1 or 2 or 3 or 4 or 5

<u>269 breaknews</u>

0 NA

1 or 2 or 3 or 4 or 5

<u>2610 digiarch</u>

0 NA

1 or 2 or 3 or 4 or 5

<u>2611 save</u>

0 NA

1 or 2 or 3 or 4 or 5

<u>2612 interact</u>

0 NA

1 or 2 or 3 or 4 or 5

<u>2613 datacheck</u>

0 NA

1 or 2 or 3 or 4 or 5

<u>2614 othercease</u>

0 NA

1 or 2 or 3 or 4 or 5

(Note: In question 2.6 also verbal specifications are prompted. These will be collected from the questionnaires and analysed qualitatively by Ari. Even if there are several examples named in "other" alternative mark it only once.)

Professional role:

2.7 The following are some issues that Western journalists typically consider as important parts of their professional role. What impact does the Internet have on meeting these goals?

(scale: 1 very negative – 5 very positive impact)

- Disseminate credible (objective) information

- Provide analysis and interpretation of complex issues

- Get news to the public as quickly as possible

- Reach the widest possible audience

- Be a watchdog for democracy

- Signal new trends and ideas

- Maintain contact with the public

- Be responsive to reactions on journalistic work

- Give people a forum to express their views

- Provide entertainment

- Be a spokesperson for certain groups

- Exert influence on the political agenda

- Influence public opinion

- Create a good environment for advertisers

- Provide a forum for public deliberations

<u>271 credible</u>

0 NA

1 or 2 or 3 or 4 or 5

<u>272 analysis</u>

0 NA

1 or 2 or 3 or 4 or 5

<u>273 quickly</u>

0 NA

1 or 2 or 3 or 4 or 5

<u>274 wideaudience</u>

0 NA

1 or 2 or 3 or 4 or 5

<u>275 watchdog</u>

0 NA

1 or 2 or 3 or 4 or 5

<u>276 newtrend</u>

0 NA

1 or 2 or 3 or 4 or 5

<u>277 contact</u>

0 NA

1 or 2 or 3 or 4 or 5

<u>278 responsive</u>

0 NA

1 or 2 or 3 or 4 or 5

<u>279 peopleview</u>

0 NA

1 or 2 or 3 or 4 or 5

<u>2710 entertain</u>

0 NA

1 or 2 or 3 or 4 or 5

<u>2711 speakgroup</u>

0 NA

1 or 2 or 3 or 4 or 5

<u>2712 polagenda</u>

0 NA

1 or 2 or 3 or 4 or 5

<u>2713 pubopinion</u>

0 NA

1 or 2 or 3 or 4 or 5

<u>2714 advertise</u>

0 NA

1 or 2 or 3 or 4 or 5

<u>2715 liberation</u>

0 NA

1 or 2 or 3 or 4 or 5

2.8 Statements

Here are some statements about journalism, journalistic work and the Internet. Do you agree or disagree with them? (Scale: 1 = fully disagree – 5 = fully agree)

2.8.1 Newspapers' future and strategies

- The internet has opened new journalistic possibilities for newspapers.

- Multimedia is an important new component in presenting stories to the audience

- News should be published online as quickly as possible regardless of the publishing time-table of the printed paper.

- In the long run, online journalism is a necessary and progressive strategy for newspapers

- The online edition is a drain on the real function of the newspaper.

- Publishing news free online devalues the work of journalists

- The public's "do-it-yourself journalism" online is a threat to newspapers.

- Citizen journalism and blogs are not real journalism

- Multi-channel publishing is just another word for re-cycling same contents across various channels.

<u>2811 newpossi</u>

0 NA

1 or 2 or 3 or 4 or 5

2812 multimedia

0 NA

1 or 2 or 3 or 4 or 5

2813 onlinequick

0 NA

1 or 2 or 3 or 4 or 5

2814 necessary

0 NA

1 or 2 or 3 or 4 or 5

2815 onlinedrain

0 NA

1 or 2 or 3 or 4 or 5

2816 devaluate

0 NA

1 or 2 or 3 or 4 or 5

2817 diythreat

0 NA

1 or 2 or 3 or 4 or 5

2818 blognotreal

0 NA

1 or 2 or 3 or 4 or 5

2.8.2 Practices

- Web publishing allows journalists to develop more attractive story-telling formats.

- With the Internet, journalists can get more information into their stories than before.

- Working for multiple media outlets makes journalistic work more rewarding.

- Journalists do not find information on the Internet that they wouldn't have found otherwise.

- Alongside the development of the Internet, the importance of journalists' technological skills has increased too much.

- A good print journalist is usually also a good online journalist.

1 or 2 or 3 or 4 or 5

2825 skills

0 NA

1 or 2 or 3 or 4 or 5

2826 printgood

0 NA

1 or 2 or 3 or 4 or 5

2.8.3 Professional role

- Future newspaper journalists can enrich their work by moving between different outlets (publishing channels) of their newspaper.

- Newspapers will have to embrace the Internet in order to survive

- In online journalism, journalists have better tools for giving background information and context than in print journalism.

- Male journalists tend to use the Internet more frequently than female journalists.

- Online journalists are closer to their audience than print journalists.

- Online journalists are more information packers than creators of original content.

- The Internet is leading journalism towards more of a 'desktop job'.

- The Internet is rendering journalistic work more superficial.

2831 moving

0 NA

1 or 2 or 3 or 4 or 5

2832 embrace

0 NA

1 or 2 or 3 or 4 or 5

<u>2833 context</u>

0 NA

1 or 2 or 3 or 4 or 5

<u>2834 malemore</u>

0 NA

1 or 2 or 3 or 4 or 5

<u>2835 audience</u>

0 NA

1 or 2 or 3 or 4 or 5

<u>2836 packers</u>

0 NA

1 or 2 or 3 or 4 or 5

<u>2837 desktop</u>

0 NA

1 or 2 or 3 or 4 or 5

<u>2838 superficial</u>

0 NA

1 or 2 or 3 or 4 or 5

2.8.4 Ethics

- The Internet makes it easier to double-check information.

- The Internet's interactivity makes journalism more accountable to the public.

- Distinguishing between true and false or inaccurate information is as easy on the Internet as elsewhere.

- Online, journalists have to deal more often with unreliable information.

- The Internet threatens the quality of journalism.

- Online journalism has sacrificed accuracy for speed.

- Online journalism has meant that media converge on a narrower news agenda

- The Internet lets journalists use a wider range of sources

2841 doublecheck

0 NA

1 or 2 or 3 or 4 or 5

2842 accountable

0 NA

1 or 2 or 3 or 4 or 5

2843 trueeasy

0 NA

1 or 2 or 3 or 4 or 5

2844 unreliable

0 NA

1 or 2 or 3 or 4 or 5

2845 threatqual

0 NA

1 or 2 or 3 or 4 or 5

2846 sacrifice

0 NA

1 or 2 or 3 or 4 or 5

<u>2847 narrow</u>

0 NA

1 or 2 or 3 or 4 or 5

<u>2848 widesource</u>

0 NA

1 or 2 or 3 or 4 or 5

2.8.5 Journalism and the public

- The public demands that newspapers make use of online possibilities.

- Linking with the audience is an important benefit of online journalism.

- Combining the potentialities of print and online media results in an improved relationship with the audience.

- Print media serves audience better than online media.

- Print media is more trusted than online media

- In important issues, the audience prefers print media.

- Audience needs news, not interaction with journalists.

<u>2851 pubdemand</u>

0 NA

1 or 2 or 3 or 4 or 5

<u>2852 linkaudience</u>

0 NA

1 or 2 or 3 or 4 or 5

<u>2853 combine</u>

0 NA

1 or 2 or 3 or 4 or 5

<u>2854 printbetter</u>

0 NA

1 or 2 or 3 or 4 or 5

<u>2855 printtrust</u>

0 NA

1 or 2 or 3 or 4 or 5

<u>2856 printprefer</u>

0 NA

1 or 2 or 3 or 4 or 5

<u>2857 newsneed</u>

0 NA

1 or 2 or 3 or 4 or 5

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