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**News and Radio: Social Media Adoption and Integration by  
@RadioProducers and its Impact on Their #MediaWork**

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## **Abstract**

This research analyses how news talk radio program producers are using social media in their daily work practices and routines, and how doing so has impacted on their media work. Currently, the majority of scholarly attention has focused on the apparent crisis facing print media in light of continuous technological innovations in newsrooms, as a condition of media convergence. However, there has been significantly less scholarship considering how the introduction of various Internet and new media technologies has impacted on radio broadcasting. Structural transformations of the radio industry have triggered workplace shifts in news talk production that has altered the media work of radio program producers. It is therefore the aim of this thesis to explore the changing nature of radio work, and the way in which news talk radio producers adopt and integrate Internet and new media technologies into their daily work practices and routines.

This research examines the use of Internet and new media technologies by three news talk program production teams within the community, commercial, and public service broadcasting sectors in order to explore how each have taken to social media in their daily workflows.

Based on participant observation and semi-structured interviews with each of the radio producers, the research uses an inductive ethnographic research methodology to understand the technology access and workload challenges they are facing in developing social media skills, particularly concerning program pre-promotion and audience interaction.

The research indicates that access to reliable computing technologies is a contentious issue amongst the commercial and community radio stations observed and which ultimately impacts upon the radio producers' ability to effectively complete their daily media work. Further, the research indicates that

the workload of each of the producers has increased significantly with their incorporation and adoption of social media in their daily workflows.

The study suggests that further research is necessary in order to provide a more comprehensive analysis of the changing nature of media work within radio production.

## **Certification of Authorship and Originality**

I certify that the work in this thesis has not previously been submitted for a degree nor has it been submitted as part of requirements for a degree except as fully acknowledged within the text. I also certify that the thesis has been written by me. Any help that I have received in my research work and the preparation of the thesis itself has been acknowledged. In addition, I certify that all information sources and literature used are indicated in the thesis. This study has been granted approval from the Human Ethics Research Committee, reference number: 2012/2322.

Annita Becirevic

28/11/2014



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# **Chapter One: Introduction**

In this chapter I explore the context of this study and place it within the Media and Communications research field. This chapter identifies a lack of scholarship concerning the work practices and routines of radio producers at a time when the focus has been on the apparent crisis facing print media with the introduction of new communicative technologies in newsroom; a condition of media convergence (Dwyer, 2010). I then outline the research question posed and the theoretical framework of this study, which considers radio production as an evolving form of media work, drawing extensively from digital media scholar Mark Deuze. Finally, this chapter outlines the structure of this thesis with a brief overview of each chapter.

## **1.1 Context**

In the 2000s, radio news and talk production is changing rapidly with the ongoing digitalisation of production practices and routines. The online networking of newsrooms includes the use of the Internet as a tool for research, program distribution and most significantly, audience interaction. Search and communications technologies have extended the reach and speed of newsgathering (Garrison 2000; Rosenberg & Feldman 2008; Couldry 2006; 2010) while the World Wide Web (WWW) and has enabled media organisations to distribute news and information in multiple formats with accompanying images, audio, and video (Deuze, Bruns & Neuberger 2007). The domestication of the Internet in the 1990s (Silverstone & Haddon 1996; Cummings & Kraut 2002) allowed users to connect, discover, and share information instantly through outlets such as web-logs (which are more commonly referred to as 'blogs'), social networking websites, forums, and online polls. Furthermore, it has allowed users to undertake participatory or 'citizen' journalism roles, which have had an impact on mainstream media agendas and newsgathering practices (Paulussen et al. 2007; O'Sullivan & Heinomen 2008; Goode 2009, Allan 2013).

Internet communication and production platforms facilitated the popularity of online journalism that would see media organisations and journalists interact with their audiences in news and challenging ways (Bardoel & Deuze 2001;

Deuze 2003; Lowrey & Anderson 2003; Hirst & Harrison 2007; Macnamara 2010; Hirst 2011). However, it is important to note that these modes of interaction are challenging in themselves particularly in terms of pressure placed on journalists and media professionals to be multi-skilled (see Chapter 2); additionally they are also challenging as they are resource consuming and require access to adequate technological infrastructure within newsrooms. Thus media convergence and widespread use of new communicative media technologies have seen radio producers forced to adopt new computer mediated production technologies as modes for information gathering, production and distribution, and as a way to build new relationships with their audience.

Here it is important to note that the problem however is that many popular accounts of technological change in the media industry are utopian or are reflections of techno-determinism<sup>1</sup> (Innis 1951; 1972; Chandler 2000). Snowden (2006) also notes that the concerns regarding the effects and consequences of media technologies, most notably shared by scholars such as Marshall McLuhan<sup>2</sup> (1962) were 'often appropriated to support and promote the diffusion of the technology' that he had critiqued (p. 82), while the work of scholars Ithiel de Sola Pool<sup>3</sup> (1983) and Trevor Barr<sup>4</sup> (1985) were often used to 'advance arguments about the positive *potential* of new technology' (ibid.) This thesis investigates media convergence as a concept linked to the operation of digital capitalism (Schiller 2000; Deuze 2007; Fisher 2010) and participatory media, which is in line with Henry Jenkins' (2006) discussion concerning 'participatory culture' (2006; see also Chapter 2).

The Internet has also enabled the growth of citizen journalism, where non-professional journalists are able to search for, produce, and distribute

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<sup>1</sup> This study takes the meaning of technological determinism from Chandler (2002) who refers to it as 'a technology-led theory of social change: technology is seen as 'the prime mover' in history'

<sup>2</sup> McLuhan's concept of a 'global village', which conceptualised the word as a village condensed by the access to, and availability of new communications technologies (Snowden 2006, p. 57).

<sup>3</sup> In reference to Pool's publication, *Technologies of Freedom* (1983), which explored the social effects of the telephone.

<sup>4</sup> Barr examined the importance of the changing ICT environment and linked it to 'the political and economic environment as well as the media [...] before the rise of technological utopian views in the 1990s' (Snowden 2006, p. 82).

information of their own creation to a wide audience. Perhaps most significantly, while providing an additional platform for media organisations in their news production and diffusion, the proliferation of the Internet and citizen journalism has allowed for news and information to be delivered via individuals and organisations without the mediation of the traditionally established news media. While citizen journalism and mass-self communication have continued to grow in popularity, a number of social media websites have been established to act as arenas in which members can network as well as share their opinion(s) in an online environment. Most prominently, social media website giants Facebook<sup>5</sup> and Twitter<sup>6</sup> have become two of the most successful and recognisable social media websites; acting as online forums where users can create, share, and distribute information to fellow users. As citizen journalists continue to create and broadcast information, they introduce new flows of information to professional journalists and media organisations that use social media in their work routines. Subsequently, these new flows of information that journalists encounter via social media websites are impacting upon their work practices, which are consequentially changing the news production process.

Radio is considered an interactive medium, particularly in the way in which it allows for audience interaction and participation. The interactive nature of radio increased significantly with the start of news talk, or talkback radio in the 1970s (Scannell 1990; 1991; Hutchby 1991; Chignell 2009; 2011; Flew 2004; Turner 2007). However, the adoption and integration of social media websites within radio broadcasting has significantly changed the relationship between radio programs and their audience. Furthermore, the integration of social media within the news production and broadcasting processes has also impacted upon journalists' attitudes toward digital and new media technologies within newsrooms. This is primarily seen as an issue related to convergence within newsrooms as journalists and other associated media workers are expected to

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<sup>5</sup> Founded in 2004, Facebook had an average of one million users in its first year of operation. Celebrating its 10<sup>th</sup> year, Facebook now boasts approximately 1.23 billion monthly active users <<http://www.theguardian.com/news/datablog/2014/feb/04/facebook-in-numbers-statistics>>.

<sup>6</sup> Founded in 2006, Twitter averages 241 million monthly active users, with an average of 500 million Tweets sent per day <<https://about.twitter.com/company>>.

have at the very least, a basic knowledge and understanding of a variety of new media and Internet technologies (see also Chapter 2).

## **1.2 Locating the research problem**

The concept of 'traditional' journalism practices has shifted dramatically with the continuous introduction of new media and Internet technologies. As various new media technologies begin to be implemented within newsrooms, journalists and media professionals alike are increasingly expected to have, at the very least, some skill in using multiple media devices within the production and broadcasting stages. The move to, and subsequent popularisation of, social media platforms such as Twitter and Facebook has meant that media organisations now have access to a new medium where they can produce and distribute information to an almost global audience<sup>7</sup>. In their move to online resources, media organisations and the journalists who work for them have begun to increasingly incorporate social media into their work practices and routines; which have become an important tool for many media professionals across print, television, and radio for tasks such as searching for and producing content, program promotion, and audience interaction. Internet and new media technologies have allowed media professionals to access social media websites that act as additional platforms where programs, across any broadcast medium, can be promoted via websites such as Twitter and Facebook. Additionally social media is increasingly being used by media organisations as a tool to encourage audience interaction and participation by posing questions to the audience via social media in addition to online polls (Hermida & Thurman 2008; Singer et al. 2011).

It is also worth noting that the emergence of portable Internet accessible devices has also changed the way media organisations promote their programs and interact with their audience, in addition to how audiences consume and broadcast information. This is particularly evident primarily as the majority of portable devices used to produce and broadcast information from virtually

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<sup>7</sup> It is noted that limitations exist within those countries that filter Internet content.

anywhere only require Internet access (see also Deuze 2005; 2007; 2011; Bruns 2008; Allan 2006; 2010; Macnamara 2009; Dwyer 2010; Hirst 2010 among others). Furthermore, as journalists and media professionals increasingly incorporate social media in their work practices, a new demand for up-to-date technology arises (see Chapter 2). The technological infrastructure made available within newsrooms to journalists and media professionals has what Singer et al. describes as a 'significant effect on the adoption of innovative practices in professional newsrooms' (2013, p. 72). The technologies made available to media workers is an area of increasing relevance, particularly in terms of newsroom convergence, whereby the work practices and processes of journalists, as well as their ability to carry out their media work is at times determined by the technologies available to them (see also Deuze 1999; Snowden 2006; Singer 2006; Paulussen & Ugille 2008; Steensen 2011).

While it appears that media organisations are promoting the use of social media amongst their employees particularly when it comes to audience interaction and program promotion; in doing so, journalists and media professionals are facing uncertainty regarding efforts to incorporate the use of social media websites into current journalistic workflows. This uncertainty has led to a sense of defensiveness amongst journalists toward what seems like a push by the media organisations they work for to further incorporate social media in their daily work practices (see Ngyuen & Western 2006; Deuze 2007; Thurman 2008; Nguyen 2011; Singer et al. 2011); which in itself brings up issues regarding multi-skilling as described by Bromley (1997).

Furthermore, this sense of defensiveness has resonated within the journalists' notion of their traditional gatekeeping roles, which are continuously being challenged and reoriented with the rise of mass self-communication amongst the public as a result of the popularisation of social media. Within this new media environment where there is a seemingly unlimited number of sources of news and information, the concept of journalists as the sole gatekeepers of information becomes rather absurd (Williams & Delli Carpini 2000; Singer 2006b). Singer (2006b) suggests that journalists, who were seen as traditional

senders of messages, are now faced with new methods of information delivery as well as fundamental shifts in their roles as communicators (see Chapter 2). This view expressed by Singer highlights the shift from the traditionally journalistic associated gatekeeping roles, to online systems where the public can select, produce, and diffuse their own information. Furthermore, scholars such as Bowman & Willis (2003) have commented on the state of traditional journalistic roles, particularly that of gatekeeping. Within the context of advancing new technologies that allow for an alternative means of news consumption and diffusion, particularly as users can bypass traditional media organisations, Bowman & Willis state that:

The venerable profession of journalism finds itself at a rare moment in history where, for the first time, its hegemony as gatekeeper of the news is threatened by not just new technology and competitors but, potentially, the audience it serves (2003, p. 7).

These authors assert that in an era of always-on technology where powerful mobile devices and user-friendly publishing tools exist, the 'online audience has the means to become an active participant in the creation and dissemination of news and information' (Bowman & Willis 2003, p. 7), rather than how they have previously been described as 'passive consumers'<sup>8</sup>. It is in this networked mediascape where the role of journalists historically described as gatekeepers of information, are in a 'the process of being redefined' (Singer 2007, p. 74).

### **1.3 Research question**

This research is primarily interested in how the introduction of Internet and new media technologies in newsrooms have impacted upon the traditional journalistic functions of radio producers; with an emphasis placed on their adoption and integration of social media in their daily work practices and routines, and its subsequent impact on their media work. Here it is important to note that it is difficult to clearly define the varied roles undertaken by those working within professional radio roles, therefore it is important to offer a definition of what the term 'radio producer' means in relation to this research.

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<sup>8</sup> It is noted that the concept of an audience that is entirely passive receivers of information has been questioned and for the most part dismissed by a number of media scholars (see Jenkins 2006; Gillmor 2006; Singer et al. 2011)



For the purposes of this research, a 'radio producer' is defined as an individual working within the radio broadcasting industry in a position where they are in some way responsible for the organisation and production of content for a live to air radio program on either a public service, commercial, or community radio station. A radio producer in this sense is not necessarily an exclusive member of the Media, Entertainment, and Arts Alliance (MEAA), however, it is also necessary to note that there are radio producers who come from a professional journalistic background and may already be members of the MEAA and therefore governed by its ethical guidelines. Further, in addition to the researcher's own experience working within a commercial radio station in the capacity of a radio producer for a commercial radio station, the main theoretical frameworks of this study are drawn from journalism studies and therefore influences the definition of the terminology. In this sense, it is the position of this study that radio producers assume, at least in part, some of the traditional roles of journalists which is in part due to their close working relationships with journalists in addition to the roles and varied tasks they themselves undertake as part of their daily workloads.

The main question therefore being posed within this research is *'How do radio producers' adoption and integration of social media in their daily work practices and routines impact on their media work?'* While the majority of scholarship currently available primarily concerns itself with the crisis facing print media organisations, there has been less scholarly attention within the relatively new research field of radio studies, particularly when it comes to the impact of Internet and new media technologies on the media work carried out by radio program producers. This lack of concern toward radio producers, their adoption and integration of social media and how it impacts on their media work is therefore the central theme of this study. It is the aim of this thesis to address this lack of literature and add to the current scholarship available concerning radio producers, their adoption and integration of social media and its impact on their media work.

## 1.4 Significance

Print newspapers, and the journalists who work for them, have continuously received scholarly attention, which is in part due to the long history of newspapers and their ability to withstand and adapt to continuous technological advances (Hardt 1979; 1990; 1998; Winston 1998; Hirst 2011). In a recent publication, Singer et al. discuss the 'historical longevity' of newspapers, particularly in regard to how they have adapted to the introduction of various new communication technologies; as well as their reasons behind opting to examine journalists working within traditional (print) newspapers:

The newspaper industry has survived everything from the advent of the telegraph in the early 1800s to that of the mobile telephone a century and half later – with landline telephones, film, radio, broadcast and cable television, and more in between. As a result, the culture of newspaper journalism is simultaneously – and somewhat paradoxically – the most deeply rooted and the most flexible of all newsroom cultures. This seemed to us an interesting backdrop for the current challenges posed to journalists by an open and interactive network (2011, p. 3).

However, this reinforces that while print media receives a large concentration of scholarly attention, other mediums such as radio, have been somewhat neglected. A considerable amount of scholarly enquiry has concentrated on the apparent crisis facing print media organisations primarily due to advances in new communication technologies that have seen publishers of print newspapers shift to online versions (see for example Cochran 1997; Boczkowski 2004a; 2004b; Conboy 2010; Franklin 2008; Singer 2001; 2006a; Ursell 2001; Bruns 2012). The introduction of the Internet and new media technologies in addition to the popularisation of social media platforms has sparked a variety of speculations about future developments and evolutions in journalism. Most prominently, these speculations have included the 'death of print' as multimedia companies replace newspaper publishers and the 'demise of gatekeeping' (Boczkowski 2004, p. 5). Furthermore, a number of scholars have examined the place and future of print media alongside new media and Internet technologies (see for example works by Allan 2006; 2011; Bardoel 2002; Pavlik 1997; 1999; 2008; Bromley 2007; Carlson 2007; Franklin 2008; Mosco 2009; Curran 2010; Conboy 2010; Macnamara 2010; Carpenter 2010; Chyi & Chadha 2011; Hirst

2011). Another discussion among scholars is that of potential problems that are likely to be faced by the journalism profession in the future, especially when it comes to future technological advances and newsroom convergence; Macnamara states:

A key question being asked by many in the media industry is whether these developments are just another cycle of change in a continuum of progress destined to return to equilibrium after an unsettled period, or whether they constitute a major evolution/revolution as significant as the development of the printing press or the invention of television (2010, p. 211).

As a result of the rise of social media as well as the crisis facing print media, many studies have examined how participatory media is being utilised in the production of online newspaper content (Paulussen et al. 2007; Hermida & Thurman 2008; Singer et al. 2011; Domingo et al. 2008; Harrison 2010). These scholars have examined how print media organisations in particular have begun to explore how participatory media can be used within content production by connecting with 'changing usage patterns and the 'real' needs and preferences of their public' (Paulussen 2007, p. 132); in addition to how the introduction of social media and Internet technologies have changed the work practices and routines of journalists. However, while there is ample scholarship concerned with print media, there remains a gap regarding how the adoption and integration of social media into the work practices and routines of radio producers impacts their media work; a gap this study aims to fill.

## **1.5 Theoretical framework**

This thesis regards radio production as an evolving form of digital media work, and therefore draws specifically from digital media scholar Mark Deuze and his seminal text *Media Work*. Deuze (2007) suggests that the context for media production is changing rapidly, particularly as media workers are increasingly expected to adopt new tools, techniques, and working arrangements as a direct result of the convergent nature of current 21<sup>st</sup> century newsrooms. While Deuze examines the work changes that are occurring within the media industries with a focus on the creative and cultural industries, he does not examine aspects of

media work that are significant to this thesis; that being radio production work. While examining radio production as a form of media work, this thesis explores the changes occurring within radio news talk production and situates these changes within a longer history of journalistic evolution; one where the work practices and routines of journalists have continuously evolved with the integration of various new media and communicative technologies.

This research also draws upon the work of various other scholars within the wider fields of journalism, media and Internet studies. The scholarship of Hanno Hardt (1979; 1990; 1998a; 1998b) and James W. Carey (1974; 1989) for example is particularly relevant to this research as it calls for an inclusive history of journalism; where the attitudes of news workers toward advancing new media technologies is considered and recorded in journalism history rather than disregarded. Hardt was at the forefront of the discussion and critique regarding the impact that advancing technologies have on the work practices of journalists and media professionals alike. The growing dependence on technology by journalists and media professionals has meant that news workers have had to adapt to new technologies that have altered their work practices and processes to the point where 'news workers became part of the new machinery, designed to produce materials faster and more accurately than competitors' (Hardt 1998, p. 179). Hardt (1979) in particular stresses that the way in which journalists report and diffuse information should continue to be an instrument of change, which evolves with constant advances in new media technologies. In addition, Hardt (1990; 1998) also maintains that advances and evolutions in journalistic technologies are not small nor current issues that have arisen, rather, they are part of a longer history of change in which the journalism profession has adapted, evolved and survived. Furthermore, sociologist Alfred McClung Lee also contributed to the discussion by offering his own analogy to the state of news workers at the time, by suggesting that 'news-handling [had] some similarity to [an] automobile manufacturer's assembly line' (cited in Hardt 1998, p. 179). With the implementation of newsroom convergence where journalists are assumed to know, at the very least, 'a little about a lot', there is now a renewed focus on the capacity for journalists to adapt to technological change and

innovation, particularly in regard to their work practices and processes (Singer et al. 2011).

The scholarship of both Hardt and Carey assist in providing a historical context of journalism history, which highlights the continuous evolutionary nature of journalism and the introduction of new media technologies, while also outlining the gaps in the scholarship specifically concerning radio workers; or more specifically, radio program producers. Taking lead from Hardt, contemporary scholar Jane Singer has also identified the need for further research into the impact of new media technologies on the work practices and processes of journalists and media professionals (1998; 2003; 2007).

As this research examines the work practices and processes of radio producers; it is also necessary to examine the work of scholars such as Gaye Tuchman and Phillip Schlesinger, each of whom are pioneers within the area of production studies. In his earlier work, Schlesinger argued the need to consider a number of factors in the news production process, and while pointing out areas that have been examined extensively such as 'news values' and 'professionalism'; Schlesinger outlines the necessity to explore the production of news in relation to time:

Their shaping role in modern cultural production has attracted little attention. And yet, when we come to examine 'news' as a specific cultural form, it quickly becomes clear that to study temporal concepts, and their role in its production, is quite as relevant as the more well-worked areas of 'news values', 'objection', and 'professionalism'. Our understanding of the production system which gives birth to 'the news' is much enhanced when the time-factor is clearly focused upon (1977, p. 337).

The importance of examining time-factors in the news production process as outlined by Schlesinger in 1977 is still relevant today, considering the current 24-hour news cycle. The advent of the Internet and various social media websites has meant that producers of news, regardless of the medium, have access to a seemingly unlimited amount of information at hand instantly; which therefore reduces the amount of time spent sourcing information and potential content to be aired. Building on his earlier work, Schlesinger & Doyle (2014) note that the development of multi-media practices, particularly in the current

convergent nature of newsrooms, has been an increasing area of research particularly in regard to reshaping cultures of production. Furthermore, highlighting the lack of consideration of the audience in the news production process, Schlesinger comments on Simon Cottle's call for a 'second wave' of ethnographic research on the production of news (see Chapter 3).

The selection, packaging and broadcasting of information to an audience, irrespective of the media platform, is generally considered as the fundamental role of journalists (McNair 1998; 2005). In radio, producers perform a large part of the journalistic function; however, in considering the scholarship currently available concerning the adoption and integration of social media in the work practices and processes of journalists, very little has specifically examined radio producers. Therefore examining the adoption and integration of social media by radio producers in their daily work practices and routines and considering the impact it has on their media work becomes an increasingly important area of research.

McLeish's contribution of examining the Internet and use of websites by radio producers, while limited, nonetheless adds to the scholarship available concerning the work practices and processes of radio program producers. While useful, the majority of scholarship published by McLeish (1999) and Hendy (2000) concerning the multi-skilling of radio producers, particularly in regard to the design and construction of websites, is now dated. Their contributions to radio scholarship does however reflect on the current convergent nature of newsrooms, where media workers are expected to be multi-skilled particularly when it comes to creating and broadcasting information for multiple platforms. This is further reinforced with current broadband Internet connections coupled with the constant connectedness to information made possible with Internet accessible portable devices. As Internet technologies have become commonplace, especially with the popularisation of social media, it is clear that there is a significant lack of scholarship examining how radio producers use of the Internet and social media in their production and processes, not just in the diffusion of content as outlined by both McLeish (1999) and Hendy (2000). The introduction

of new media technologies as well as the implementation of convergent journalism practices within newsrooms have steadily redefined the roles of journalists in an 'always on' (Chen 2012) society.

While this study does not focus specifically on the gatekeeping function of radio program producers, it is important to consider how the adoption and integration of social media by media professionals has impacted on their traditionally appointed gatekeeping roles. Gatekeeping studies have a long history, dating back to the 1940s when David Manning White (1950) first applied the term 'gatekeeper' to journalists after examining the editorial choices made by a wire editor at a small newspaper (see Chapter 2). In what he called an experimental study, White examined how the wire editor, whom he dubbed 'Mr. Gates', chose which international and national news stories appeared in his newspaper. In addition, another influential early gatekeeping study conducted by Walter Geiber (1956) examined the editorial decisions made by 16 wire editors. Directly following studies by White and Geiber, a number of studies have examined the gatekeeping function of journalists and editors primarily in print and television newsrooms (see Breed 1955; Geiber 1956; Snider 1966; Buckalew 1967; 1974). The results of these studies indicated that potential news items pass through a number of 'gates', which are ultimately guarded by journalists or editors. Further studies conducted have reinforced the conclusions made by earlier studies, suggesting that journalists and editors enforce 'gates' that operate to either accept or reject potential news content based on their personal values and or the values enforced by the media organisation they work for (see Van Tubergen 1968; Buckalew 1969; Clyde & Buckalew 1969). While earlier studies conducted have suggested that journalists are, and should continue to enforce their traditionally appointed gatekeeping function, recent studies by scholars such as Jane Singer have asserted that the gatekeeping function of journalists has significantly shifted with the rise of citizen journalism. Amongst the debates concerning the future of journalism, which is seen predominantly in print media, there have been numerous suggestions that have focused on the importance of citizen journalism or participatory media, for the future of journalism (see Singer

1997; Bruns 2008b; Hermida & Thurman 2008; Deuze 2007), which is in line with the evolutionary nature of journalism as stressed by Hardt (1979; 1990).

In order to examine how the adoption and integration of social media by radio program producers has impacted their media work, this study adopts an inductive ethnographic methodology, which examines three (3) radio programs from across the commercial, community, and public service broadcasting sectors. The study analyses how social media is used by each of the producers across the three broadcasting sectors and identifies differences in work practices – particularly in terms of access to internet networked computing technologies and how that may impact on producers’ media work. Furthermore, the study examines how social media is used during the research and broadcasting stages of each of the program, as well as a means for further audience interaction and participation. Initially, a specific period of participant observation where the participants’ work practices and routines are observed was conducted; which was then followed by individual semi-structured expert interviews with each of the participants, which were guided by the observed behaviour (see Chapter 3).

## **1.6 Chapter outline**

Considering the lack of relevant research conducted which specifically examines the work practices and routines of radio program producers, the focus of **Chapter 2: Radio production and social media – the evolution of digital media work** examines radio production as a form of digital media work, drawing primarily from digital media scholar Mark Deuze’s seminal text *Media Work* (2007).

The ethnographic methodological approach employed within this study is outlined in **Chapter 3: Methodology**. This chapter begins by exploring the importance of using ethnographic methods to conduct studies concerning media work and then explicates the choices made regarding the three workplace case studies examined. Finally, this chapter outlines how the participant observation phase within each of the workplaces, as well as the expert interviews with each radio producers were conducted before it discusses how the data was analysed.



Details of the research findings are provided within **Chapter 4: Findings**. This chapter outlines how the radio producers in this study have integrated and adopted social media in their work practices and routines; it provides a 'snapshot' of whether social media has impacted their media work. In **Chapter 5: Discussion**, the results of the research are discussed in relation to the theoretical arguments made within the earlier chapters. Finally in **Chapter 6: Conclusion**, a summary of the research findings and discussion is presented in relation to the initial theoretical discussion. Furthermore, this chapter identifies issues for further research.

## **Chapter Two: Radio production and social media – the evolution of digital media work**

Disruptive technologies such as the internet, social trends (especially worldwide demographic convergence), cultural transformations, political and societal developments all contribute to a pervasive sentiment of a runaway world, a world where letting go of control, history, and tradition are advertised as the new necessary survival skills (Deuze 2007, p. 233).

In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, as digital media scholar Mark Deuze (2007) suggests in his book *Media Work*, the context for media production is changing rapidly. Media workers have been expected to adopt new tools, techniques, working arrangements and practices as industries restructure to address digitalisation, Internet protocols, communications and publishing, and transnational competition. This chapter reviews how studies of digital radio production, and the production of news talk radio in particular; indicate this form of media work is evolving to incorporate social media use in its work practices and routines. In particular, I explore radio production as an evolving form of media work, which is continuously changing to address the domestication of the Internet, as well as the wider concepts of media convergence and participatory journalism.

Radio production work has continuously evolved to address changes to journalism and is particularly evident with its adoption of new media technologies and their uses: these have significantly altered the work practices and routines of radio producers and associated media professionals. This thesis argues that radio producers have had to adopt social media technologies as part of the evolution of journalism practices, in addition to the changing industrial conditions within media organisations, technological change, and changes in audience relations.

In this chapter I reveal that there is a gap in the literature concerning the adoption of social media in the production of news talk radio, focusing on three radio sectors: Commercial, Community, and Public Service radio broadcasting.

At present, there is a considerable amount of scholarship available examining the impact of new media technologies on the work practices and processes of journalists and media professionals in newsrooms (Pavlik 1997, 1999; Deuze 2007; Singer 2006a; Franklin 2008; Curran 2010; Lasorsa et al. 2011; Gulyas

2013). More recently, in a large study of Swedish journalists' use of social media, Hedman & Djerf-Pierre (2013) found that the introduction, and subsequent popularity, of the use of social media in newsrooms was causing a digital divide between avid 24/7 users and non-users of social media (p. 382). Further, Hedman & Djerf-Pierre identified three ways of relating to social media among journalists: the *skeptical shunners*, the *pragmatic conformists*, and the *enthusiastic activists* (pp. 381-382). The first group of journalists, the *skeptical shunners*, are described as journalists who are 'deeply skeptical of all uses of social media' who also 'resist the notion that this new phenomenon should change the profession to any significant extent' (p. 382), while the second group of journalists, the *pragmatic conformists*, are described as journalists who 'regularly use social media, but are selective and judicious in their usage' (p. 382). Further, Hedman & Djerf-Pierre note that this group of journalists use social media 'partly because of perceived peer pressure and organizational requirements' where they believe that they are required to be 'up to date with current trends in the industry and believe that cultivating social media skills is a professional requirement' (p. 382). The third and final groups of journalists, the *enthusiastic activists*, are described as journalists who 'fully lead a life online, being connected and twittering or blogging continuously' (p. 382). This study is particularly useful in examining the differences between the journalists involved, especially in terms of their use of social media in their daily work practices, their attitudes toward social media use, and the impact, if any, it has had on their daily work practices and processes. Interestingly, while Hedman & Djerf-Pierre's study included journalists working across a number of platforms, it was clear that the majority of journalists who had taken part in this study were print journalists (which included local, regional, and metropolitan newspapers and magazines), while significantly less worked within radio.

The focus of the majority of scholarship concerning the impact of new media technologies on the work practices and processes of journalists and media professionals has predominantly centered on those working within print media, while significantly less scholarship has examined these same impacts on those working within radio. In recent years however, an increasing number of studies

have analysed radio's institutional adoption of the Internet; particularly the use of social media as a means of audience interaction (see Ferguson & Greer 2011; Moyo 2012; Rosales 2012; Warner, McGowen & Hawthorne 2012). Furthermore, the use of the Internet and social media websites for both gathering and disseminating content continues to be a growing area of research (Ruggiero 2004; Nguyen & Western 2006; Newman 2009), however there is little examination in the scholarship currently available specifically looking at how the proliferation of social media services in particular are impacting on the media work of radio producers.

This chapter examines radio production as a form of digital and convergent media work. With an emphasis placed on news talk as a radio format, I examine the changes to media work that radio producers are currently facing as a direct result of a push by media organisations to incorporate social media into their work practices and routines. While this thesis is primarily concerned with changes to the work practices of radio producers, it's necessary to consider how these changes to media work, such as multiskilling, fit within the wider field of journalism, and how the adoption and integration of new media technologies such as social media websites have subsequently impacted upon media work. The chapter then shifts its focus to examine social media and defines the terminology used throughout thesis when referring to journalism produced and disseminated by non-professional journalists. In addition, I frame radio as a medium that is participatory in nature and one that has continued to evolve with continuous developments in new media and Internet technologies. Finally, the chapter touches upon the traditionally appointed roles of gatekeepers ascribed to professional journalists. In exploring these aspects, this thesis will therefore examine how the introduction of social media websites into the work practices and routines of radio producers impacts their media work.

## **2.1 Radio production as digital media work**

In *Media Work*, Deuze discusses at great length the work changes that are currently occurring within the media industries – with a specific focus on the

creative and cultural industries as also outlined by Hesmondhalgh (2002); including the games industry, advertising and marketing, and radio and television broadcasting (2007). Deuze suggests that within contemporary definitions of media work, there are four elements which tend to get mixed up - making an accurate assessment of media work more difficult, including content, connectivity, creativity, and commerce (2007, p. 57). Deuze's influential text does not however explore the aspects of media work that are of importance to thesis; radio production work.

I am investigating changes in the Australian radio industry, where business models, audience, and thus production objectives and work vary according to their location with specific industrial sectors: commercial, national or public service broadcasting, and public or community radio (Potts 1989). Radio production work across the sectors differs for a number of reasons, so rather than investigating changes to radio production as generic, we need to examine the differences in how social media is adopted by radio producers in their work practices and routines across the three broadcasting sectors.

In radio studies research the work of radio production involves different roles and tasks, including facets of journalistic practice such as research, sourcing of contacts, as well as sound production, production management, and promotion. A key radio scholar, Robert McLeish, does not provide a definition of radio production, while another prominent radio scholar David Hendy says that the roles of radio producers are varied. Both McLeish (1999) and Hendy (2000) have examined the varied roles of radio program producers, tracing their 'traditional' journalistic traits to how their roles have changed in relation to the introduction of new technologies; and how these have impacted upon their work practices and routines. In turn, this means that in my research, I need to identify the roles of radio producers and see whether social media adoption is something that is adopted happily, or whether there are tensions surrounding social media adoption in already full workloads.

Radio production has a flatter work hierarchy, and a less prominent division of labour when compared to television production, meaning that individuals perform more varied roles within the production process. Hendy notes:

The roles of researcher, director, producer, editor, sound recordist [sic], and very often studio operator and presenter, are almost always pulled together into the single role of the multiskilled [sic] radio producer (2000, pp. 69-70).

In suggesting that radio producers are already multi-skilled media professionals, in this thesis I therefore need to consider the reasons why they have adopted online technologies such as social media into their work practices and routines. These reasons may include considering new, and up-to-date technologies as essential tools for their craft, which can also assist in promoting their professional identity. However, the adoption of new communicative technologies such as social media may also be seen as a burden on already multi-skilled radio producers who have varied and heavy workloads. It is therefore difficult to define the exact scope of radio production work, particularly in a digital era. This is particularly evident in radio production work, which can differ for a number of reasons such as program format, length, and aired days per week as well as content. Furthermore, radio production work can differ according to which broadcasting sector it falls within – a finding made by this study.

Radio producers are socialised into their work roles and practices and therefore internalise professional standards on the job. This makes it difficult to critically reflect on why they may have adopted their work roles and practices and why they might change. As Hendy notes, many producers are reluctant to explain their profession, stating:

Producers, like journalists, are notoriously reluctant to explain their craft: many regard it as in one sense simply unteachable [sic] because they see it, not as a *science* of clearly enunciated rules, but as an intuitive *art* born of long experience leading to the creation of some unspoken set of 'professional' standards, implicitly understood as common sense by those involved (2000, p. 73).

In approaching my research, this suggested that I needed to examine radio producers' work routines and practices in the workplace in order to understand why and how they might adopt social media in their daily work practices. Early media ethnographies such as Philip Schelsinger's *Putting Reality Together: BBC*

*News* (1978), which focused on institutional discourses as well as constraints on the production of news, Roger Silverstone's *Framing Science* (1985), which examined the production of television and Brian O'Neill's *Producing The Arts show: An Ethnographic Study of Radio Producers at Work*, which explored the daily tasks of radio producers on a British radio program, are all useful in providing a methodological framework for examining first hand the work practices and routines of media workers.

In order to understand why radio producers would change the way they work, I needed to examine radio production as a creative process, with its own professional identity. Deuze also notes that 'in the daily work environment and practices in the media, technology plays a crucial part in the creative process (2007, p. 68), which suggests that I needed to examine how the adoption of new media technologies and social media has impacted upon the *creative process* of radio producers.

The professional status of both radio producers and media workers alike is important to consider when researching media work and associated technological change. Although scholars such as Hendy note that there is no outline of the 'unspoken set of 'professional' standards' (2000, p. 73) for radio producers as there is for professional journalists, it could be assumed that they may be similar to the five traits of professional journalism as described by Merritt (1995), Kovach & Rosenstiel (2001) and later Deuze (2005); each of whom have examined the traits of journalistic ideology. This assumption can be made as the work of radio producers involves many facets of journalism work; and therefore their professional work identities can be assumed to be broadly similar. The professional identity of radio producers is necessary to consider in this research as it may offer an insight into the factors that determines how they see themselves as media professionals, and how likely they are to adopt social media technologies in their daily work practices and routines.

Radio production has changed continuously with the introduction of various new communicative and Internet technologies. Roel Puijk notes that technological



change has significantly altered the work of media production, arguing that the majority of production studies focus on the 'consequences of digitalization of the production chain for the division of labour and the resulting convergence and divergence process' (2008, p. 31). Additionally, scholars such as Gazi, Starkey & Jedrzejewski have supported this view, making the point that technology 'is one of the most important factors in the development of radio' (2011, p. 10); a view which can also be applied to the early days of radio. Online radio and podcasting is one example of how the introduction of new technologies has forced changes to radio production practices, as Berry notes:

Podcasting is not only a converged medium (bringing together audio, the web and portable media devices) but also a disruptive technology and one that has already forced some in the radio business to reconsider some established practices and preconceptions about audiences, consumption, production and distribution (2006, p. 144).

In addition to podcasting, the introduction of talk radio in Australia has also impacted on the work practices of radio producers, particularly in terms of the various new roles they were required take on. Australian talkback radio began in 1967 after the first authorised phone calls were broadcast (Ward 2002; Gillman 2007). The end of the 1970s saw a significant increase in telephone usage as radio became accessible in a wider range of public and private spaces including '[...] workplaces, shops and cars' which subsequently made talkback 'available to a demographically broader audience' (Gillman 2007, p. 188). News talk radio fast became a popular medium, as audiences were increasingly encouraged to interact with the radio presenter. The growth in audience interaction meant that the production of news talk radio required producers to adopt journalistic gatekeeping functions, where they could control which callers went to air (Flew 2004); as well as other journalistic tasks such as researching and sourcing contacts – making the varied roles of radio producers similar to professional journalists.

Thus it follows that the work of producing news talk radio, which is the focus of my research, will evolve in the digital era in response to the adoption of new communications and media technologies, altered work conditions and practices, and developing standards in digital news media and online journalism. However

these workplace shifts in news talk production come in response to major structural changes to communications and media industries, and their relations of production. Therefore it is the aim of this thesis to explore the changing nature of radio work and the way in which news talk radio producers adopt and integrate Internet and new media technologies into their work practices and routines and how it impacts on their media work.

## **2.2 The changing nature of media work in the digital era**

Media work has changed over time with the introduction of various new communicative technologies within newsrooms. Deuze notes that technological convergence, particularly in relation to newsrooms and within media organisations, 'refers to the coming together of audio, video, telecommunications and data onto a common platform, enabled by the digitalization of all these formerly separate technologies' (2007, p. 70). Further, Deuze notes that while various technologies are used within different contexts of work practices throughout the creative and cultural industries, media professionals today 'are first and foremost expected to come to terms with technological convergence in their work' (2007, p. 70). This statement reinforces views by scholars such as Hardt (1998) who has previously argued that media professionals are amongst the earliest adopters of new communicative technologies.

It is also worth noting that news production takes place within the broader structural context of commercial enterprise, as Dahlgren argues:

We cannot accurately analyze the impact of technology on traditional online journalism and journalists while being blind to political economy. Thus while digital technologies are changing journalistic production practices, within traditional news outfits these developments do not necessarily promote journalistic values or quality, but rather are aimed at producing short-term profits (2009, p. 152).

It is therefore necessary to also consider the investments made by media organisations into the technologies they provide to their staff members. Clearly these may impact upon the media work of media professionals. These investments can be considered within the wider concepts of modernity and

advanced capitalism (Giddens 1987; 1990) as well as ‘communicative capitalism’ (Dean & Fuchs).

Deuze notes that in its earlier guises, traditional journalism ‘is coming to an end’ (2007b, p. 141), explaining that the existing boundaries which separate professional journalism from other forms of public communication are vanishing. This in turn necessarily means that there is an ongoing need to continuously reassess the evolving nature of media, and more specifically, assess how ongoing technological innovations impact and change journalism work.

While scholarly attention has focused on the crisis facing print media in light of technological innovation, increased competition, and changing consumption patterns (Couldry, Livingstone & Markham 2007), the impact it has had on radio broadcasting has been somewhat neglected. The aim of this thesis therefore is to add to the current scholarship available concerning the work practices and routines of radio program producers and their adoption of social media with an emphasis on how it impacts upon their media work. Considering the rapid rate in which Internet and new media technologies are being incorporated within newsrooms as a direct result of media convergence, it is important then to understand how media professionals and more central to this thesis, radio producers, are using the Internet and social media websites in their everyday work practices and routines.

In this thesis I argue that the challenges radio producers face in adopting social media make an excellent test-bed for studying larger changes in media work occurring under the conditions of modernity and advanced capitalism. In studying social media adoption by radio producers, it allows for a closer examination of how Internet and new media technologies are impacting upon everyday media work carried out by radio news talk producers. To perform a micro-analysis of why and how radio producers are adopting social media however, we need to examine how these broader forces are impacting on the conditions of work in radio stations, and what specific tensions are arising

around the changes to the nature of work, working relations and professional identities.

## **2.3 Changes to the work of radio news talk production**

Digital media and journalism research suggests that industrial and socio-cultural shifts will affect the work of radio news talk production in different ways. There are two key work changes that I am investigating in this thesis: the first is technological change in newsrooms, and the second being the changing nature of production as a result of the introduction of various new communication technologies. Both of these key work changes are necessary to investigate when examining the adoption and integration of social media by radio producers into their work practices and routines and how this has impacted on their media work.

The Internet and digitalisation of databases and news sources offer new ways of improving the efficiency and quality of radio production; this leads to interest in adopting various computing technologies in newsrooms. It is evident that the process of producing content for radio programs requires the use of computing technologies for a number of reasons including contacting sources, editing audio packages, monitoring social media, as well as seemingly simple tasks such as answering emails. Deuze notes that the 'success of journalism in reporting news across all media has always been influenced if not determined by technological advances' (2007, p. 153). He also asserts that the ubiquitous nature of technology should be seen in terms of its implementation within newsrooms and 'how it extends and amplifies previous ways of doing things' (2007, p. 153). Access and proximity to basic computing technologies in newsrooms therefore warrants consideration; and was as aspect noted within the participant observation phase of this study (see Chapter 3; Chapter 4).

Internet search is now an important part of media work as it grants instant access to information for media professionals; in addition, the rise of Google acting in an intermediary role has aided the restructuring of relations between

audiences and journalists (Carlson, 2007). The introduction of Internet search engines has also presented new challenges and opportunities to both journalists and audiences, invoking the prediction made by Nicholas Negroponte and his concept of the 'Daily Me' (1995), which suggested that the introduction of online news would allow readers to choose topics and sources that interested them (Bowman & Wills 2003, p. 7). This is similarly the case when it comes to Internet search engines such as Google, which operates on computer algorithms to select headlines based on the user's previous searches. However, as Google 'cheerfully informs users that it will search more than eight billion pages upon request' (Singer 2006a, p. 11), entrepreneur and Internet critic Andrew Keen argues that the use of search engines does not necessarily mean that users are accessing the best, or most reliable information; rather, Google (along with other search engines) are merely giving users information they already know:

Entering words into Google's search engine, we are actually creating something called 'collective intelligence' [...] the logic of Google's search engine, what technologists call an algorithm, reflects 'wisdom' of the crowd [...] the more people click on a link [...] the more likely that link will come up in subsequent searches [...] The search engine is an aggregation of the ninety million questions we collectively ask Google each day; in other words, it just tells us what we already know (2007, p. 6).

What Keen describes becomes problematic as users, including journalists and media professionals, as they turn to search engines such as Google to gather accurate information, but are subsequently directed to particular sources due to the number of views it has had. Yet without such search engines, the dissemination of news would be limited significantly; meaning that journalists, media professionals and more central to this study, radio producers, would therefore be likely to have a limited means of accessing various news websites both locally and globally.

Due to newsroom convergence and the restructuring of workplace relations, multi-skilling remains as an increasingly contentious work issue. This is evident as journalists are being encouraged to work faster and use multiple media devices not only in the production of news and content, but also in its dissemination; meaning that journalists are required to become multi-skilled when it comes to their abilities to produce information for multiple platforms. At

a minimum, it is suggested that journalists have at least 'some technical knowledge of how to use wired or wireless networking to post or send material remotely' (Wilkinson, Grant & Fisher 2009, p. 7). This concept of multi-platform publishing within newsrooms has been viewed by some as an attractive business model, particularly in suggesting that media organisations are therefore able to 'produce more news for the same or little more money', by potentially cutting labour 'costs through increased productivity' (Quinn 2005, p. 29). However, in adding to the discussion regarding convergent newsroom practices, journalism scholar Jane Singer (2004) suggests that multi-skilled journalists may not necessarily increase productivity; noting that convergence within media organisations is demanding more from journalists and media workers as well as increasing already heavy workloads.

Another change in media work relates to the rise of self-publishing and social media services. These shifts in media production have meant that journalists are now competing with citizen and amateur journalists when it comes to the production and dissemination of information. The use of social media within newsrooms has also prompted a change in promotional work, where journalists, producers, and associated media professionals increasingly use social media websites to promote programs and news content. It is becoming a seemingly common practice to spend a significant amount of time on the promotion and pre-promotions of content via social media websites, which became clear during the observation phase of this research (see Chapter 4).

## **2.4 Journalism and work change**

Journalism, as a profession and a form of media work, has a long history of adopting new media and communications technologies in order for journalists and media workers to expand their individual creative potential in producing and disseminating news content. Many technological changes have prompted the alteration of journalistic work practices, most recently digitalisation which has enabled forms of industrial and cultural convergence (Singer 2006a; Deuze 2007), as well as inter-networking, which has impacted upon media

professionals' work routines. As media organisations have incorporated various Internet communicative technologies, it is therefore necessary to examine how the introduction of social media websites has changed media work carried out by journalists and associated media professionals. Jane Singer (2003; 2006a; 2006b) has examined the impact new media technologies have on journalists and media professionals. She stresses the need to consider how the development and implementation of new communicative technologies within newsrooms alters work practices and processes of both journalists and associated media professionals. This is particularly relevant as much of Singer's research has centered on journalists and media professionals working within print; an area in an apparent state of crisis, while there has been less research examining the adoption of Internet and new media technologies by radio producers and the impact these technologies have on their media work.

Deuze's explanation of media work fits with his media life perspective in which he argues that media should no longer be viewed as a separate entity, rather, it should be acknowledged that as a society we 'live *in* media, rather than *with* media' (2011, p. 143). In asserting the media life perspective, which is drawn from Zygmunt Bauman's concept of liquid modernity, while at the same time conscious of the techno-determinism of both Marshall McLuhan and Manuel Castells, Deuze argues that 'as media become pervasive and ubiquitous [...] they become invisible' (2011, p. 137). Considering Deuze's media life perspective, it is therefore important to examine media work in relation to ongoing technological advances and media convergence within newsrooms. This is necessary when placing journalism, as a profession and a form of media work, within a long history of adopting new media and communicative technologies into their work practices and routines. Hanno Hardt argues that in terms of incorporating new communication devices into their work practices and routines, the news media are among the earliest adopters of new communications technologies, particularly as their positions as mediators of information has continued to evolve:

For over a hundred years newsroom, like factory floors, have been a laboratory for technological innovations and a battleground of economic and social interests; current arguments concerning specific adjustments of the editorial

workforce to electronic news processing technologies are a continuation of the traditional confrontation between newsrooms and the management of media industries (1998, p. 173).

In a similar manner, Deuze makes the point that the pervasive role of technology stands out amongst accounts of structure, management, and media work within media organisations, which in turn cements the media industries as 'key accelerators of the development and innovation of new information and communication technologies' (2007, p. 68). Deuze further notes that as different technologies are continuously used within different aspects of media work, media professionals are 'first and foremost expected to come to terms with technological convergence'. This can be seen to directly affect four key aspects of media industries: 'the content of communication, the relationship between media producers and consumers, the structure of firms, and ultimately how communication professionals do their work' (2007, p. 70).

## **2.5 Journalism, an evolutionary profession**

The journalism industry is evolutionary in nature, and as with all aspects of the media, is '[...] prone to shift and change as culture shifts and changes around it' (Carlson 2007, p. 1027). McNair argues that 'journalism, like all cultural forms has been changing and evolving since its emergence; paralleling changes in the environment within which it is practiced' (2005, p. 39). Likewise, radio production is impacted by cultural shifts, such as the widespread adoption of social media. Journalists and media professionals however, are facing uncertainty regarding efforts made by media organisations to incorporate the use of social media into their current journalistic workflows. This uncertainty has therefore led to a sense of defensiveness amongst journalists toward the media organisations they work for (Thurman 2008; Ngyuen 2010). This uncertainty can impact on the professional identity of both journalists and media professionals. In this regard, conceptualising journalism as an ideology, as suggested by Deuze (2005), may then reinforce the professional identity of both journalists and media professionals.



The concept of referring to journalism as an ideology refers to understanding how news workers and journalists validate and give meaning to their work; building upon a suggestion made by Soloski (1989) that journalists can therefore naturalise the structure of the news organisation through their practice. Furthermore, the professional self-identification of journalists and media professionals is an integral aspect of their attitudes toward their work. Deuze suggests that key characteristics of professional self-identification can be summarised by a number of values and that journalists 'feel that these values give legitimacy and credibility to what they do' (2005, p. 446). According to definitions by Merritt (1995) and Kovach & Rosenstiel (2001), there are five traits of professional journalism. Deuze draws upon these definitions to describe the five most recognised traits of journalistic ideology to be, public service, objectivity, autonomy, immediacy, and ethics (2005, pp. 447-450). In examining how media professionals use Internet and new media technologies, it is necessary to contemplate the role of the digital divide, the access to these technologies, as well as computer literacy itself. Although these aspects will not be examined within this thesis, I will consider however whether radio producers have access to the tools and necessary technologies they need to effectively use the Internet, and then to access social media platforms in order to carry out their media work. The evolution of journalism as well as the popularity of the Internet, which has enabled citizen, or participatory journalism, has contributed to blurring the lines between professional and amateur journalism. It is therefore relevant to analyse how the journalism profession has evolved with technological innovations as well as the new perceived cultural roles that journalists are expected to perform as their roles also continue to evolve:

It is not just a question of what journalism is, though, but of what we think it should be, and the tensions between the two... one should also ask – who is the journalist and what cultural role is he or she expected to perform in the twenty-first century? (McNair 2005, p. 27).

The primary focus of professional journalism remains the same, in that the fundamental role of the journalist is to package and broadcast information in a way in which audiences can consume and understand. Yet in this period where technologies have enabled the diffusion of news and information by citizen and amateur journalists, it appears that it's not only the work practices of journalists

which have evolved, it's also their traditional and cultural roles. McNair comments:

The journalism industry has found itself in a transitional phase as an increased dependency on technology has altered the news production process in a way, which have challenged the cultural role of the journalist, normative definitions of journalism and encouraged journalism hybrids (2005, p. 27).

The argument over the cultural role of the journalist has continued with scholars questioning what constitutes a journalist. Alan Knight has argued that before the inception of the Internet, journalism was defined by agencies such as radio stations, television stations and newspapers (2008, p. 118). However, with the rise of the Internet, new questions have surfaced concerning who a journalist is, what their role within society is in addition to how and what stories they select for broadcast. Knight questions *who* exactly should be considered a journalist when access to the Internet has meant that virtually anyone can broadcast their own ideas and information (2008, p. 123).

## **2.6 Social media and its impact on journalism**

Alfred Hermida aptly states that 'Powerful digital communication tools, often identified by the catch-all phrase of social media, are transforming the way media is gathered, disseminated, and consumed' (2012, p. 309). This is evident as users increasingly take to various social media websites to search for, and in many cases produce, and disseminate their own content. Hermida defines social media as technologies, which have 'characteristics of participation, openness, conversation, community, and connectivity' (2012, p. 311). The emergence of various social media platforms has enabled users to create their own social networks, which suggest an evolution of the public sphere in an online environment. boyd & Ellison describe web-based social networks as places where users can 'construct a public or semi-public profile within a bounded system', as well as 'articulate a list of other users with whom they share a connection', in addition to viewing and traversing their 'list of connections and those made by others within the system' (2007, p. 211).

In recent years, social media has become what the Pew Research Centre describes as a 'global phenomenon' (2010). While popular amongst a myriad of users, media organisations have incorporated social media as it 'further amplifies the changes in the media landscape and as it does, it provides new avenues for dissemination and engagement' (Hinton & Hjorth 2013, p. 2). Furthermore, the adoption of social media by media organisations assists in establishing new relationships with audiences and contributes to maintaining and strengthening existing relationships (Greer & Yan 2010; Ferguson & Greer 2011; Hermida 2013). Social media websites offer an alternative means for audiences to gather, produce, and share information; thereby allowing audiences to bypass traditional media organisations and professional journalism; in doing so, social media has allowed for the growth in participatory journalism (Domingo et al. 2008). While the Internet has allowed users to contribute to the creation of content online, the emergence of various social media websites has enabled this process to become mainstream (Hinton & Hjorth 2013). Social media coupled with the 'growing ubiquity of mobile media devices – particularly mobile phones' has allowed users of these media to take photographs and videos of events happening around them, meaning that footage is frequently available 'courtesy of someone's ever-handy mobile phone' (Hinton & Hjorth 2013, p. 65).

With the popularity of the Internet, there has been a rise in literature concerning the use of the Internet, and more recently social media, within radio stations. However, much of this scholarship has examined how radio stations use social media to diffuse and share information. Lind & Medoff (1999) found in their major study of Internet use by radio stations that the primary reason for radio stations to adopt Internet technologies was to connect with the station's greater audience. In addition, they found that it was almost a case of 'keeping up with the Jones's' whereby radio stations employed Internet technologies to appear technologically savvy by having an online presence. Lind & Medoff (1999) primarily examined how the introduction of Internet technologies increased the interactivity between the audience and radio station. Similarly, Lin & Jeffres (2001) found that the websites of these radio stations would attract listeners as it further connected them to their community. In a study conducted on an FM

station website, Potter (2002) found that while the radio station included a contact email address and generic information about events, it did not provide any opportunities for interaction. While the radio station had the technology to connect with its audience, Potter concluded that they were not using the Internet and computer technologies for that purpose (2002). As Ferguson & Greer suggest 'prior research regarding radio stations and the Web are pertinent to the examination of Twitter' (2011, p. 39); this research suggests that it is also important to examine how the introduction of new media technologies are being used by radio producers and media professionals to assess the way in which they impact upon their work practices and routines, and ultimately their media work.

## **2.7 The rise of the amateur: citizen and participatory journalism**

There have been a number of terms coined to describe content produced and disseminated by those whom media critic Jay Rosen describe as 'the people formally known as the audience' (2006). Some of these terms include civic journalism (see Black 1997; Voakes 1999), open source journalism (Deuze 2001), and user-generated content (UGC) (Thurman 2008; Paulussen 2008; Singer 2010); while Axel Bruns prefers the use of the term 'produsage', which highlights the blurring line between production and consumption (2005). Arguably the most generic, the term 'citizen journalism' and its meaning has been debated extensively within newsrooms and academia. Hirst & Harrison, for example, defined the term by describing a 'person who is not attached to a media organisation who witnesses an event, and then provides an account of that event, normally using traditional and new journalistic forms' (2007, p. 240). Interestingly, Hirst & Harrison dismiss the term 'participatory journalism', arguing that the term is misleading and suggest that one of the 'enduring myths of the digital age' is that advances in online technologies and portable Internet accessible devices have allowed virtually anyone to call themselves a journalist (2007, p. 255). However, my suggestion is that the definition of citizen journalism given by Hirst & Harrison (2007), coupled with their dismissal of the term 'participatory journalism', does not fully represent the current online environment and the changing nature of content production and dissemination.

Social media consultant and online journalist J.D Lasica explored the concept of participatory journalism and found that it generally falls into broad categories including audience participation at mainstream news outlets, independent news and information Web sites, full-fledged participatory news sites, collaborative and contributory media sites, various 'thin media' (which includes mailing lists) and personal broadcasting sites (2003b). Lasica also notes, similarly to Bruns (2005) that the line between professional and amateur journalism is now blurred 'thanks to new ubiquitous tools that make it possible for anyone to publish and report news' (2003b). The interaction and participation taking place between media organisations and their audience is a collaborative approach to news production where 'individuals [are] playing an active role' in the news production process, when this was once a task 'reserved almost exclusively to the news media' (Lasica 2003a, p. 71). As there is a lean toward participatory aspects of news production and dissemination, the terminology therefore used for the purposes of this thesis is *participatory journalism*, which is adopted from the definitions given by Bowman & Willis (2003) and Singer et al. (2011). Bowman & Willis define participatory journalism as the 'act of a citizen, or group of citizens, playing an active role in the process of collecting, reporting, analyzing and disseminating news and information' (2003, p. 9); similarly, Singer et al. describes participatory journalism as one that:

[...] captures the idea of collaboration and collective – not simply parallel – action. People inside and outside the newsroom are engaged in communicating not only *to* but also *with*, one another. In doing so they are participating in the ongoing process of creating a news website and building a multifaceted community (2011, p. 2).

In using this terminology, it is important to note that participatory journalism fits into what Henry Jenkins describes as 'participatory culture' where he suggests that 'rather than talking about media producers and consumers as occupying separate roles, we might now see them as participants who interact with each other' (2006, p. 3). It is therefore necessary to note that participatory journalism and culture are referred to as part of a discussion concerning media convergence. In positioning participatory journalism within a greater discussion concerning convergence in media, Jenkins argues that the meaning of

convergence, particularly within media organisations, encapsulates scholarly concerns regarding responses to rapid technological change and innovations:

If the digital revolution paradigm presumed that new media would displace old media, the emerging convergence paradigm assumes that old and new media will interact in ever more complex ways. The digital revolution paradigm claimed that new media was going to change everything [...]. More and more, industry leaders are returning to convergence as a way of making sense of a moment of disorienting change. Convergence is, in that sense, an old concept taking on new meanings (2006, p. 6)

Furthermore, in coining the term 'convergence of modes', Ithiel de Sola Pool presented an early conceptualisation of media convergence as a process that is 'blurring the lines between media' (1983, p. 24). Pool suggested that with the growing influence of digital media, traditional divisions between media organisations such as print and broadcast were in the process of collapsing (Pool 1983; see also Mueller 1999; Dupagne & Garrison 2007).

It is also necessary to note that in an online environment where audiences are encouraged to participate with media organisations, citizen, and other forms of participatory journalism need to be examined as potential sources of information. However, in examining these new forms of journalism, media professional and journalist Christopher Scanlon has questioned content produced and disseminated by citizen journalists as viable sources of information. Scanlon argues that by simply having a computer and an Internet connection does not constitute the merits of a journalist working online:

Just as having Photoshop installed on your computer doesn't make you a graphic designer, setting up a blog doesn't make you a journalist – much less a news organisation. Quality journalism requires enormous amounts of skill and money. Expecting the same depth of reporting by committed amateurs is fanciful (cited in Murrell & Oakham 2008, p. 13).

While Scanlon may have dismissed citizen journalism as sources of information, his statement also raises concerns regarding the ethical conduct of citizen journalists who may not identify with the traits of journalistic ideology that are ascribed to professional journalists. Yet irrespective of the title, whether it is citizen or participatory journalism, amateur journalism allows for the production, promotion, and distribution of ideas without the assistance of professional journalism. This has subsequently led to social media users

competing with professional journalists in terms of breaking news stories, as well as coverage of general news items.

For some time radio journalists have been integrating social media into their daily work practices and routines: it is therefore the aim of this thesis to see *how* the use of social media impacts the media work of radio program producers in order to understand whether it is having as great of an influence on their media work as is often argued in studies of print. Furthermore, this thesis seeks to examine whether social media adoption by radio producers is causing problems to the traditional gatekeeping roles of journalists, and whether there is any resistance amongst radio producers in adopting new technologies and adapting to the changes they make to their media work. The use of social media websites within radio production, in addition to journalism as a whole, has meant that radio producers and media professionals are required at some level to become participatory with their audience. For the purposes of this thesis however, it is necessary to first and foremost position radio as a participatory medium that has historically allowed more direct forms of audience interaction and participation, in contradistinction to its print and television counterparts.

## **2.8 Radio and participation**

Audience participation with radio programs dates back to the early days of Australian broadcasting during the 1920s, when the industry sought to connect with listeners in a variety of ways including 'radio 'families', radio clubs and community singing' (Griffin-Foley 2010, p. 7). The radio 'Uncle' and 'Aunt' were features of several Australian radio stations as early as 1926 (Griffin-Foley 2010, p. 7), which appealed to both adults and children. Radio 'families' would often take off-air phone calls and read mail from listeners while on air; at times they would also take their program on the road in order to meet and further connect with their audience (Griffin-Foley 2010, p. 7). While listeners during the 1920s were fascinated by outside broadcasting which brought the news of the world into their homes; broadcasting historian Lesley Johnson noted that by the end of

the decade Australian industry leaders came to believe that radio was most successful when it was intimate, human, and personal:

Radio had begun by exploiting the extraordinary during the first decade of its life, but in the 1930s radio broadcasting began conjuring up a world it shared with listeners; the everyday, the ordinary, the intimate, domestic world of home life (Johnson 1983, p. 45).

Prompted by the launch of 'Vox Pop' on American radio, by the end of 1935 at least two Australian stations launched their own versions called *Vox Pop: The Voice of the People* (Griffin-Foley 2010, p. 9), however the formats of the program were significantly different. The program hosted by Frank Sturge Harty and Ronald Morse for Sydney's 2UE was transmitted from different parts of the city each week, whereas Melbourne's 3KZ's approach saw host Norman Banks 'launching the program in the lobby of Melbourne's Regent Theatre' (Griffin-Foley 2010, p. 9). Banks' program actively sought to include 'the people' within commercial radio, which was evident with programs that he hosted such as *Voice of the Voyager* where he interviewed passengers on incoming ships and *Voice of the Shopper*, which was broadcast from a Melbourne CBD shopping center (Walker 1984; Loviglio 2002; Griffin-Foley 2010). In an Australian context, while the radio broadcasting industry appeared to be determined to provide opportunities for audience interaction and participation (Griffin-Foley 2010, p. 8), there appeared to be a fundamental problem posed by the Postmaster-General's Department (PMG). The PMG had introduced broadcasting regulations that prohibited 'conversations between individuals on wireless that effectively prevented wireless from competing with the postal and telegraphic services supplied by the PMG' (Gould 2007, p. 82).

It was not until 1964 that the radio industry introduced a Swedish device dubbed the 'beep-a-phone' system, that allowed for conversations to be recorded and aired with a 'delay to prevent the broadcast of offensive remarks' as well as a 'beep' that ensured that callers knew that they were being recorded (Griffin-Foley 2007, p. 12). Talk, or talkback radio as it is more commonly referred to in



Australia, emerged in 1967 after legislative changes<sup>9</sup> were made allowing 'the direct broadcast of material from the telephone' (Flew 2004, p. 231). As this new format gained traction, it had become the most important medium for reaching what several scholars have described as 'ordinary' people (Flew 2004; Gould 2007; Griffin-Foley 2007). Although the popularity of Australian talkback radio declined in the 1970s in favour of imported American music formats it re-emerged as a significant programming genre as radio stations introduced dedicated news/talk formats during the 1980s (Gould 2007, pp. 84- 85). With this model, entertainment and lifestyle talkback programs accompanied the politicised model of news and talk programs which focuses on the 'private or domestic world of the listener' (Gould 2007, p. 86). The lifestyle oriented programs encouraged listeners to phone in and speak with the presenter(s) regarding an array of topics.

Not only has radio become a popular medium, the presenters of various programs themselves have become extremely popular and influential. In Australia, various scholars have studied the popularity of two high profile radio presenters, John Laws and Alan Jones, examining issues such as cash-for-comment scandals, the influence these radio hosts have as well as the relationship they have formed with their audience (see Flew 2004; 2005; Fitzgerald & Housley 2007; Gillman 2007; Gould 2007; Turner 2007; Griffen-Foley 2010; Ewart 2011). In examining the influence of talk radio, Flew describes three features of the medium, the first of which endorses Marshall McLuhan's (1964) observation that radio is a 'hot' medium in that it concentrates upon a single sense meaning that the message can be more focused and sustained. The second factor that Flew describes concerns the self-selecting nature of the audience, where audiences tend to identify with a station or presenter and generally remain loyal to them. The third factor described by Flew is that in general, listeners to talkback radio (and radio more broadly) are 'more likely to

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<sup>9</sup> These legislative changes included the mandatory seven-second delay before putting calls to air as well as intermittent beeping to remind callers that their calls were being recorded. These conventions were added to the new telephonic regulations as a result of decisions made by the regulator, the Australian Broadcasting Control Board (ABCB), between 1960 and 1967 (Gould 2007).

listen in an environment where they are by themselves – in a car, at work, or when other members of the house are out’ (2004, p. 235). This is also consistent with Jo Tacchi’s study of audience listening behaviour, which found that audiences tend to ‘tune in’ to the radio while they are alone (2000). Further illustrating the influence that radio hosts can potentially have, former Australian Prime Minister Paul Keating stated: ‘Forget the Press Gallery. If you educate John Laws, you educate Australia’ (cited in Flew 2004, p. 232). Furthermore, in a report conducted on behalf of the Australian Broadcasting Authority (ABA), Alan Jones described his influence as a talkback presenter in the following terms:

The roadblocks are up for a lot of people, the bureaucracy is very impenetrable, parliamentarians sometimes yield painfully to change, and people feel as though they can come to me because I can actually exercise beneficial clout. Not power, not for its own sake, but power in the pursuit of a legitimate end and that happens (Pearson & Brand 2001, p. 125).

In addition to the influence held by talkback hosts, the relationship between the audience and the presenter(s) is an aspect that has been examined extensively by scholars such as Ewart who has examined the role of talkback radio as a ‘therapist, companion, confidant, counselor, and friend’ (2011, p. 231). Ewart specifically examined how the interactive nature of talkback radio enables those who experience social isolation the ability to interact with fellow people. This is in line with Gillian Appleton who, over a decade ago, found that the increasing popularity of talkback radio may be linked to social change such as the ‘growth in the number of unemployed and part-time and shift workers over the last two decades’ who are able to listen and call in at times when they previously would have been at work (1999, p. 85). Appleton suggests that the ‘nature of these changes, and the kinds of people who have been most affected by them’ are most likely to have been influential in setting the agenda of talkback radio programs (1999, p. 85).

The participatory nature of radio is evident from the early years of radio where listeners sent letters to radio stations however as technologies evolved, listeners began to interact with radio stations via telephone, facsimile, email, and mobile phone messaging; this meant that radio stations could instantly incorporate feedback from listeners into the program. Examining the influence successive

media technologies have had on commercial radio audiences in particular from the 1960s through to present day, Liz Gould considers whether the introduction of newer and 'interactive' technologies are increasing the participatory potential of radio programs:

In recent years, the radio industry has increasingly become dependent on the internet to create new relationships between listeners and broadcasters. The advent of the internet and related digital technologies promises significant changes to audience participation in radio programming (2009, p. 95).

Gould also notes that while telephone technology played an important role in creating the participatory nature of talkback radio, the spread of mobile phone ownership and use was a 'significant development for talkback programmers from the mid-1990s onward' (2009, p. 96). In addition, Gillman discusses the introduction and development of email and Short Message Service (SMS) technologies which have 'attracted a new kind of participant'; namely those who feel uncomfortable with calling, yet are able to use text-based communication (2007, p. 190). Talkback host Steve Price has said that talkback radio is 'the most immediate and flexible of all mediums'; in addition, Price has commented on how mobile phones have encouraged listeners to contribute to the production processes of talkback radio as they 'have turned listeners into the eyes and ears of good radio talkback presenters' (2007).

In their major study of radio stations and the use of the Internet, Lind & Medoff (1999) found that the primary reason why radio stations had begun using Internet technologies such as websites was to connect audiences with the station, and therefore extend the program's audience reach through a new medium. This is evident in technologies that allow Web streaming, a phenomenon that Jackie Cook describes as 'welcomed by global travellers, international students and diasporic communities cut off from their particular 'common culture'' (2007, p. 71). Cook notes that while Web streaming has the capacity to 'reconnect the geographically dispersed'; it can also create new audiences by 'aggregating the often very small special interest groups with a local audience into global clusters of sufficient size to exert production influence' (2007, p. 71). Similarly, podcasts of radio programs have enabled a wide

audience to not only source, but also produce radio segments and programs.

Pointing to differences between traditional radio and post-digital radio

production particularly in regard to the Internet, Cook observes:

The key element of difference between traditional radio and post-digital audio services is the relation between transmission and reception, the broadcaster and the audience. This is now a relation in which the power of content selection, and even production can reverse (2007, p. 72).

This suggests a collaborative approach to content production and dissemination between media organisations and their audience, which also coincides with the definition of participatory journalism used for the purposes of this research given by Singer et al. (2011).

The participatory nature of radio is characterised by the evolving technologies made available within radio stations; as well as the radio producers and other associated media professionals who use the technology in order to produce and broadcast quality radio. As new technologies emerge, the media professionals who use them have been forced to adapt to various technological demands, a condition of media convergence, as well as demands from the media organisations they work for to incorporate these technologies into their work routines.

However, the participatory nature of social media, where virtually anyone with access to Internet accessible technologies can produce and disseminate information and bypass professional journalists, has meant that journalists' traditional gatekeeping role is embedded in a process of evolution. It is therefore necessary to consider how social media has impacted on the traditional gatekeeping role of journalists.

## **2.9 Gatekeepers of information**

One of the traditional roles carried out by journalists is that of the information gatekeeper. Gatekeeping has been defined as the 'process by which the vast array of potential news messages are winnowed, shaped, and prodded into those few that are actually transmitted by news media' (Shoemaker et al. 2001, p. 233).

As social media websites offer an alternative means for audiences to gather and share news, a new dilemma for journalists and their traditionally appointed roles of gatekeepers of information is posed. Singer argues that the notion of a journalist who decides what information others need to know 'has become deeply ingrained over the years' which has allowed for 'an agenda-setting function that lets citizens know which issues are important to think about, as well as how to think about them' (Singer 2007, p 81). However it is becoming clear that the once dominant appointed journalistic trait of 'information gatekeeper' has lessened, and is now complemented by the rise of participatory journalism directly resulting from the popularity of the Internet as a tool for sharing alternative interpretations of news and information (Singer 2006a; Bruns 2011). Along with advances in new communication technologies, an increase of Internet capable mobile communication devices has led to a significant increase in unedited, user-generated content available on the Internet (Snowden 2006). Mobile communication devices have become new-age instruments of news and information diffusion for the general public, resulting in a sense of loss of control within the journalism industry over what audiences consume. Advances in mobile communication devices, then, have altered the traditional gatekeeping role of the journalist and thus has seen a significant shift in what journalists perceive to be their role(s), as Singer argues:

The journalist no longer has much if any control over what citizens will see, read or hear, nor what items they will decide are important to think about. In such an open, frenetic and overcrowded media environment, the conceptualization of what a journalist does must turn from an emphasis on process- selecting and disseminating information, framing particular items in particular ways- to an emphasis on ethics (2006a, p. 12).

While Internet users have the option to search for and publish their own news and information, Singer asserts that professionally trained journalists, the traditional arbitrators of information and the Fourth Estate (Schultz 1998) will remain, at least in the technical sense, the primary disseminators of news and information. Singer argues:

In today's media environment, virtually all the notions of journalism based on practice are gone [...] access to sources of information is open to anyone [...] anyone can disseminate his or her view instantly and globally with a few key strokes [...] that makes everyone a publisher, but it does not make every publisher a journalist (2006a, p. 13).

Morris Janowitz also entered the conversation regarding the gatekeeping function of journalists and the media; arguing that the coverage of events required journalists to 'select the important from the mass of detailed information' available which thereby meant that the notion of a journalist as a gatekeeper of information rested on their ability to 'direct, emphasise, and disseminate that which was important' (1975, p. 618). It is this self-appointed duty of professional journalists to decide upon what information is worth disseminating that is the basis for what Singer describes as the gate-keeping theory of journalism which she argues 'provides a framework for assessing how and whether a particular item is included in the available news space' (2005, p. 179). The concept of a journalist who decides what information others need to know 'has become deeply ingrained over the years' which has allowed for 'an agenda-setting function that lets citizens know which issues are important to think about, as well as how to think about them' (Singer 2007, p 81). The agenda setting function of journalists as described by Singer is supported by Bruns who argues that:

The role of industrial journalism especially in a pre-networked age has long been understood as one of gatekeeping or filtering: of all the news of the day, reported by in-house staff or arriving over the wire services journalists and editors would select only the 'news that's fit to print' (as the *New York Times* slogan famously puts it), according to internal selection policies and their own idealised [...] image of what the 'man on the street' was interested in (2011, p. 134).

Traditionally, the professional practices of journalism have defined the role of journalists as the writers of the 'first draft of history' (Bruns 2011, p. 134). These professional practices and norms such as objectivity have prompted journalists to assume the role of gatekeepers of information, whereby their professional practices and associated norms are used to sort through the abundance of daily information, and decide on what information was of significance to their audience. The gatekeeping function of journalists in its most basic form is the 'regime of control over what content is allowed to emerge from the production process in print and broadcast media' (Bruns 2005, p. 11). Bruns usefully discusses the meanings of adhering to length limitations of various forms of

media, such as word counts associated with newspaper columns, to minutes of news bulletins on radio and television. These space and time constraints reinforce the gatekeeping function of the media, with media organisations controlling how much of what audiences see, read and hear. The process of deciding what content is to be included in a broadcast can have many contributing factors; including the individual interest of the journalist(s) as well as the overarching value framework of the media organisation they work for.

Radio producers also maintain a gatekeeping function when it comes to the interactive nature of radio, particularly when it comes to talkback radio, in light of continuous advances in Internet new media technologies. One of the pioneering and most controversial talkback radio hosts, John Laws, reflected that most callers in the early years of talkback would call to raise 'pedestrian, domestic issues' (Ward 2002, p. 22). The introduction of various new media technologies as well as the popularisation of the Internet has enabled radio to become a far more interactive medium. More recently, the availability of Internet accessible technologies such as mobile phones have aided in increasing interactivity and reach. Examples of this include the websites of radio stations (including their social media presence), which may have 'listen online' or podcast functions in addition to mobile applications, which allow the audience to interact with, listen to, or interact with the radio station via their own portable Internet accessible technologies. This can also be seen in the development of email and texting technologies which attracted participants who either may not want to, or don't feel comfortable with calling; making radio a 'viable participatory forum for a much wider audience' (Gillman 2007, p. 122). In describing the gatekeeping functions of radio producers, Terry Flew states that even in such an interactive environment where audiences can interact with the presenters, producers still apply a screening process to maintain the integrity of the program:

The hosts and their producers have the ability to reward 'favourable' callers (often with gifts of their sponsor's products), disadvantage 'hostile' callers, select calls, order calls, interrupt callers, and cut off 'hostile' callers, through what is known as 'the dump', which is often followed by derogatory comments from the announcer after the caller is cut off the airwaves (Flew 2004, p. 237).

Furthermore, media commentator David Salter (2006, 'Who's for breakfast, Mr. Jones?', comments in his article about veteran broadcaster Alan Jones, on the gatekeeping function of the program producers when it comes to putting caller to air:

Remarkably few people now call talkback programs [...] Of those who do call, only a few are chosen by the producers for the honour of joining the queue to converse on-air with Jones. The producers do a quick pre-interview with each caller and make a selection of those who best suit the tenor of the program (Para, 19).

The traditional gatekeeping function of journalists has been viewed as a 'core professional role' and one that is 'closely linked to separating fact from opinion and reporting from advocacy' (Singer 2005, p, 179). However in a highly networked mediascape where the ever increasing popularity and development of various social media websites allows millions of people to source and diffuse their own information, there remains the question of whether a journalist's role as a gatekeeper is any longer valid.

The reference to journalists as gatekeepers of information by White and others (see Janowitz 1974; Schudson 1989; Singer 2005, 2007) initiated debates regarding the traditional roles of journalists, and the apparent power of journalists to decide what information to be newsworthy. However as the Internet, social media and search engines offer alternative means for audiences to gather and diffuse news, this poses new dilemmas for journalists and their traditionally appointed roles of gatekeepers of information. Singer argues that within this new media environment, the accessibility of Internet search engines such as Google via new media technologies, and gadgetry with Internet connectivity, this has meant that users have greater access to global news, as well as bypass news delivered by media organisations. It is within this 'new communication realm' (Castells 2007, p. 248), where journalists and media professionals engage with new technologies in the production of content, that it is useful to draw upon production studies (see du Gay 1997; Cottle 1999; 2000; Caldwell 2008; Mayer 2009; Paterson 2008; Domingo 2008; Banks & Caldwell 2009; Erdal 2011).



## **2.10 Conclusion**

This chapter has analysed the concepts of radio production, social media, and media work, each of which are central to the core aims of this thesis to examine how social media adoption and integration by radio program producers impacts on their media work. Further, this chapter has highlighted that radio production practices have walked in lock step with evolving participatory practices of audiences and citizen journalism.

In the next chapter I will discuss my approach to studying the adoption and integration of social media in three workplaces. These workplaces represent different sectoral forms of radio production and have different understandings of radio producers' professional role, different working conditions and different relationships with both sources and audiences via social media.

## **Chapter 3: Methodology**

This thesis uses an inductive, ethnographic research methodology in order to examine how news talk radio producers are using social media tools and techniques in their daily production processes, and explores how this has impacted upon their work roles, routines and practices, and generally, their media work. This chapter begins by exploring the anthropological origins of ethnographic research methods and how ethnography and media ethnography has been used within the social sciences, particularly in the form of production studies. The chapter moves on to discuss how the three workplaces were selected for this thesis, before offering a rationale for these choices. There is a discussion in relation to how I conducted both the participant observation phase within each workplace, as well as the expert interviews with each of the radio producers before discussing how I have analysed the collected data.

### **3.1 Media ethnography in production studies**

This research uses an often-used media ethnography framework, combining participant observation in news talk production environments and expert individual interviews with radio program producers. Historically ethnographic approaches emerged from nineteenth century Western anthropology, where ‘an ethnography was a descriptive account of a community or culture’ (Hammersley & Atkinson 2007, p. 1) produced by a participant observer. However, over time, and with adoption by a variety of academic disciplines the meaning of ‘ethnography’ has diversified and consequently there can be a significant overlap with other labels such as ‘field work’ or ‘case study’ (ibid.). Contemporary media ethnographers such as Horst, Hjorth & Tacchi have also noted the increasing visibility and flexibility of ethnographic research methods across disciplinary domains:

On the one hand, ethnography is inherently transdisciplinary in its focus upon everyday life and all of the messiness that entails. The flexibility and openness to new tools and novel avenues of inquiry also signal a transdisciplinary framework for practice (2012, p. 88).

Thus it is important for this research to signal how media ethnography has developed as a distinct field of inquiry in media and communications research, and why it is significant in the study of changing production roles and practices.

In the formative years of ethnographic exploration, 'ethnology', referring to the conceptual, historical, and comparative analysis of non-Western cultures, was the favoured core of anthropological work. However as anthropologists began to conduct their own fieldwork, the term 'ethnology' became less popular as 'ethnography' came to refer to 'an integration of both first-hand empirical investigation and the theoretical and comparative interpretation of social organization and culture' (Hammersley & Atkinson 2007, p. 1). Between the 1920s and 1950s sociologists at the University of Chicago developed ethnographic and case study methods to analyse patterns of life found in cities and urban areas, and this reinterpretation of ethnography prompted the spread and popularisation of the approach across various disciplines<sup>10</sup>.

In the latter half of the twentieth century cultural and media studies scholars moved away from their traditionally 'historical and textual approaches' by adopting ethnographic methods, most notably in the study of audiences and 'cultural consumption' (Hammersley & Atkinson 2007, p. 2). Additionally, Lull's (1980) landmark study of the social uses of television paved 'the way for many [...] studies in the ethnography of mass communications' (Jankowski & Wester 1991, p. 54). Pioneering research by David Morley (1986) and Roger Silverstone (1990) promoted media ethnography that 'views the individual in the context of the everyday and takes account of the home, technologies and neighbourhoods, as well as public and private mythologies and rituals' (Horst, Hjorth & Tacchi 2012, p. 86).

Virginia Nightingale notes that media ethnography has seen a number of interdisciplinary shifts, 'from being a method 'borrowed' by media audience research to becoming a sub-field within the discipline of anthropology' (2012, p. 95). Nightingale refers to the publication of two books in the mid 1980s concerning ethnography and anthropology by scholars Clifford & Marcus (1986)<sup>11</sup> and Marcus & Fisher (1986)<sup>12</sup>, which she notes to have expanded media

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<sup>10</sup> The increasing range of disciplines using ethnographic method is illustrated in subsequent editions of the *Handbook of Qualitative Research*: Denzin & Lincoln (1994; 2000; 2005).

<sup>11</sup> Clifford, J & Marcus, G 1986, *Writing Culture: The Poetics and Politics of Ethnography*, University of California Press, Berkeley, CA.

ethnography within the discipline of anthropology (2012, p. 98). Additionally, Nightingale argues that the 'initiative and vitality for the flowering of media ethnography' made evident in publications from the early 2000s, 'bears testimony to the wealth of research undertaken during the 1990s by anthropologists inspired by the challenges new media posed for conventional ethnographic research' (2012, p. 98). It is also important to note that I have however applied anthropological techniques and processes to this study following the work of scholars such as Hammersley & Atkinson (1994); Tacchi (1997); Lindlof & Taylor (2002) and Nightingale (2008).

One of these techniques is reflexivity, a concept that calls upon the researcher to consider his/her own experiences, assumptions and subjectivity, and how these affect the conceptualisation and conduct of the research, a process Davies describes as 'self-reference' (1998, p. 4). Davies discusses the role of reflexivity in ethnographic research, particularly within social research, as one where 'reflexivity expresses researchers' awareness of their necessary connection to the research and hence their effects upon it' (1998, p. 7). My experience as a news talk radio producer was a valuable asset for this study as it allowed me to place myself in the position of the radio producers that were being observed; and through this I was able to examine the work routines of the producers involved in this study from their perspective. Additionally, my own insights into radio production work afforded me the ability to relate with the producers involved in this study giving me the ability to identify potential concerns that the radio producers may have, particularly in terms of access to various technologies as well as their attitudes toward social media adoption. For example, during the participant observation phase, my work experience as a producer shaped key observations made regarding the work practices and routines of the radio producers involved in the study and their adoption of social media; additionally it influenced the questions that were posed to the participants at each radio station (see Chapter 4).

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<sup>12</sup>Marcus, G & Fischer, M 1986, *Anthropology as Cultural Critique: An Experimental Moment in the Human Sciences*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago.

The 'first wave' of substantive ethnographic news production studies were conducted during the 1970s and 1980s (Cottle 2000, p. 19), and while there were relatively few, these studies proved to be highly influential (see Epstein 1973; Murphy 1976; Tuchman 1973, 1978; Schlesinger 1978; Golding & Elliott 1979; Gans 1979; Fishman 1980; Soloski 1989). Cottle argues that they demonstrated that in-depth studies of news producers can assist in explaining 'the dynamics and determinants of news output', as well as provide a 'deeper understanding' of the news production process (2000, pp. 19-20) by being examined first hand by researchers. In 2000 Simon Cottle argued for the need for media ethnographers to investigate new forces of change restructuring media industries such as the introduction of various new media technologies as well as newsroom convergence. He argues that:

Since many of these ethnographic studies were conducted, however, much news ink had dried up for good under the bridge of technological change, and economic, regulatory and cultural forces have also played their part in the radical, and often professionally traumatic, reconfiguration of news corporations, news production and journalistic practices (2000, p. 20).

Cottle called for a 'second wave' of ethnographic studies to 'theoretically map and empirically explore the rapidly changing field of news production and today's differentiated ecology of news provision' (2000, p. 21). In this study, I have investigated how the adoption of social media by radio program producers has affected 'production processes, communication patterns and labour routines' (Puijk 2008, p. 31). My study builds on the work of the scholars identified in the previous chapter to explore the new communicative practices enabled by social media and how they impact on radio production, its convergence with Internet communications and publishing, and the role of radio producers as gatekeepers.

Although a significant amount of the literature available concerning production studies has focussed on the digitalisation of newsrooms, this thesis is more concerned with how the adoption of social media by radio producers has impacted upon their work practices and routines and ultimately their media work as a direct result of newsroom digitalisation and media convergence. The thesis explores the way in which social media use is incorporated into the production roles, routines, and practices of executive and studio producers in

three different radio stations, representing different radio sectors. Although the emphasis is on how social media adoption impacts upon the radio production work carried out by radio producers, it is also important for me to consider factors including radio producers' use of various computing and Internet technologies, access to these technologies in the workplace, and their workloads (see Chapter 4).

The introduction of new communication channels and the use of various technologies in newsrooms, such as internal communication systems, has made the work of researchers somewhat more difficult as they change the means of access to information for both researchers and journalists (Puijik 2008). The changes that Puijik mentions are referring to the use of Internet technologies by journalists in newsrooms such as electronic internal communication systems. In reference to his own study of the production of nonfiction television programs (1990), Puijik explains that if the researcher is not connected to the internal communications system of the media environment they are researching, '[...] he/she will not be able to follow the discussions, and will have to rely on verbal information from one of the team members', which can have several consequences for ethnographic fieldwork. (2008, p. 35). Each of the workplaces involved in my study had their own internal communication systems in place; however they did not appear to impact my ability to conduct the necessary research for the purposes of this study. The public service program producers in particular referred to their internal communications system on several occasions throughout the observation period.

In adopting an ethnographic research methodology, using both participant observation and individual semi-structured interviews, it is possible to observe first hand that: 1) what computing platforms and information systems radio producers have access to; and, 2) how social media are being used in radio production work. Participant observation then allowed me to examine the daily work practices and routines of the radio producers involved in this study; while individual semi-structured interviews enable me to verify and explore my

observations, investigating the impact that their social media use has on work practices and professional identities.

In the next section of this chapter I will discuss the way in which each of the three workplace case studies examined within this thesis were selected. I then outline the two main ethnographic methods used: participant observation and semi-structured interviews with the producers of each program.

### **3.2 Locating the case studies**

This research is concerned with comparing how the adoption of social media by news talk radio producers working in the public service, commercial, and community sectors has impacted upon their media work. In selecting one program from each of the three broadcasting sectors, the intention is to examine the work routines of each of the radio producers and compare how their adoption of social media technologies have impacted upon their work practices and routines.

The initial recruitment phase of the research began by identifying potential news talk programs to be approached to participate in the research across the three broadcasting sectors. Here it is necessary to briefly note that the radio landscape in Australia is divided into three distinct sectors, public service, commercial, and community broadcasting. The government funded public service sector comprises of the Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC) and Special Broadcasting Services (SBS), while there are 273 commercial radio stations across Australia (104 of which broadcast on an AM frequency, 152 which broadcast on an FM frequency, as well as 12 which fall under non-broadcasting bands) (Australian Communications and Media Authority 2013). In addition to the public service and commercial broadcasting sectors, the not-for-profit and non-government community sector however was established in an effort to address gaps such as access and special interest programming not addressed by either the commercial or government funded public sector (Al-Ghul 2004).



Based upon factors including content, time and length of broadcast, and number of days broadcast a week, nine programs, three programs from each broadcasting sector, were initially identified to be approached as participants in the study. Time was spent listening to each of the programs over several weeks in order to familiarise myself with the content and structure of each program. Additionally, prompts from the presenters calling for their audience to interact with the program via social media was also noted and taken into consideration when selecting the programs. In this regard, the selection of metropolitan radio stations was one of convenience where their proximity to central business districts was a major consideration. However, due to the limited pool of willing participants, time, and budget restraints of this project, the case studies chosen were based on the accessibility of the programs and their willingness to participate.

Introductory emails were sent to the Executive Producer of each potential program inviting them to take part in the project. Email was the preferred initial means of communication, as it gave the potential participants the opportunity and time to read the attached Participant Information Statement (See Appendix One). The introductory email informed the participants that their participation in the research was voluntary, and that they were free to exclude themselves from the study at any stage. Additionally, participants were also advised that they would remain anonymous throughout the research process, ensuring that their identities remained non-identifiable to workplace colleagues. Furthermore, the participants were told that their individual participation in this study would not be as 'agents' or 'representatives' of the media organisations they work for, instead they would be regarded as professionals working within radio production.

Both the commercial and public service radio programs selected were broadcast every Monday to Friday while the community program was broadcast three days a week, from Wednesday-Friday (the program also airs on Monday and Tuesday, however there was a different presenter who did not require a producer to be present while on air). There are also variances in the broadcast times of each of

the programs; the commercial program aired from 1pm-4pm, the community program from 9am-12pm, and the public service program from 8:30am-11am.

Of course this small pool of case studies within this thesis limits my analysis as I am unable to make generalisations or wider assumptions regarding the work practices of radio producers based on the programs selected as representatives of each sector. Noting that case studies are small, idiosyncratic, and mostly non-numerical, Hodkinson & Hodkinson note that there 'is no way to establish the probability that data is representative of some larger population' (2001, para 32). This study does not aim to provide a comprehensive analysis of the work practices and routines of radio producers and their social media usage. Instead, this research aims to examine how the adoption of social media by a small sample of radio producers has shaped media work, and how this might be interpreted as a linked to the wider conditions of media convergence.

Once the Executive Producers of each program confirmed their participation via email, a follow up phone call was made to each of the Executive Producers to confirm the start date of the observation period and to enquire about security passes. The programs from the community and commercial sectors did not require security clearance other than checking in with the front desk upon my arrival. The public service sector program however required that I check in with the security desk prior to my arrival and that security personnel escort me to floor of the program; this was primarily due to not being at the station long enough for a visitor swipe access card to be issued.

The next section of this chapter outlines the rationale for the use of participant observation as the initial phase of the fieldwork conducted for this study.

### **3.3 Participant observation**

Participant observation has been widely adopted within the social sciences as a method of human subject research (Atkinson & Hammersley 1994; Snowden 2006). It was used in the context of this project to record when and how radio producers accessed and engaged with social media in their daily work practices and routines. The participant observation phase of this research is used to 'gain

direct, observable information about the professional practices of media professionals' (Snowden 2006, p. 193), with an emphasis placed on the use of social media in particular. Snowden also places importance on the authenticity of the data obtained when using participant observation as a research method:

Participant observation studies and scrutinises people in a natural environment, rather than in an artificially constructed or laboratory environment and provides considerable insight into the research subject's lived everyday experience (2006, p. 194).

This claim by Snowden further reinforces the decisions made regarding the methodological approach and research methods adopted for this study. For the purposes of this research, it is important that the radio producers' adoption of social media is observed within their normal working environments, in order to analyse whether and how it has or has not impacted upon their media work.

Although there are varying concepts of participant observation within the social sciences, this research uses the definition given by pioneering media ethnographers Howard Becker & Blanche Geer as a process in which 'the observer participates in the daily life of the people under study' in addition to 'observing things that happen, listening to what is said and questioning people over some length of time (1972, p. 102). It has been suggested that participant observation is more robust when conducted over a length of time ranging from several weeks, months, to years, which can be seen for example in Georgina Born's extended ethnographic study of the BBC (2005). But due to the scope of this research project, the workplace observation period in each case study was limited to three (3) days. This shortened period of observation is sufficient for the scope and purposes of this thesis as it covers three news cycles and allows me to see how work routines and practices develop across the three broadcasting sectors.

Nightingale emphasises the significance of 'interactions and exchanges between researcher and research participants' as a process that corrects the 'assumptions inherent in the researcher (his or her predisposition to counter-transference) that might otherwise be projected onto the research subjects' (2008, pp. 105-106). She also notes that observational research involves interaction with the

participants and finding a way in which the experience of the researcher can meet that of the participants (2008, p. 106).

In this respect my experience working at a metropolitan commercial radio station within Australia, initially as an unpaid intern then as a paid casual radio producer, was critical to my acceptance as a professional observer. My experience allowed me to understand the daily work demands experienced by the radio producers observed; it also allowed me to recognise potential areas of concern, such as inadequate technologies to carry out work practices and increasing workloads. Overall, the participants across each of the broadcasting sectors welcomed my presence as both a radio producer and researcher. This was made evident in the initial meetings with the Executive Producer of the commercial program and Program Director of the community program, who each expressed a strong interest in the study. The Executive Producer of the public service program did not express an overt amount of interest in this study during the initial telephone conversation where their participation was requested, however this appeared to change upon meeting with him at the start of the fieldwork. Additionally, upon commencing the fieldwork, I met the presenter of the public service program and explained the study and my own experience in radio; she expressed interest in the topic area and sought my opinion on the changing nature of radio production. While I entered each of the radio programs as a researcher, by engaging in conversations with the participants regarding my background as a radio producer, I was able to connect with each of the participants on a professional level. This helped in 'breaking the ice' with the producers and decreasing the division between the participants involved and myself as a 'lone' researcher. My conversations with the producers outside of the interviews were valuable in that they gave me personalised insights into their work routines, their attitude toward adopting new media technologies and social media into their work, and the general pressures that were placed on them. Additionally, after conducting an interview with one of the producers at the public service program, and on returning to the office area, he told me that one of the reasons why he granted permission for the research to take place was that I had come from a radio production background and would

understand, and then be able to relate to the demands of their daily roles and tasks.

The location of each of the workplaces was also necessary to consider in terms of access for the research process. In addition to their work practices and routines, the producers' workloads themselves, access to technologies, and their spatial proximity to these technologies were relevant factors to consider. Each of the three workplaces observed for the research were located either within, or a short distance from, the central business district of major metropolitan cities within Australia. In order to examine how radio producers are using social media in their daily production processes as well as how social media has affected their work roles, routines, and practices, the participants were observed for the entire time that they were at work. The observation phase of this research included before, during, and after the program went to air for a total of three (3) consecutive days at each of the three broadcasting sectors.

At each of the radio programs, I took note of the number of people in each production team as well as the individual roles and routines they took on; this included, as best it could distinguishing and breaking down, the division of the workload amongst the producers. Most of the observations regarding workload division were based on conversations between the production team regarding their daily tasks. After careful consideration of the organisational structure of the production teams of each program (one producer and assisting intern for the commercial program, and three producers at the community program who worked autonomously on rostered days, and three producers who continuously worked together at the public service station); the division of the workload was most clearly demarcated within the public service sector program.

I made sure to take note of the individual access each producer had to personal computers and new media technologies. I also took note of the age, functionality, and most importantly the reliability of these technologies, and considered how these factors may impact upon the producers' work practices and routines; particularly as newsrooms are becoming ever more dependent on Internet-

based new media technologies. Additionally, I also took note of the location of these technologies in relation to the employees, and whether the producer had to move around the station in order to access different technologies such as printers and telephones (see also Chapter 4).

The approach that I have adopted in this research is similar to earlier ethnographic studies of radio such as Tacchi's exploration of the role of radio within the home (1997). Although as this thesis is concerned with the use of social media and its impact upon the work practices and routines of radio producers, my approach is more consistent with an ethnographic study conducted by Dori-Hacohen (2012), who examined the gatekeeping function of radio producers of an Israeli phone-in program. Dori-Hacohen found that media professionals 'are producing the sites of public participation, and, therefore, they construct the public sphere' (2012, p. 126). Furthermore, while scholars such as Williams & Delli Carpini (2000) have suggested that gatekeeping is obsolete in contemporary media, Dori-Hacohen's research, which focuses on the Habermasian concept of the public sphere, supports fellow scholars such as Bowman (2008) who assert that gatekeeping function of media professionals is still relevant.

The next section outlines the rationale for the use of semi-structured interviews, and how such an approach is beneficial for the purposes and scope of this particular study of contemporary radio production.

### **3.4 Semi-structured Interviews**

The act of interviewing is used within numerous professions in an attempt to elicit an exchange of information between the researcher and the informant. The long history of interviewing lies within such diverse practices as 'religious confessions, oral examinations, and legal interrogations', which all date back further than journalistic and research interviewing (Brinkmann 2008, p. 470). As modern social sciences emerged during the 19<sup>th</sup> century, interviews became the preferred method of quantifiable surveys. Yet it wasn't until the 1920s when the

Chicago School of Sociology used qualitative interviewing, that the research method became popular. Since then, qualitative interviewing has become one of the most accepted and used method of collecting information regarding human interaction and opinion. Typically, interviews are used alongside other methods and associated with both qualitative and quantitative social research (Davies (2006, p.157). In themselves, interviewing has proven to be a particularly instrumental method within the social sciences. The expert interviews conducted in this research have been very important in providing information about the specialist work and professional practices of news talk radio program producers and how social media impacts upon their media work.

Depending on the outcome sought by the researcher, there are four kinds of interview structures found in scholarly research; informal, unstructured, semi-structured and structured; each of which appeal to a range of researchers depending on the outcomes they seek. This research project employs a semi-structured approach to interviewing, which allows the researcher to guide and adjust the direction of the interview by having a list of prepared questions but then allows for deviation from these in order to ask additional questions. These adjustments are based not only the observation of behaviour prior to the interview, but also the answers given by the participants as the interview progresses. This approach also allows the researcher to maintain the 'casual quality of conversation' (Berger, 2011, p.136).

Adopting a semi-structured approach to individual interviewing enables the researcher to pose predetermined questions to the participant, which 'address the experience or perspective of people in a variety of social settings' (Travers 2010, p. 311) Establishing rapport with the participants being interviewed is also an important aspect according to scholars such as Travers (2010), who argues that it is important to establish rapport with participants prior to the beginning of the interview. This, he explains, is particularly important when there is no prior relationship established at the time of the interview. Travers suggests that it is important to begin with a preparatory period where the researcher can talk with the participant and explain the purpose of the interview, how information will be used, as well as reinforcing the confidentiality

of the interview. Fontana & Frey also emphasise the importance of establishing rapport, stating:

The goal of unstructured interviewing [or semi-structured for the purposes of this research] is understanding, it is paramount to establish rapport with respondents; that is, the researcher must be able to take the role of the respondents and attempt to see the situation from their viewpoint rather than superimpose...[the researchers] preconceptions (cited in Denzin & Lincoln 2005 p. 708).

The semi-structured interview questions posed to each of the participants were based on their use of the Internet and social media in their daily work practices. The questions ranged from how they would search for information for the program, to how they would use social media in interacting with their audience and pre-promoting the program. While a sample set of semi-structured interview questions were made prior to commencing the field research, during the observation period at each of the radio stations, the individual work routines of the participants were taken into consideration in reformulating the questions posed, thus ensuring that the questions posed were relevant to the participants of each radio station.

The questions posed to the commercial and public radio stations remained relatively similar, with some questions added based on the observations made. However the structure of the community radio station warranted a slight adjustment based on the structure of the production team. For example, during the observation conducted at the community radio station, it was evident that each of the producers had a clear preference when it came to which social media website they used the most while at work (see Chapter 4). In order to examine the reasons behind this, some of the questions posed to the community producers were reformulated to query this observation and find out the reasons, if any, behind their social media preferences. Additionally, while there were three producers working on the community program, they were never present at the same time as the program went to air. When seeking access to the program, the Program Director explained to me that each producer has their own rostered day where they would come in and produce the program. The Program Director also noted that while the producers didn't work together all of the time, they were able to maintain connectivity via email, GoogleDocs, and social media



accounts. This meant that I had to alter the way I conducted the participant observation phase of this research to examine how each producer produced the program individually, as opposed to in a group environment as seen in the public service production team (see Chapter 4).

### **3.5 Conclusion**

This chapter has examined the methodological framework employed by the research in order to examine the relationship between the adoption of social media by news talk radio producers and their media work. In using ethnographic techniques such as participant observation and semi-structured interviews, I have gathered valuable data concerning the work practices and routines of radio producers particularly in terms of their social media adoption and use, as well as identifying concerns shared by the participants regarding newsroom digitalisation and convergence.

The next chapter outlines and analyses the findings from both the participant observation and interview stages of this research, and identifies key areas of concern shared by the participants. These findings are then situated within a wider discussion regarding media convergence: which includes recognising patterns concerning the continuous introduction of technologies into newsrooms; and, teasing out the impact that these technologies have on the media work carried out by media professionals.

## **Chapter 4: Findings**

This chapter investigates how the media work of a selected group of radio program producers has been impacted with the introduction of Internet and new media technologies as a direct result of convergence in newsrooms. In order to do so, in this chapter I outline the findings of the participant observation phase and subsequent interviews conducted with each of the participants in this study to examine whether the adoption of social media by radio program producers has impacted upon their media work, and if so, how and why this is the case.

The chapter highlights a tension amongst radio producers concerning their adoption and integration of Internet and new media technologies, particularly social media, into their work practices and routines. This tension that appears to stem from limited access to new and reliable technologies that are used to carry out their daily media work. The introduction of Internet and new media technologies have altered the way in which the radio producers involved in this study go about their daily work practices and routines. This study however has found that while newsroom convergence has prompted the inclusion and adoption of Internet and new media technologies, the traditional roles of journalists, and therefore radio producers, have fundamentally stayed the same irrespective of advances in technologies.

To begin with, this chapter notes the assumed knowledge of the participants prior to the commencement of any fieldwork, specifically in regard to their social media use and preference. It then examines the structure of the production teams of each of the radio programs that took part in this study, which takes into consideration factors such as airtime, the number of people in each production team, and the associated division of labour within the production teams. The chapter then outlines the specific findings that are drawn from my observations at each radio programs, and the subsequent interviews that followed with each of the producers.

#### **4.1 Preconceived ideas made prior to the commencement of fieldwork**

The use of social media by radio producers is partly determined by structural factors, such as the investment within each broadcasting sector, company, and workplace in terms of digitalisation, convergence in newsrooms, multiskilling, online gatekeeping and participatory journalism practices. It was evident that the producers of each of the programs observed adopted Internet and new media technologies, such as social media, in order to ensure that they were keeping up with ongoing advances in communicative technologies. Prior to commencing any fieldwork, I had made assumptions regarding the use of social media by the radio producers of the three programs observed within this study; which were based primarily on the use of particular social media websites across the broadcasting sectors.

Initially I assumed that the producers of the community program would be more likely to use a number of social media websites within their work practices and routines – especially considering the nature of the program’s content and their audience demographic. This was not necessarily the case however; the community producers indicated throughout the observation period that they each preferred the use of Facebook over other social networking websites such as Twitter and Instagram, particularly in a work context.

In a similar manner, I made an assumption that the commercial radio station producer would be less likely to adopt multiple social media websites, again based on the program’s content and audience demographic. Furthermore, looking at their social media presence prior to commencing the fieldwork reaffirmed my assumptions. Upon commencing the fieldwork, I again noted that my assumptions were incorrect. The producer was observed actively using social media accounts such as Twitter and Facebook equally within their work practices.

As with the commercial program, I expected that the public service producers would be less inclined to use a varied number of social media websites in their daily work practices and routines when I considered the content of the program and the programs' audience. However those assumptions was also proved to be incorrect. Interestingly, the producers indicated that they each had a social media preference (between Facebook and Twitter): however I noted that their preference did not appear to influence their use of other social media websites for work purposes.

Regardless of their individual social media preference, it was clear that the radio producers observed in this study used the social media websites they thought would be the best fit, in order for them to go about their work practices and routines. The next section of explores the structure of the production teams within the study, how they differ, and how the structures of each team shape the way in which I conducted the fieldwork.

## **4.2 Structure of production teams within study**

The structures of each of the production teams observed and interviewed in this study were significantly different; particularly in terms of their internal division of labour, and the roles that each of the members were responsible for. The commercial station had only one producer who was responsible for producing the whole program and was therefore responsible for their own use and integration of social media into their work practices and routines; however they did have an intern who assisted on a daily basis. The community program had three producers and appeared to have a clear division of labour; this was similar to the public service program that also had three producers and a clear division of labour amongst them. Due to the limited time spent at each of the workplaces, it was difficult to establish through observation whether there was a particular person from each of the production teams who was responsible for encouraging the adoption and integration of social media and new media technologies in the work practices and routines of the production teams. Rather, each producer across the three broadcasting sectors appeared to take it upon himself or herself

to incorporate Internet and new media technologies into their work practices and routines.

The production team of the commercial radio station consisted of one producer who was solely responsible for the daily organising, scheduling, and running of the program, which aired Monday – Friday from 1-4pm. The producer was the main point of contact when it came to the production of the program, however they did have assistance in the form of an unpaid intern completing an internship as part of their undergraduate media degree. The producer was responsible for the majority of the daily work tasks, such as booking interviews, researching potential segments, preparing audio for the presenter, and ensuring that the program went to air smoothly. While the producer attended to the running of the program, it was the intern – nearing the end of their three month internship - who assumed some of the responsibility of pre-promoting upcoming segments of the program as well as interacting with the audience via social media. The tasks included posting audio and ‘behind the scene’ photographs on the program’s various social media pages. I was interested in the amount of responsibilities that the intern had on a daily basis; and the producer indicated that the intern was nearing the end of their internship and had shown that they were capable of taking on more varied tasks and responsibilities.

That said, due to the relatively short length of the internship, the producer had to select and train a new intern up to four times year; which in turn places additional pressure on the workload of the producer. The producer indicated that the selection criterion for new interns was primarily based on the university degree they were undertaking, their requirement of an internship as being part of their studies, and their knowledge and interest of radio production. This suggested that the knowledge and use of Internet and new media technologies by the intern were not the foremost consideration when being selected, but it was hoped that the interns were proficient, or at least knowledgeable, in using social media and Internet technologies.

The community radio program was structured significantly differently to both the commercial and public service programs observed within this study. The program aired Monday to Friday, and was shared by two presenters, one who hosted the program on Monday and Tuesday without the backup of a production team, while the second presenter hosted the program from Wednesday to Friday alongside three producers. The production team itself was also quite different to both the commercial and public service production teams. While there were three producers in the production team, each producer worked independently and produced the program on a set day each week. This structure allowed the producers to volunteer their time in other areas of the radio station as well as work at their regular place of employment, or attend university. In addition, the Executive Producer, who oversaw the scheduling of segments, guests, and interviews for both presenters during the week, was only ever present on one day of the week where they produced the program.

The structure of the production team made it necessary to modify the way I conducted the participant observation phase of this research. In other words it permitted me to examine how the producers worked independently, as opposed to studying them in a group environment; and this was the observational context of the public service program production team. It also meant that I could closely examine how each of the producers adopted social media into their work practices and routines, and whether their practices departed significantly from other members of the production team.

As with the community program, the public service radio program also had three producers working within its production team. The main difference within the structure of this production team was that they all worked together on a daily basis. The producers of the public service program were observed working together as a team when it came to the production of the program; each with their own clearly defined roles within the production process. These defined roles were easily visible during the observation period, particularly when the program went to air, as two of the producers (including the Executive Producer)

left the office area and went to the production booth to oversee the program as it aired, while the remaining producer stayed in the office area.

Initially I was unsure as to why this occurred, however after speaking with the producer who remained in the office (Producer B), he indicated that he did so in order to carry out his tasks which included preparing upcoming segments for the program, without hindering the work of the other two producers. Producer B also indicated that he assumed responsibility for preparing and uploading sound and audio clips of segments to the program's website and social media accounts before, during, and after the program aired.

It is equally important to consider the access that each of the production teams within this study had to technologies that are needed to effectively produce live-to-air radio programs. This includes technologies that enable radio producers to quickly gather real-time, relevant information for their journalistic analysis and reportage, support talk-back calls between the presenter and audience, set up interviews including pre-recorded and phone-in interviews, as well as station hook-up interviews.

One of the key observations made within this study was that the radio producers across each of the broadcasting sectors need access to various technologies in order to effectively carry out their media work. The next section of this chapter explores the access each of the production teams had to reliable online technologies within their office, production, and broadcasting areas.

### **4.3 Access to networked, mobile computing technology**

Throughout the observation period conducted at each of the radio stations involved in this study it was evident that the producers at the stations used a variety of Internet and new media technologies in their daily work practices and routines. Based on their use of various technologies, it is therefore necessary to consider whether each of the radio producers had access to a reliable Internet



connection, and up-to-date computing technologies, in all critical production locations across the workplace.

The producers across the three broadcasting sectors had access to fixed line telephones and similar basic computing and Internet-protocol communications technologies such as desktop computers with wireless Internet access and networked printers. It became clear during the observation period that the reliability of some of these technologies was questionable. Interestingly, of all the participants across the three broadcasting sectors, the producers of the commercial and community radio stations in particular made informal negative comments throughout the observation period about the reliability and speed of the computing technologies made available to them.

The producer of the commercial program and their intern had access to a number of basic technologies which included desktop PCs, fixed line telephones, wireless Internet, and networked printing in both their office and production booth. On several occasions throughout the observation period, the producer was overheard commenting on the slowness of the computers they were using. Additionally, on several occasions after commenting on the slowness of their desktop computer, the producer would refer to either their personal smartphone or iPad. This resort to personal mobile devices happened more often while in the production booth particularly as the producer became increasingly frustrated at the slowness of the other computer in that location.

At one point when the commercial producer was trying to access her contact list via the desktop computer, in the time it took for the Microsoft Excel file to open on the computer, she had managed to find the phone number in her mobile phone and start dialing on the PhoneBox<sup>13</sup> system. This appeared to be particularly frustrating for the producer who only had a short window of time to

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<sup>13</sup> PhoneBox is an automated system that allows journalists and media workers the ability to monitor and manage multiple phone calls, which is particularly useful in terms of talkback radio programs where presenters take a number of phone calls. Further, PhoneBox allows for frequently dialed numbers to be saved, profiles to be established for frequent callers (such as names, sex, and age), in addition to blocking banned phone numbers/callers to contact the program.

phone the guest and put them through to the presenter for their interview – particularly as the program was live to air. The producer indicated in the interview that followed that she could no longer rely on the computers provided by the radio station primarily due to their slow responsiveness and unreliability when it came to opening up programs, or webpages in addition to connecting to the printing network. For these reasons, and to have more mobile, second or third screen access to online tools and services, the producer had felt that they needed to purchase an iPad to use while at work:

I bought it purely for work, because I was just finding that well, [...] the computers are slow and I needed a second screen to do stuff like Twitter and it was just easier to [use my iPad]. I need to have my normal computer checking emails and breaking news so [my iPad works] like a third screen (**Commercial Producer**).

The producer's actions confirm the necessity of access to reliable technologies within real-time newsroom production environments. Furthermore the above example also alludes to the time pressures placed on journalists and media professionals: to access vital production information online, wherever they are; to adopt social media into their work practices and routines for seeking contacts; for professional interaction, and for newsgathering. Access to reliable technologies in newsrooms is necessary for radio professionals to carry out their media work, yet funding restrictions and priorities limit media organisations in their ability to provide new and up-to-date technologies. While upgrading existing technologies may not necessarily be considered a funding priority for all radio stations, it was clear that access to reliable technologies is paramount for radio professionals to work effectively, particularly while facing conditions arising from media convergence, including ongoing technological changes and the adoption of social media into work practices and routines.

Similarly to the commercial station, within the community station's open-plan communal area, the staff and volunteers had access to basic technologies including several desktop computers, a printer, and a fixed line telephone. It quickly became apparent during the observation period that the technologies available to the staff and volunteers were slow, outdated, and in some cases, inoperable. Each of the three producers commented on numerous occasions that

the computer in the production booth in particular, which is used by all the producers across the station, was slow and unreliable. They also commented that the slowness of the computer affected their work practices as it was especially slow when it came to uploading content and interacting with the audience via social media – these being two of the main roles carried out by the producers. The slowness and unreliability of the computers provided by the station, and the lack of software updates, prompted two of the three producers to bring their personal laptops to work in order to efficiently carry out their media work:

A lot of our computers are a bit dated, sometimes just things like QuickTime or Flash and things like that that aren't working it means that our integrated AMRAP<sup>14</sup> pages and stuff like that get a bit glitchy, so I would usually work from my MacBook to look at those pages that we update with the playlist and also to upload photos that we take with guests on to [the programs] Facebook **(Community Producer A)**.

Yeah I completely use my laptop. As you can see [points to the desktop computer in production booth] this computer's so old [...] and it has got so much stuff on it that has just built up over the years that it's just impossible to use. [...] My phone is not very good, but I know most people have iPhones [...] so it is a lot easier for people to go on Twitter, but I predominantly use my laptop to playlist and check Twitter [and] Facebook **(Community Producer B)**.

It was clear that a contributing factor for the increasing use of personal computing technologies by the commercial and community radio producers was lack of access to fast, well-maintained, mobile workplace computing technologies, and second screen capacity.

In my interview with the Program Director of the community radio station, she indicated that while the community station would ideally update the technologies available to them to make the media work of their staff and volunteers easier, they were restricted by budget constraints:

[It's one] of the realities of working at a community radio station – we're a lot better off than so many other stations in terms of financials. [...] as new technology comes through, we keep an eye on it, but for a community radio station price is one of the major concerns **(Community Program Director)**.

In addition to this response given by the Program Director, in a later informal conversation, she indicated that in an ideal situation the station would upgrade

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<sup>14</sup> Australian Music Radio Airplay Project (AMRAP) is a program which allows radio programs to upload music onto their website allowing audiences to track playlists.

the technologies available to staff and ensure that the second studio – which was not in operation and was only used to record advertisements at the time this research was conducted– would be functional.

In comparison to the technology access conditions for staff in the commercial and community workplaces, the staff of the public service radio station appeared to have access to more functional and reliable technologies in their office and studio areas. This was particularly evident within the public service radio station where in addition to basic communicative technologies such as desktop computers, telephones, and printers, each staff member in the large open-plan office area had access to his or her own pair of headphones; which are working conditions that may well be a reflection of a divergent management approach. As the observation continued I noticed that due to the open-plan layout of the office area, it was necessary to provide the staff members with headphones in order to control the noise levels, particularly as more people entered the area throughout the day. The accessibility of various Internet technologies provided by the radio station extended into the production booth where the producers had a number of computer screens available to them, each of which were used for different purposes, while the program went to air; with at least one screen dedicated to social media monitoring.

While the producers of the public service program gave no indication that they had purchased any technology specifically for work purposes, they were continuously seen using their personal mobile phones (smartphones) throughout the observation period. On the second day of observation, one of the producers initiated a conversation regarding the usefulness of smartphones in a media environment and noted that the radio station had requested that all employees place a passcode on their smartphones and mobile Internet accessible devices. The producer also noted that as smartphones are used in both the private and work lives of the employees within the radio station, the requirement of passcodes was seen as necessary to enforce in order to prevent the loss or unauthorised sharing of sensitive information, such as contact lists and private communication.

In examining the access to networked, mobile computing technologies, it was clear that the digitalisation process of each of the radio stations observed was an incomplete and ongoing process. It appeared that the commercial and community sector radio stations were not investing enough in computing technologies and convergent production practices in order to keep up with the speed of continuous technological change, and the promise of ubiquitous, or at least mobile computing.

#### **4.4 Time spent on social media**

One of the major findings of research was that the producers across the three broadcasting sectors each spent a considerable proportion of their time on social media websites for a variety reasons. Interestingly, while they used social media for comparable reasons such as pre-promotion and audience interaction (as discussed in the next section of this chapter), the production teams of the commercial and public service programs in particular seemed to spend most of their time on social media at different times of the day. While the community producers spread out their social media use throughout the day (before, during, and after), the commercial producer spent most of their time on social media before the program aired, with the public service producers spending the majority of their time on social media after the program had aired. This section of the chapter explores how much time each of the production teams spent on social media during the observation period, as well as what they spent their time doing.

The commercial producer spent the majority of their time prior to the program going to air monitoring social media websites Facebook and Twitter – approximately 30-45 minutes. On each day of the observation period, one of the first things the producer would do upon her arrival was check her Twitter account on her iPad that she had purchased for work purposes; occasionally joking that she was ‘checking to see what’s going on in the world’. The producer was observed constantly referring to and checking their social media accounts

by alternating between their desktop computer, iPad, and iPhone; during this time, she monitored social media to see what was happening in the community and the media that would be of interest to the program's audience demographic. Once the segments for the program had been lined up, the producer would then spend at least 10-15 minutes pre-promoting the program from their office; where she also updated the station's Facebook status, tweet from the station's Twitter account, and share or retweet the same updates from their personal social media accounts. When the presenter arrived, the producer would also have her pre-promote the segments on the program from her personal social media accounts.

The structure of the community radio program's production team was significantly different to the commercial and public service production team, however observing how the three producers worked independently on their designated days meant that I could examine the time each of them spent on social media and compare them to each other. Each of the producers had a different approach to not only how they used social media, but also to how much time they would spend on social media each day.

On the first day of observation prior to the program airing, the producer (Producer A) had a discussion with the presenter regarding the topics being covered on the program, before proceeding to log into the program's Facebook account where they began to pre-promote the program. Producer A spent approximately five minutes pre-promoting the program prior to it going to air, in that time they also invited the audience to interact with the program via social media. As the program went to air shortly thereafter, the producer spent much more of their time on social media, on both their personal Facebook account and the program's account. While the program aired, the producer spent her time interacting with the audience by answering questions they had asked via Facebook, as well as posing questions to the audience to encourage participation with the program. On this particular day of observation there was an in-studio guest, and after the segment had finished, the producer took a photo of the presenter with the guest and immediately uploaded it to the program's social

media accounts in order to share with their audience. The promptness of the producer in uploading the image to the program's social media accounts could be put down to her making sure that the content they uploaded was relevant to the program's audience.

On the second day of observation, the producer (Producer B) was similar to Producer A in that they spent a short amount of time prior to the program airing on social media pre-promoting the program, with the bulk of their time on social media while the program aired being dedicated to interacting with the audience. On the third day of observation however, Producer C, who was also the Executive Producer, spent a minimal amount of time on social media before and after the program aired. At the time, I noted that the Executive Producer spent most of their time organising guests and interviews for upcoming programs and segments – an activity which seemed to take up the majority of their time and was a task that wasn't assigned to the other two producers observed.

The three producers of the public service program would split up as the program prepared to go to air with two producers (including the Executive Producer) attending to the production booth to oversee the program as it aired, while the third producer (Producer B) remained in the office area where he prepared segments and audio grabs for upcoming programs. The two producers who oversaw the program from the production booth (Producers A and C) were observed spending a considerable amount of time monitoring social media via TweetDeck. As with the commercial and community radio programs, it was difficult to gauge an exact length of time that the producers spent on social media while the program aired, however it was apparent that they were constantly referring to social media. Prior to the program airing, the producers had posed a question to the audience via social media in an attempt to spark a conversation with their listeners. At one point as the program aired, one producer turned to me and stated that they had received '10 tweets in 10 minutes', which they were impressed with; which reinforced how closely they monitored social media while the program aired.

In examining the time spent on social media by each of the producers, it was clear that the use of social media websites are an integral part of the radio production process; and is symptomatic of media convergence in newsrooms where Internet and new media technologies are increasingly introduced and integrated into the media work of radio professionals. This in turn means that the ability to use social media and Internet technologies effectively is critical knowledge for radio producers, and which is also linked to the multiskilling of journalists and media professionals (see also Chapter 2), including low responsibility staff such as interns.

Throughout the observation period, it was evident that the majority of the time spent on social media websites by the producers at each of the broadcasting sectors was dedicated to promoting the program and interacting with their audience. Media convergence in newsrooms has resulted in radio professionals using a variety of new media and Internet technologies within their work practices and routines to carry out their media work. In turn, radio professionals are increasingly using Internet and social media technologies for cross-platform promotion, where they have the opportunity to reach a wider audience through effective and innovative social media use.

The next section of this chapter explores how social media is used as a tool by the radio producers observed in this study for the pre-promotion of radio programs and segments.

#### **4.5 Social media: A promotional tool**

Throughout the fieldwork conducted, it was evident that social media websites were used by the producers at each of the broadcasting sectors as a promotional tool, whereby the producers would pre-promote upcoming segments and special guests on the program. Each of the producers across the three broadcasting sectors were observed spending a large proportion of their time dedicated to pre-promoting the program via online mediums such as social media.



The commercial producer and their intern spent a lot of their time using social media in order to pre-promote upcoming segments on the program. The majority of the producer's time was focused on pre-promoting the program prior to the program airing while the intern attended to most of the pre-promotion work as the program aired. Within several informal conversations, the producer commented that a relatively simple task such as posting a Facebook status or tweeting about what was coming up in the program generated some 'buzz' amongst their social media followers.

The three producers of the community program were observed on multiple occasions using social media websites in order to pre-promote upcoming segments on the program. While the time spent on social media varied amongst the community producers, they all nonetheless placed a great emphasis on social media as a promotional tool for not only the program they produced, but also for the overall radio station. One of the producers made the comment in their interview that they used social media as a tool for pre-promoting the program as well as for sharing content from the program with their audience:

We use social media, mostly Facebook and sometimes Twitter, [...] as a promotional tool. This allows us to alert followers of interesting content and guests, as well as provide links to supplement on-air information [and] avenues to listen back to the show. [...] It's also interesting to provide behind-the-scenes content (i.e. photos with guests in the studio) to accompany the on-air content **(Community Producer A)**.

It is also worth noting that the three radio stations observed within this study had protocol documents available for their producers to refer to, and these were located in either the offices or production booth/studio area. The social media guidelines were most visible in the production booth of the community program, where documents such as information regarding social media use and promoting the program were available to staff and volunteers. The necessity of having a social media guideline openly available at the community station is mainly due to the high number of volunteers who cover shifts over a 24-hour period. The volunteers in particular may not have had much experience in using social media

as a promotional tool and means of effectively communicating with radio audiences online; this was confirmed by the Program Director who indicated that it was a useful document for the volunteers as they started working at the radio station.

The public service producers also used social media websites Facebook and Twitter for pre-promoting the program, which appeared to be a group discussion concerning what content would be posted. When it came to the promotion of the program via social media, the whole production team and presenter appeared to contribute, yet despite this, it seemed that Producer B had more responsibility when it came to the pre-promotion of the program – which was seen particularly as he remained in the office area working on upcoming programs while Producers A and C accompanied the presenter to the studio.

The time and effort spent on pre-promoting the program and segments on the program collectively by the radio producers in this study is reflective of the changing nature of media work in radio, particularly in terms of cross-platform promotion and divergent publishing channels. The use of social media as a platform to assist in the pre-promotion of radio programs also plays into the participatory and interactive nature of radio as well as the traditional journalistic role of gatekeeping, where media professionals decide upon the information relayed to its audience (see Bowman & Willis 2003; Singer 2007; see also Chapter 2). The next point made in this chapter concerns the use of social media as a tool to facilitate audience interaction. Just as the producers were observed using social media to pre-promote their programs, they were also observed spending a lot of their time interacting with their audience via telephone, text, email, and most significantly to this thesis, social media.

#### **4.6 Social media: A tool for audience interaction**

I noted throughout the observation period that the producers of each radio station actively sought to communicate and interact with their audience. Audience interaction was also encouraged via outlets such as telephone, text, and

email; however social media appeared to be the most popular within the commercial and public service stations in particular while the producers of the community program indicated that telephone and text services were still more popular amongst their audience. Although the producers at each of the radio programs observed encouraged audience interaction via a number of platforms, I also noted that it was apparent that the producers maintained a level of gatekeeping when it came to making decisions about which callers, text messages, social media comments, or emails would go to air. This was particularly evident with the commercial program producer who commented on the necessity to ensure that when their audience interacted with the program it needed to be appropriate for the content of the program and for the radio station.

Depending on the segments lined up for the program on each day, the commercial producer would pose a question prior to the program airing where they would invite listeners to tune in at particular times to listen to a specific discussion as well as invite them to interact with the program via phone, text, email, or social media. Considering the commercial program and radio station follows a talkback radio format, I observed both the producer and intern spending a lot of time interacting with the audience on social media even though audience interactions via telephone appeared to be the most popular amongst their audience, similarly to the community radio station. While social media was widely used as a tool for audience interaction, the radio producers within this study also indicated that other means of communication, namely telephone calls and emails, are still popular channels of communication for their program and their audiences:

[Social media] has definitely added a new platform to interact but there is always the need for callers, which there are always plenty [of] because not everyone has social media and it's easier to come on the radio and talk rather than typing a message – it just depends on the person **(Commercial Producer)**.

We use social media to increase our reach to listeners, to give them a multifaceted platform to interact with. Text is the most popular form of contact for us on our program, then [telephone] calling, and then Facebook **(Community Executive Producer)**.

Social media has definitely provided a new form of interaction for both the

program and audience [however] it's interesting to note that this hasn't significantly changed the relationship between program and audience. Most of our listeners prefer to phone up during the program and speak directly to the presenter [...]. We definitely get a larger audience response via the text-line and phone than we do through social media in regards to requests, competition call outs and engagement in general **(Community Producer A)**.

Similarly to the commercial program, the public service program producers, after a short editorial meeting each morning, would pose questions to their audience via Facebook and Twitter encouraging them to interact with the program; this was noted on the first day of observation, where the presenter asked the producers 'what are we putting on Facebook?' in reference to the topics being discussed on the upcoming program. Later as the program began to air, Producer C informed the presenter that Facebook was 'agreeing' – in reference to one of the questions they had asked the audience on social media prior to the program airing.

While considering the ongoing digitalisation process of each of the workplaces involved in this study, as well as the additional duties and responsibilities taken on by radio professionals as a result of newsroom convergence, this study considers radio production as a form of distinct digital media work. Therefore the next section of this chapter explores the adoption and integration of social media into the work practices and routines of the radio producers involved in this study.

#### **4.7 Adoption and integration of social media into work practices**

Each of the producers across the three broadcasting sectors used a variety of new media and Internet accessible technologies in order to carry out their daily work practices and routines. Irrespective of the technologies available to them, a common theme that emerged throughout the observation period at each radio station was that each of the producers were constantly logged into at least one social media website while carrying out their media work.

Although it was clear that each of the producers used social media in their work practices and routines, I was also interested to see whether the use of social

media amongst the producers was in any way influenced at all by their management. While the responses given by the commercial and community producers concerning any pressure placed on them by management to adopt social media within their work practices and routines mostly as I expected, the public service producers did not directly respond to this question when answered, which suggested some coyness in disclosing how the radio station approached the adoption of social media in their work practices. However a subsequent conversation with the public service program's presenter during the observation period did shed some light on the pressure placed on journalists and radio producers at the station to adopt social media in their work practices and routines. It clearly suggested that the integration of social media was indeed a directive of management.

The producer of the commercial program was firm in stating that the use of social media in their work practices and routines was not only expected, but was a requirement made directly by their management team:

From a work point of view it is a directive from management that we use social media. It's the way of the world now and we need to have a presence in order to compete with this market. I suppose it makes us competitive with other news and media markets **(Commercial Producer)**.

This type of response was expected within a commercial radio environment where there is a pressure placed on the producers and presenters by management to reach target ratings; therefore a strong social media presence, where the program and station is promoted effectively, can positively impact upon the station's competitiveness amongst other media organisations for ratings.

One of the community producers noted that while management does not necessarily enforce the use of social media, there is an unspoken expectation amongst the staff and volunteers that they adopt social media in their work practices and routines:

There is an expectation [from management] that social media is used, [however it is] not so much asserted **(Community Producer A)**.

The Executive Producer of the community program noted that management encouraged the use of social media amongst the employees and volunteers as it promoted a sense of community, which reflected the community values of the radio station.

The public service producers did not comment on whether their use of social media in their individual work practices and routines was related to the requirement of management. Although on one occasion during the observation phase, after the program had aired, the presenter started to talk to me about the purposes of this research. They spoke with me regarding how the use of social media in radio production is an area that is often glossed over. The presenter then light-heartedly indicated that the study would be a 'good read' for those in radio management who were concerned with compiling social media guidelines and requirements. The presenter opined that while 'someone' was in charge of compiling documents such as social media guideline to be used amongst the employees throughout the entire radio station, they did not seem to understand the practicality of implementing such a guideline, and furthermore, they seemingly did not understand the pressure it placed on the ever increasing workloads of journalists and radio producers. The conversation with the presenter suggested that as with the commercial station, there was a pressure placed on the producers of each program to actively use social media in their work practices and processes. I observed each of the producers incorporating social media in their work practices and routines, whether it was a directive of management or not. The next section of this chapter explores another interesting finding of this study concerning the social media preference of the radio producers involved.

So far, this chapter has explored some of the main findings of this thesis including the time spent on social media, its use as a tool for promotion and audience interaction, and how social media has been integrated into the work practices of the radio producers involved in this study. The next section of this chapter explores the social media preference of the producers at each of the broadcasting sectors.

## 4.8 Social media affordances and preferences

When it came to social media use, it was clear that the producers across the three broadcasting sectors relied primarily on two websites, Facebook and Twitter. An interesting and unexpected observation made was that the producers of the community radio program had a clear preference for Facebook. While the commercial and public service radio producers did not appear to have a clearly defined preference, as they were observed spending approximately the same amount of time on both Facebook and Twitter.

At the community station, there was a lot of discussion amongst the three producers and presenter regarding their social media website preferences. On the first day of observation for example, immediately after the presenter arrived at work, he started asking myself and the producer about personal social media preference before asking whether we had started using several new types of social networking websites. While the station had its own Twitter, Instagram, and Facebook accounts that could be accessed by all staff and volunteers, it became clear during the observation period that the producers favoured Facebook over all other social media websites. Based on this observation, the producers were asked about their social media preference, and interestingly each indicated that their use of social media website(s) at work was directly influenced by their personal social media habits. The three producers stated that while they each had their own personal Twitter accounts, they each felt more comfortable using Facebook for both personal and work situations. A reoccurring reason given as to why the producers preferred using Facebook was that Twitter enforces a 140-character limit on each post. During the interviews, each of the producers indicated that the 140-character limit did not allow them enough space to either pre-promote the program, or interact with their audience effectively:

I think Facebook does so well because of the nature of how you engage [with the audience] [...] Facebook to see what's going on in the studio, or see where they are, [also] comments aren't as restricted with character limits and things like that **(Community Producer A)**.

I have a Twitter [account] but I use it more to follow what other people are doing as opposed to tell people what I'm doing. [...] I mean, 140 characters is a

really small amount of space to publicise whatever you're trying to do or say. [...] Most of the time I'll always update the Facebook page but I forget about Twitter and I don't even really bother logging on – I always forget about it **(Community Producer B)**.

Personally I don't have a Twitter account, so I don't know if that reflects in my use of the social media. [...] When we do a Facebook post we always make sure that there is something interactive in there, so that could be a photo or a video or a link to something; whereas on Twitter, you've only got a limited amount of characters and you have to use the shortened links **(Community Producer C)**.

The Program Director was also asked to comment on what appeared to be a clear social media preference amongst the producers of the community program. Her response indicated that while the producers were not necessarily on-board with the use of Twitter in their work practices, this was not necessarily an accurate reflection of the radio station's staff and volunteers as a whole. Rather, the Program Director suggested that staff and volunteers working across different programs had varying social media preferences, which are reflected in their work practices:

Some of them (staff/volunteers) use Twitter more. [...] Some people are more comfortable keeping the Facebook open and Twitter not so much, I'd say that all of our volunteers have Facebook and maybe 50% of them have Twitter **(Community Program Director)**.

Due to the limited scope of this research, it was not possible to observe whether this statement was accurate or not. The producers interviewed also indicated that Facebook was a 'better' platform for engaging with their audience, particularly when it came to sharing content. By contrast, the Program Director thought Twitter was a 'better' platform for engaging audiences; and yet she did seem to agree with the producers that Facebook was perhaps a 'better' platform for sharing content and images with the audience:

I think Twitter is better for engaging with people, [and] listeners who have gotten in contact with the program. Twitter is good for shorter more constant updates and Facebook is where we put content or pictures or that kind of stuff **(Community Program Director)**.

When it came to the pre-promotion of the program or interacting with the audience, the producer of the commercial station program didn't appear to have a clear social media preference; instead, she appeared to use both Facebook and Twitter equally. Yet, when it came to searching for news and information, the



producer had a clear preference of which social media website they use – Twitter. While the community producers explicitly noted that they didn't like the 140-character limit imposed by Twitter, the commercial producer on the other hand embraced it, stating:

Yeah well everybody Tweets. I just find Facebook [has] too much information; whereas Twitter [has] 140 characters. At least a few times a day I hear others as well as myself saying 'did you see that on Twitter?'. It is easier to look at [the guts of a story] in 140 characters and see if you need it or not, rather than trawling through pages and pages of stuff to find out about the story  
**(Commercial Producer).**

The public service producers on the other hand did not appear to have a clear preference when it came to the social media website they used most. Each of the three producers were observed using both Facebook and Twitter in their work practices, all of which was made easier with the use of social media monitoring application, TweetDeck. Although the public service producers didn't appear to have a clear preference, during the interviews that followed, the Executive Producer mentioned that they were currently more inclined to use Twitter over Facebook:

Twitter I think to me is probably more my buzz at the moment. I find Twitter is a lot more to the point than Facebook [...] I found that quite often if you want to cut to the chase about what is going on somewhere in a certain way, then Twitter is speedier, and quite often because of that [it is] oddly accurate **(Public Service Executive Producer).**

At the start of the fieldwork, I assumed that there would be a slight preference in which social media website was used by each of the radio stations, it quickly became clear that my assumptions were completely wrong (see Chapter 5) and were not an accurate reflection of the use of social media by the radio program producers in this study.

The next section of this chapter explores the use of social media monitoring websites such as HootSuite and TweetDeck by the participants; noting that while the commercial and public service producers used social media monitoring websites during the production process, the community program producers did not have access to either computer software.

## 4.9 Social media monitoring websites

The producers at the commercial and public service radio stations used social media monitoring applications such as HootSuite and TweetDeck in their daily work practices and routines; both of which offers monitoring functionality of multiple social media accounts in one application. Although the community producers did not use either of these applications, two of the producers did however indicate that they had used either one or both of the applications at their time working at radio stations in the past.

While HootSuite appeared to be installed on all computers throughout the commercial station, the producer only seemed to use it while she was in the production booth as the program aired. Furthermore, she opted to use her iPad and web pages on their desktop computer to monitor social media while she was in her office. Initially this seemed odd, however the producer later told me that a similar application called TweetDeck had previously been installed on the computer and in recent months had been replaced with HootSuite. The producer also noted that she did not like using HootSuite as much as TweetDeck and therefore minimised the time she spent on it. The reasons given regarding why she disliked HootSuite, appeared at first to be rather trivial - such as failing to recognise passwords, logging the user out after a short period of time, or failing to remember frequently used Twitter handles. Yet combined, these reasons could drastically impact upon the producer's work practices and are therefore necessary to consider.

While the community radio producers did not have access to any type of social media monitoring application, two of the three producers interviewed indicated that they had previously used TweetDeck at radio stations they had previously worked in. One of the producers specifically noted that while they had used TweetDeck before, they doubted that they would use such an application, particularly within the context of community radio, in the future:

I've used TweekDeck, it was quite some time ago [...] I have but it's not something that I've used a lot or something that I'll bother with again probably

[...] I'd be much more inclined to log into my own Twitter as the actual feed and go about my tweeting that way **(Community Producer A)**.

This view may be consistent with the nature of community radio and perhaps such an application is not seen as a necessary expense when considering the frequency of social media interaction is arguably lesser than within the commercial and public service radio broadcasting sectors.

The three producers of the public service program on the other hand were each observed using TweetDeck over the course of the study period. They appeared to effectively use the application as a way to stay on top of what was happening across multiple social media platforms, while still attending to their production tasks as the program went to air. In the interviews that followed with the public service producers, they were each asked about their use of TweetDeck and whether they viewed such applications as useful tools in managing multiple social media accounts, particularly as it was noted during informal conversations with all three of the producers that they switched between their personal and work social media accounts:

The reason for us is, particularly me and [the presenter] have our own accounts and so we have our own people that we follow, we have our own output, and we have our own conversations going [...]. It's basically a way for us to handling multiple accounts at once it's the easiest way, otherwise you'll be logging out of Twitter and logging back into twitter all the time. It's more of a way of monitoring local issues and also two accounts at once rather than anything else, it [TweetDeck] wouldn't be of any use to me if I didn't have multiple accounts **(Public Service Producer A)**.

I'm only just getting across TweetDeck's functionalities [...] For monitoring purposes; TweetDeck is pretty bloody good **(Public Service Executive Producer)**.

While two of the producers (Producers A & C) indicated that they liked using TweetDeck for purposes such as monitoring social media activity using only one application, the response given by Producer B indicated that he had not yet started using the application in the same way that his colleagues had done. Instead, he noted that he was currently switching between web pages, which he described as 'painful':

I don't use it a lot. I don't use it at all really because I haven't taken the time to set it up properly. I haven't really bothered this time around, I probably should. [...] On my phone I'm hooked up to swap between the two [Twitter accounts] so I can swap between the station account and my own account, and I just have one Twitter [account] opened in Chrome and the other Twitter [account] open in Internet Explorer so that's just how I do that, its probably a bit more painful but it sort of works for me – I just haven't taken the time to get that [TweetDeck] up  
**(Public Service Producer B)**

The response given by the public service producer suggests that there is an underlying tension between radio producers and the management of media organisations regarding the use of social media and associated social media monitoring websites. Furthermore, the response reinforces the pressure placed on radio producers and media professionals alike to be multi-skilled - particularly when it comes to adopting various Internet and new media technologies into their workflows.

The next part of this chapter explores several ways in which the adoption of social media by radio producers and their integration of these platforms into their work practices and routines have impacted on their media work.

#### **4.10 Impact of social media on work practices**

The responses given by the participants in this study concerning how the adoption of social media has impacted on their work practices were varied. A prime example of this is seen in the response by the commercial producer who indicated that their adoption of social media has meant that it was difficult for her to stay on top of the varied tasks that she is required to undertake. On the other hand, the community and public service producers indicated that they were relatively unaware of how social media has impacted on their work practices; one inference to be drawn from here is that social media adoption in media organisations is in line with continuous evolutions within the media industry, challenging traditional journalistic roles such as gatekeeping.

As this research has taken place at a time when the use of Internet technologies within newsrooms is widely used, it is difficult to gauge solely from a relatively short participant observation period at each radio station whether the use of

social media by radio producers is recent, or how it might have matured over time and gradually impacted different aspects of their media work. In order to investigate how the use of social media was currently impacting the work practices and routines of radio producers, in addition to my own observations, I needed to almost exclusively rely on the responses given by the participants during the interview phase of this study concerning their individual experiences and perceptions of technological change. Thus these findings are a snapshot of digital media work, useful in generating discussion in the next chapter regarding the broader meanings for radio production studies.

Throughout the observation period, it was evident that the commercial producer was knowledgeable in many aspects of radio production – a characteristic reflective of their 10+ years of industry experience. While the producer was in control of the production process, they did at times appear flustered when it came to managing the numerous tasks that they had to juggle simultaneously while the program went to air. For instance, the requirement of the producer to actively use social media in their work routines, as a directive of their management team, on top of their already heavy workload, appeared to place more pressure on the producer to produce quality radio. It was clear that the presence of the intern was helpful when it came to tasks such as monitoring social media, responding to audience questions via social media, answering phone calls, and researching segments for upcoming programs. The commercial producer indicated that the introduction of Internet and new media technologies within newsrooms, in addition to the added pressure placed on media professionals to integrate social media into radio work, has meant that radio production is no longer a job for one person:

This used to be a one-person job. One person would be able to handle all of the demands, but it's different now. Now you need two people, two producers to work on this program. You need one to research stories, background etc. and the other to put everything to air. I can't keep up with uploading stories onto Twitter and promoting them when I also need to make sure [the presenter] is doing what they need to and then I still need to answer calls and respond to emails  
**(Commercial Producer).**

In contrast to the response given by the commercial producer, the producers of the community program each suggested that they weren't aware of whether the

introduction of social media had an impact on their work practices. The producers indicated that as they already used social media in their private lives, it was unlikely that incorporating social media into their daily work practices and routines had significantly impacted upon their media work. While the community producers were not able to definitively answer whether or not the integration of social media platforms into their work practices had affected their media work, I noticed during the observation period that each of the producers were clearly proficient in using social media in their work practices and routines.

The response given by one of the producers of the public service program was interesting concerning their adoption of social media, particularly Twitter, in his work practices and routines. The producer suggested that he did not believe that his use of Twitter has impacted upon his media work, mainly as he has always used social media in his personal life, which has carried through seamlessly into his work practices and routines:

I've only been [working in radio production] since Twitter existed. So this has sort of been the way I have been able to do it, so it hasn't really changed a lot for me [...] The entire time I've been [a producer, Twitter] has always been a part of my workflow **(Public Service Producer A)**.

Similarly, Producer B stated that their use of social media was all 'second nature' to them. These responses suggest that the long-term integration of digital media in both the personal and working lives of the producers has a varied effect on their ability to use social media effectively in their work practices and routines.

Although he did not specifically comment on how social media had shaped his work practices, the Executive Producer of the public service program preferred to emphasise how the introduction of new media technologies, and the overall move to Internet resources has changed his work practices. Using print newspapers as an example, he made the point that as more resources went online, he was less likely to read physical copies of newspapers. He remarked that while his journalist colleagues as well as the other two members of the production team continue to rely on physical copies of newspapers to source information, he had shifted his preference to online newspapers and resources:

Once it was a common practice that in radio stations like ours [producers would] basically come in and flip through the actual physical newspapers and such in the morning [that] would have been a completely accepted, common normal practice. I became the first member of my current team to stop reading [physical] papers quite a while ago, that happened to me probably about two or three years ago I stopped reading the physical newspaper altogether **(Public Service Executive Producer)**.

Although the Executive Producer expressed a preference for solely reading online newspapers as opposed to physical newspapers, the other two producers also indicated that they would often refer to online newspapers when a physical copy was not available. Interestingly, all three producers at points throughout the observation period mentioned that the online pay walls enforced by many online media outlets get in the way, with the Executive Producer describing them as 'annoying as hell'. The response given by the Executive Producer reflects the introduction of a succession of new technologies within newsrooms that have all made a contribution to the evolution of journalistic work practices and routines.

Another observation frequently heard during the observation period was that radio producers were increasingly required to be multi-skilled, particularly when it came to the introduction and use of various Internet and new media technologies, specifically social media platforms. As noted in the Literature Review newsroom convergence and the restructuring of workplace relations, has meant that journalistic multi-skilling has remained a contentious work issue (see p. 20). The introduction of various Internet and new media technologies in newsrooms has placed a mounting pressure on journalists and media professionals to adopt various new technologies into their workflows. The integration of new media technologies such as social media platforms/software are now routinely encouraged by media organisations as a means of disseminating information and interacting with an online audience, which in turn means that the workload of radio producers has continued to increase. Along with being multi-skilled, the producers across the three broadcasting sectors have needed to be proficient at multi-tasking, particularly when it came to juggling tasks such as producing live-to-air radio and completing administrative work.

The producers of the community station indicated that using social media in their daily work practices and routines, whether it be promoting the program or interacting with their audience, has significantly added to their daily workloads. The three producers suggested that radio producers are increasingly required to be technologically savvy and multi-skilled in various Internet and social media technologies in order to keep up with continuously evolving technologies within newsrooms:

Well it has definitely added to the workload! In this day and age you definitely need to have lots of skills and be able to learn new ones in order to keep up with technology **(Community Producer A)**.

It has required more training of producers in how to effectively use social media. It definitely means another things to do and multitask with **(Community Executive Producer)**.

The responses given suggest some form of tension when it comes to the adoption of social media into the individual work practices and processes of the community radio producers. Additionally, the response given by the Executive Producer in particular infers that she might not be entirely thrilled with the idea of embracing social media into her daily media work; interestingly, the Executive Producer who offered this response was also observed spending the least amount of time on social media while the program aired. This observation cannot of course be regarded as a definitive evaluation of the attitude that producer has toward the adoption of social media into her work practices and routines especially given that she was only observed for one day; however, at some level it does show on her willingness to become multi-skilled.

The commercial producer also indicated that the introduction of Internet and new media technologies into newsrooms has meant that radio workers are expected to become multi-skilled in various technologies. The producer remarked that she had purchased an iPad solely for work purposes in order to carry out her varied work tasks, which centered largely on monitoring social media. She also indicated that that by purchasing an iPad to use as a third screen, it was easier for her to multi-task effectively and complete her daily work tasks; noting that her iPad has become a device that she simply can't work without.



The public service producers did not explicitly comment on the whether the introduction of Internet and social media technologies in the newsroom had resulted in them needing to be more multi-skilled. Yet it was clear that the producers of the public service program, much like the commercial and community producers were multi-skilled media professionals. This insight is primarily based on the observed practices that in order to carry out their work practices and routines efficiently, each of the producers need at minimum a basic working knowledge of the various technologies used to produce the programs they work on.

It is also important to consider the gatekeeping role that the producers involved in this study carry out on a daily basis as a part of their work practices and routines. Studies dating back to the 1950s have positioned journalists as the traditional gatekeepers of information (see p. 13). In recent years however, the introduction of Internet and social media technologies have meant that audiences are able can search, create, and diffuse their own news and content. While social media has allowed audiences to create and distribute their own content in addition to bypassing the traditional gatekeeping function of media organisations, I noted that the radio producers involved in this study maintained their traditionally appointed journalistic roles as gatekeepers of information.

The radio producers involved in this study were each observed implementing gatekeeping techniques. This was apparent particularly when it came to monitoring the comments made by their audience on their various social media platforms. As the producers monitored social media accounts, they were observed filtering through the comments made by their audience and removing those they deemed to be inappropriate or offensive. The producers were enforcing the gatekeeping function traditionally appointed to journalists, albeit in a new and interactive online medium. These gatekeeping roles carried out by the radio producers came as second nature to them, particularly when judged from the perspective of monitoring audience comments and participation via social media. During the observation period at the community radio station, one of the producers mentioned that they monitored the programs' social media

pages in line with the social media guidelines enforced by the radio station. The producer's opinion was that while they adhered to the social media guidelines, they also took into consideration the type of content they would want shared on their personal social media pages, and removed comments or links to external websites they deemed inappropriate for the radio program. This was an interesting comment made by the producer as similar occurrences were noted with the other producers within this study – which is perhaps a indication of the current social media landscape, where users are to be in a sense cautious of what information is shared on their social media pages, whether they be personal or professional.

The introduction of various Internet and new media technologies in newsrooms, all of which are symptomatic of continuing media convergence, has meant that radio producers and associated media professionals have had to adapt to continuous changes in their work practices and routines. It was evident though that while the introduction of Internet and new media technologies may have changed some aspects of how radio producers go about their daily work practices and routines; such as searching for and disseminating information, they still maintain a gatekeeping function; albeit via a new medium.

#### **4.11 Conclusion**

In placing this study within the broader industrial context of media convergence processes, this chapter has outlined the key findings made which centre on the necessity for adequate access to new, or at the very least, reliable Internet accessible technologies. The responses of the participants involved have alluded to what appears to be an underlying tension amongst the radio producers regarding their adoption of social media in their media work. The findings of the study suggest that while the work practices and routines of the radio producers observed have altered and evolved with the introduction of Internet and new media technologies, their roles in terms of the media work they carry out fundamentally have remained the same.

The next chapter of this thesis further analyses and discusses the findings made within this chapter and places these findings within a longer discussion concerning the evolution of journalistic work practices and routines. Furthermore, Chapter 6: Conclusion offers potential solutions to issues raised within this study particularly concerning the technological infrastructure available within newsrooms.

## **Chapter 5: Discussion**

The findings of this study indicate that there are a number of aspects to consider when examining how the adoption and integration of social media by radio producers in their daily work practices and routines is impacting on their media work. This chapter elaborates on the key findings of this study and embeds them within a longer historical discussion concerning the adoption and integration of new media technologies in the work practices of media professionals as well as the digitalisation of newsrooms.

This chapter identifies the five main findings of this study and discusses them in relation to the theoretical and conceptual frameworks of the thesis. The first key finding made is concerned with the access each of the radio producers had to reliable communicative technologies within each of their workplaces and how a lack of access can impact their ability to effectively undertake their media work. The second finding examines the adoption and integration of social media by the radio producers involved and whether or not it comes as a directive of their management, while the third finding explores the amount of time spent on social media by each of the radio producers. The fourth finding of this study explores the use of social media as a tool for pre-promotion of their programs and as a means of encouraging audience interaction and participation. Finally, the fifth finding highlighted in this chapter considers the increasing workloads of radio producers as a result of integrating and adopting social media technologies in their media work, as well as the apparent need for constant journalistic multi-skilling, multi-tasking, and up-skilling whereby the radio producers must adapt to continuous advances in new media technologies and devices in order to complete their media work.

Each individual finding of this study contributes to the understanding of the daily work practices and routines of radio producers and adds to the existing available scholarship concerning social media adoption and integration by media workers. Additionally, the findings of this study assists in answering the question posed within this study which is specifically concerned with the adoption and integration of social media by radio program producers and the impact it has on their media work.

## **5.1 Access to reliable communicative technologies**

The use of social media in the radio production process within this study was partly shaped by the access that each of the producers had to workplace provided computing technologies. This study has revealed that access to basic reliable communicative technologies at each of the radio stations is particularly important when it comes to ensuring the efficient production of the radio programs observed. Without the availability of such technologies in media organisations, producers, journalists, and other media professionals are restricted in their ability to produce and disseminate information, as well as to efficiently integrate social media technologies into their work practices and routines.

There has been a significant amount of scholarship conducted on the impact of technology on journalism (see page. 18), most notably with scholars such as Pavlik who has aptly stated that 'Journalism has always been shaped by technology', and that 'Technology has, for better or worse, exerted a fundamental influence on how journalists do their jobs' (2000, p. 229). Pavlik's latter statement is significant for this study as it reinforces the broader argument that I am making in the thesis: that the work of radio producers has continued to evolve alongside the introduction and evolution of various new media technologies. It therefore remains an area for valid ongoing academic examination. In asserting that technology influences how journalists and media professionals do their jobs however, it is necessary to consider whether the journalists and media professionals, or more specifically radio producers in the case of this study, are given adequate access to such technologies and whether the technologies they do have access to are of a high enough standard to support daily use.

A common theme amongst the producers of the commercial and community programs was that although they were given access to basic communicative technologies in their workspaces, the technologies were relatively outdated, slow, and in some cases unreliable; each of which can then ultimately impact on

the producers' ability to carry out their daily media work. As noted by digital media scholar Mark Deuze (see p. 23), the success of journalism has been in part influenced, or determined by technological advances, a statement that reinforces the necessity of adequate technological infrastructure and computing devices within media organisations in order to keep up with the demands associated with daily digital media work.

In the case of the commercial and community producers in particular, their lack of access to efficient and reliable computing technologies saw them bringing their own mobile computing devices to work in order to use social media services effectively in the studio. For example, the commercial producer indicated that she had bought an iPad solely for work purposes, as the computers available within her office and in the studio were slow in terms of responsiveness thus impacting on her ability to quickly perform her varied work tasks and practices. While each of the community producers brought their own smartphones to work, two brought their own laptop computers to work however they indicated that they did not purchase the devices for work purposes alone; instead, they already had possession of these technologies and made the decision to use them at work due to the slowness and unreliability of the computers available at the radio station. It was clear that a contributing factor for the use of personal devices by two of the community producers as well as the purchasing of a mobile device especially for work purposes by the commercial radio producer was a combination of the slowness, unresponsiveness, and unreliability of the desktop computers provided by the two radio stations. In comparison, the producers of the public service program did not appear to have the same problem when it came to the access each of them had to computing technologies, each of which appeared to be relatively new and reliable. There was no outward expression given by any of the producers, or the presenter, that may have indicated that they could not rely on the technologies made available to them by the radio station to carry out their daily work practices, routines, and overall, their individual media work.

It is also important to note that the lack of access to reliable technologies within workplaces can ultimately impact on the digital media work of convergent news workers in terms of costs incurred for purchasing not only the devices, but also software updates such as updates to operating systems, accessories such as cases and keyboards, as well as technical support and servicing. Additionally, it means that media workers are increasingly having to up-skill themselves when it comes to using new computing technologies in their daily media work (p. 110).

The explanation offered by the commercial producer in particular concerning her reasons for purchasing a mobile computing device for work purposes (see p. 71) warrants consideration of the 'Bring Your Own Device (BYOD)' concept, which is increasingly being implemented in a range of media organisations as a way of addressing ongoing issues raised concerning convergent workplaces. Furthermore, various media companies have implemented BYOD as a strategy aimed at shifting the financial responsibility of mobile technologies to their employees (Wood 2012; Calder 2013), a reflection of the increasing costs faced by media organisations particularly in terms of convergent newsrooms. Scholars such as Gartner (2013) describe BYOD as a 'strategy that allows employees, business partners and other users to use a personally selected and purchased client device to execute enterprise applications and access data' (cited in Pillay et al. 2013, p. 1). Most notably, the BYOD policy also 'allows employees to choose the technologies which best suits their roles' (Pillay et al. 2013, p. 3), which allows employees to make choices regarding the operating system they prefer as well as the type of device they not only prefer to work on, but is also most suited to their digital media work needs – whether that be a laptop, tablet, or smartphone. I do however recognise that such a concept may not be equally beneficial for all workplaces.

The preference the producers and presenters had toward the computing platforms made available to them was also taken into consideration after I noted that although the radio stations all supplied PCs, the majority of the producers (all but one community producer) were using Apple products. This was taken into consideration as it could mean that the producers are therefore required to



up-skill themselves on new computing technologies in order to be proficient in using the technologies provided by the radio stations they work for (see p. 110). The preference of computing technologies amongst the producers appeared to be a contentious issues which was further reinforced by a comment made by the public service presenter who indicated that it would be 'easier' if the radio station supplied Apple computers so that the devices used by the production team (mainly in reference to their iPhones) could be synced more efficiently while at work; therefore resulting in less time spent on transferring information from personal devices to the technologies available at their workplaces. This observation is in line with suggestions by both Mont (2012) and Pillay et al. (2013, p. 3) who note that a BYOD strategy where employees decide which devices they want to use, can create a greater sense of satisfaction and autonomy, in addition to increasing work productivity due to efficiency and ease of use by personally selecting the types of devices they would prefer to use for work purposes.

In examining the access that each producer within this study had to reliable communicative technologies it also worth a brief consideration of the layout of each radio station and what that may mean in terms of the producers' proximity to communicative technologies. While each production team had access to similar basic communicative technologies in their newsrooms and office environments, the space in which the technologies were located differed within each radio station as a result of the different office layouts and building sizes. The layout of the commercial radio station consisted of a number of smaller offices (which fit two to three people) clustered on one side of the radio station's floor plan, while the community and public service radio stations each had open plan layouts, although the public service station was significantly larger. It appeared that the public service radio station had a significantly higher investment in communicative technologies, which was reflected in the number of people working on that particular level of the building. Furthermore, aspects such as the open-plan layout of the offices of the public service station, and the way in which the desks were arranged are also reflective of observations made in Anja Bechmann's case study of newsroom convergence in a cross-media

initiative in Northern Denmark. Bechmann explores concepts drawn from Manuel Castells (2000; 2009) and Bruno Latour (1986; 1987) regarding networks and spatial proximity in the newsroom, as a 'core rationale of superdesks, which aims to enhance cross-media collaboration' (Bechmann 2011, p. 16).

However, irrespective of the layout of each of the offices as well as the types of new media technologies and devices being used by the radio producers in this study, and whether or not they were supplied by the media organisations they work for or brought in themselves; it was abundantly clear that each of the radio producers were actively integrating social media into their daily media work. The next section of this chapter explores how social media was being integrated and adopted by the radio producers and considers the expectations placed on them by management to do so.

## **5.2 Integration of social media in radio production routines**

Another key finding made within this study was that all of the radio producers involved were actively trying to integrate social media into their daily radio production practices and routines. Part of the rationale given as to why the radio producers were actively seeking to integrate social media into their workflows was that their management had either directly or indirectly implied that it was necessary to include in their workflows. This section explores the integration of social media in the daily media work of the radio producers in this study as well as considers the apparent expectations placed on the producers by management to do so.

The introduction of various Internet and new media technologies has given radio producers the opportunity to use social media more readily within their work practices and processes. Social media affords media professionals an additional way to produce and distribute content as well as interact with their audience; as Hermida notes, 'media organizations around the world have enthusiastically embraced social media as a way to distribute news and connect with audiences'

(2012, p. 309). This was certainly the case within this study, as the producers across the three broadcasting sectors were each observed using social media within their work practices and routines to search, distribute, and interact with their audience (see also Chapter 4). In their major study concerning the adoption of Internet technologies in radio stations, Lind & Medoff (1999) found that radio stations were adopting Internet technologies in order to 'keep up with the Jones's'; simply that the integration of Internet technologies throughout the station gave the appearance of being technologically savvy. Additionally, by having an online presence, particularly during the early years of Internet adoption within newsrooms, media organisations can therefore ensure that they continue to be regarded as the early adopters of new technologies (Hardt 1998a). If we fast-forward to the present day, media organisations have overwhelmingly introduced and adopted a variety of Internet and social media technologies within the work practices and routines of their employees in order to ensure that they are up to date with the latest communicative technologies.

It was clear that each of the producers used social media heavily throughout their work practices and routines to carry out their daily media work. The commercial producer indicated that the adoption and integration of social media in her media work has been relatively easy in that she already used a number of social media websites outside of a work context, and therefore was familiar with the functionalities of each website. Whether or not the producers used social media outside of work proved to be an interesting aspect to consider when examining their willingness or resistance they have toward using new media technologies such as social media in their media work. The community producers however could not (or would not) answer how social media had impacted their media work, additionally it was difficult to accurately assess whether or not the community producers' adoption of social media had impacted on their media work based on the limited time spent observing the producers while they worked. However, upon reflection, it is possible that a reason why they might not be aware of whether social media has shaped their work practices due to the structure of the production team whereby each producer is responsible for producing only one of three days that the program aired. While

each of the community producers indicated that they saw social media as a valuable tool for tasks such as researching content and potential news stories for the program, it is unclear whether they truly understood or grasped how the use of social media in their daily work practices and routines has, and can, impact their media work. This is not to criticize the way in which the community producers were observed using social media throughout the observation period, rather, it stands as an overall observation made throughout this study that questions whether the impact of social media adoption can be definitively answered. The public service producers also did not explicitly comment on whether they thought that their use of social media in their daily work practices and routines impacted on their media work. However, two of the producers indicated that using social media while at work has become 'second hand' to them – indicating that they had found a way to effectively integrate social media practices in their daily media work.

It became apparent that while the producer of the commercial program was explicitly told by management they it was required of her to use social media in her work practices, the producers of the community and public service program were not necessarily formally informed; rather, it was implied by management and other staff members. The commercial producer indicated in her interview that while she found the use of social media to be useful in doing her daily media work, she along with the other employees at the radio station, were given a directive from management to use social media in their daily work practices and routines. Similarly, the community producers indicated that while their use of social media was not always an explicit directive of management, it was implied that they incorporate social media into their daily work practices and routines. The public service producers also indicated that the use of social media in their daily media work was implicitly significant due to the media organisations' new emphasis on social media policies and guidelines. In a similar way, the presenter of the public service program suggested in an informal conversation that the use of social media was expected of each member of the production team, including herself (see p. 83). While it was conveyed that the use of social media was indeed a directive of management, it was abundantly clear that each of the producers

were comfortable and knowledgeable in using multiple social media websites. This may be not only a reflection of their personal use of social media but also of our time - where Internet and social media technologies have become increasingly pervasive in the personal and work lives of humans. I can only assume that while adopting social media into their work practices and routines has increased the workloads of the radio producers involved in this study, by already using social media technologies socially, the transition may not have been considered such a major shift in how they go about their media work. Each of the responses give by the producers across the three broadcasting sectors suggest that workplaces are increasingly expecting that their staff adopt and integrate new media technologies such as social media into their daily work practices and routines. However it was clear within this study that each of the producers were already using social media to different extents in their personal lives which correlates to their use of social media in their work practices and routines.

In discussing the expectations of media organisations that staff use social media in their work practices and routines, it is also important to consider the resistance of journalists in adopting new technologies as described by scholars such as Snowden (2006). An example of what could be considered resistance to adopting new media technologies was found within an informal conversation with several journalists at the commercial station. The journalists expressed that they felt as though they were in a way 'forced' to adopt new media technologies into their media work, not necessarily from a management point of view, but in order to keep up with the journalists and media organisations around them. One journalist in particular commented that while they were already using Internet and social media technologies in their work practices, and generally saw them as useful tools, they didn't feel as comfortable with using such technologies as they didn't use them readily in their personal lives when compared to other journalists they worked with.

This section of the chapter has discussed the integration of social media into the work practices and routines of the participants in this study and has considered

the expectation placed on employees to actively use social media in their daily media work. The next section of this chapter explores the amount of time that was spent on social media by the producers in this study and highlights an interesting and unexpected finding concerning the preferences each of the producers had toward particular social media websites.

### **5.3 Time spent on social media and the individual preferences of producers**

Another significant finding made within this study was that the radio producers across the three broadcasting sectors spent a significant amount of their time using social media services for various reasons such as gathering information, interacting with listeners, and promoting their programs. It is therefore important to consider that the radio producers placed a high importance on social media use in pre-promoting their program and interacting with their audience, both of which have undoubtedly become part of their media work. This section of the chapter explores the amount of time spent on social media by the radio producers in this study and considers whether the time they spent on social media takes away from the time they would otherwise spend on other associated work roles.

The producers across the three broadcasting sectors used social media before, during, and after the program aired for a number of reasons; however they centered on information gathering, program pre-promotion, and audience interaction. This study found that the selected producers across the three broadcasting sectors used social media heavily within their daily media work and that there were clear preferences amongst them in terms of which social media websites they used and what they used them for. However, due to the limited time spent observing each production team, it is difficult to definitively catalogue how radio producers prioritise social media for different uses; therefore further study in this area would prove useful in adding to the existing scholarship concerning social media uses by radio program producers.

Following on from this, I found that the radio producers in this study each appeared to have their own social media preference, a finding that is closely related to how much time each producer spent on social media as part of their daily media work. During the observation period, it was evident that each of the producers across the broadcasting sectors had a clear preference for which social media website they used most – whether that was Facebook or Twitter. In commencing the fieldwork, I realised that my own work experience as a radio producer influenced my assumptions regarding the use of social media by the radio producers involved in this study; and therefore influenced the generalised assumptions I had made regarding social media use and preference amongst the participants.

The commercial and public service radio producers appeared to use Facebook and Twitter more or less equally, particularly in terms of pre-promoting the program and interacting with their audience as well as searching for potential news topics; with two of the three public service producers noting that at present, they were more inclined to use Twitter. On the other hand, the community producers expressed that even though they each had access to Twitter and Instagram accounts held by the radio station, they each preferred to use Facebook as their primary social media website. The community producers indicated that they preferred to use Facebook to Twitter as they found the Facebook interface to be easier to navigate and use in terms of interacting and engaging with their audience. Additionally and perhaps most interestingly, the producers indicated that while each of them had their own personal Twitter account in addition to their Facebook account, they found themselves using Facebook more in their personal lives, which rolled over into their work habits. Furthermore, at one point one of the producers suggested that Twitter was not an ideal platform for engaging with their audience in particular.

This section has explored the amount of time spent on social media by the radio producers in this study as well as addressed the preferences that each of them have toward particular social media websites and the reasons why they use them. The next section of this chapter explores a finding made within this study

concerning the use of social media websites as a promotional tool for radio producers as well as a means of audience interaction.

#### **5.4 Social media as a tool for pre-promotion and audience interaction**

Another finding made within this study stems from the amount of time each of the producers spent on social media during the observation period and is concerning the use of social media as both a tool for pre-promotion and audience interaction. It was clear that the producers placed a high importance on using social media within their media work to not only pre-promote their almost daily programs, in addition to using social media websites to interact with their audience. This section focuses on these two aspects of social media use as outlined in within the findings of this thesis (see pp. 78-81), and explores what the means in relation to the changing roles of radio producers and the impact on radio work time. Furthermore, this chapter also outlines what I found regarding audience interaction online and participatory relationships.

A significant amount of the producers' time was dedicated to using social media as a means of program pre-promotion and audience interaction (see pp. 78-81). While at first it may have appeared that the producers were preoccupied with using social media for these purposes, drawing on my own experience working as a radio producer and being reliant on social media websites, I found that the producers had each adapted as best they could to the technological climate they were presently working in within convergent newsrooms. It was clear that the producers' use of social media as a tool for both program pre-promotion and audience interaction is in line with continuous advances in Internet and new media technologies in both newsrooms and society, which has propelled the evolution of journalistic work practices and routines. In saying so, an interesting aspect to consider in light of the social media uses of radio producers is that of their changing roles, which are journalistic at their core. While the adoption and integration of social media into the daily work practices and routines of radio producers has contributed in changing the media work of producers and



journalists alike, I suggest that the roles of journalists or more central to this study, radio producers, fundamentally stay the same (see p 64; p. 96).

Radio has a long history of being a participatory medium (see pp. 37-42) ranging from letter writing during the early years of broadcasting, to the development of talk or talkback radio on the 1970s, and to the present day where Internet and new media technologies such as social media have changed the way in which radio stations and their audience interact and communicate. This long history of being a participatory medium highlights radio's ability, and the media professionals that work within radio, to continuously adapt to advances in technologies, an argument presented by both Hardt (1990; see also pp. 10-11; p. 41) and within this thesis. In relation to audience interaction online as well as the participatory relationships created with their audience and other media organisations, it was clear that the radio producers within this study were using social media websites as best they knew how to ensure that they continued upholding the participatory nature of radio. Further, as noted in the previous chapter, the participatory nature of radio coupled with the introduction and popularisation of the use of social media platforms in radio production and audience interaction has meant that the radio producers are indeed maintaining a gatekeeping function as ascribed to professional journalists (see p. 79-80).

It is clear that the use of social media as a means for program pre-promotion and audience interaction is in part due to the continuous developments in Internet technologies that allows users to connect with the 'geographically dispersed' as noted by Cook earlier in this thesis (see p. 41). Furthermore, it is also abundantly clear that using social media in order to pre-promote a radio program as well as interact with an audience highlights the evolving work practices and routines of radio producers and media professionals alike that is especially prevalent amongst converged workers working within converged newsrooms. The next section considers how working within converged newsrooms has meant that the workloads of the radio producers increased, as well as how radio producers and media professionals alike are now required to be multi-skilled when it comes to their ability to adequately use multiple technologies in their media work.

## **5.5 Increasing workloads and the necessity for multiskilling**

The last major finding made within this study was that there were varied opinions amongst the participants concerning whether they believed the adoption and integration of social media in their daily work practices and routines was adding to their labour and workloads. Each of the producers were asked about whether the adoption and integration of social media in their daily work practices and routines had impacted on their media work. The responses given by each of the producers were also considered in terms of access they have to reliable technologies, and factors such as the size and structure of each production team (see pp. 66-69). This section analyses the responses given by the radio producers of this study concerning their increasing workloads as a direct result of integrating and adopting social media in their work practices and routines, before addressing issues concerning multi-skilling, up skilling, and multi-tasking.

The producer of the commercial program was adamant that her adoption and integration of social media into her daily media work had significantly added to her existing workload in terms of using multiple mediums to search for and distribute information. The producer went on to indicate that her workload has increased particularly in terms of how much time she would now spend on pre-promoting the program as well as interacting with the programs' audience via social media and several other online platforms. In addition to using social media, she also noted that she still needed to time spend adequate time on researching stories, putting the program to air, answering phone calls and emails, and making sure that the presenter is doing what they need to (see p. 91). Commenting on her increased workload, the commercial producers stated that using social media within her daily media work has 'definitely added to the workload!' (Producer A).

Similarly to the community producers, two of the three the public service radio producers also indicated that aside from increasing workloads, they were unable to definitively answer whether the adoption of social media was impacting their

media work. This was highlighted by the response given by one of the producers (Producer A) in his interview where he indicated that he did not believe that his use of social media, particularly Twitter, had impacted on his media work. Producer A went on to indicate that he had started to use various social media websites prior to becoming a producer, which meant that using social media websites such as Twitter had always been a part of his workflow; additionally, Producer B also indicated that the use of social media within his work practices and routines were now 'second nature' to him.

The responses by the community producers and two of the three public service producers suggests that as they were accustomed to using social media websites frequently outside of work, they had, in a sense, a greater ability to apply that knowledge to using social media in their work practices and routines; and, therefore not necessarily impacting upon their media work. On the other hand, the responses given by the commercial producer indicate that while they used social media outside of work, they believed that as it came as a directive from management to use social media, they kept on thinking of it as a task as opposed to being 'second nature' to them, as expressed by public service Producer B.

The introduction of Internet and social media technologies has added to the existing workloads and demands of the producers involved in this study. However, following from the statements made by two of the public service producers who commented on social media being 'second nature' to them, the Executive Producer made an interesting point about the apparent necessity to have constant access to the Internet and social media, stating:

If I had no Internet say for a day, or three, say a month, and if I had to read the print version of the [newspaper] everyday I would survive. It's [a matter of] speed [...]; I will feel considerably slowed down in what I do. It's the same if I lost a text message and email, and I had to actually make all the phone calls instead of sending somebody a text message. I will [still be able] do my job after all, that's how I did my job before the arrival of the Internet, but I will probably now feel considerably slowed down and bogged down in something that is a lot more time consuming otherwise. Social media is invaluable, but indispensable? No. If Twitter went down for two days, would my program be [of] considerably less quality? No I don't believe that at all, no.

This response from the public service Executive Producer is particularly interesting as it highlights that the adoption and integration of Internet and new media technologies such as social media websites is encouraged, and has made the work of radio producers and media professionals relatively easier. However as he notes, should such technologies not be available, he would still be able to go about his work practices and routines and ensure that a quality radio program went to air, with an arguably minimal impact on his media work.

In a study of Spanish and British TV journalists working within digital newsrooms, Avilés et al. (2004) suggest that the introduction of digital media work and the notion of multi-skilling in a digital environment initially was accepted by journalists as means to get jobs done 'more easily', rather than a process that impacts their output of quality news (Avilés et al. 2004, p. 91). However, they later go on to suggest that digitisation in media organisations has an ambivalent impact on journalism, and multi-skilling in journalists can ultimately impact on their work practices and processes:

Multi-skilling leaves journalists less time to fulfill traditional journalistic practices, such as double-checking of sources and finding contextual information. The newly established routines tend to emphasise the importance of speed, which sometimes raises concern about the quality of output. In addition, the fact that technology allows for faster processing of news increases the pressure to be first with the story and to provide more on-the-spot, instantaneous live news, which leaves very little chance to explain context (Avilés et al. 2004, p. 99).

Similarly, Örnebring outlines the results of a Swedish study by Nygren (2008) who found that 'reskilling, multi-skilling and deskilling are occurring simultaneously' (2012, p. 67). Örnebring continues to explore the findings of Nygren's study concerning the de-professionalisation of journalism and asserts that 'More working time is taken up dealing with technical problems, and journalists are becoming more skilled at doing technical tasks' (2012, p. 67). This statement by Örnebring relates to an observation made within this study particularly within the commercial and community radio stations where the producers would have to spend some of their working time dealing with technical issues that have arisen due to the lack of reliable technologies made available to them in their workplaces. Furthermore, Örnebring notes that:

Journalists are required to do more work in less time, but this is generally viewed as the natural state of things, lending weight to Hardt's assertion that technology has been used in news organizations to increase control of the news production process – a *proletarianization* of journalism (2012, pp. 67-68).

This comment by Örnebring is in line with the central themes presented by this thesis that stresses the need to examine how the introduction of Internet and new media technologies in newsrooms continues to impact on the media work of radio producers and journalists alike; in addition to positioning media professionals as early adopters of new communicative technologies (see p. 29).

This section has reviewed how the adoption and integration of social media in the daily work practices and process of radio producers can ultimately lead to increased workloads and the necessity for media professionals to up-skill and multi-skill. The next section provides the concluding remarks for this chapter and highlights the need for continued access to reliable technologies in newsrooms – a major finding made within this study, as well the difficulty of establishing how the adoption and integration of social media in the work practices and routines of radio producers is impacting their media work when examined over a limited length of time that does not necessarily allow for consideration of external factors such as whether the participants are already active users of social media.

## **5.6 Conclusion**

The findings of this study have highlighted that it is difficult to consider how radio producers' adoption of social media has impacted upon their media without considering their access to reliable technologies within newsrooms. This study has also highlighted that social media is not a single medium within the current networked society as discussed by scholars such as Castells (2001; 2009), especially in terms of how technologies are becoming increasingly pervasive and ever-connected especially within the concept of convergence, and convergence in newsrooms. Furthermore, this study has revealed that social media cannot be discussed in isolation, rather, to understand its use within the wider context of contemporary media practices; it is necessary to consider all existing and emerging technologies.

The participants of this study relied heavily on a number of Internet accessible technologies in order to go about their daily work practices and routines. The actions and responses of the commercial radio producer in particular highlighted the constant need for access to reliable technologies; and although the producer was given access to a number of basic technologies, they were not completely reliable and therefore resulted in the producer purchasing an iPad solely for work purposes (see p. 71). I argue that without access to basic and reliable technologies within newsrooms, the media work of radio producers and media professionals is already disadvantaged as they are not able to adequately complete their daily work practices and routines.

Furthermore, an aspect that is also worth consideration was briefly examined earlier in this chapter, and is that of radio producers, journalists, and media professionals who are already actively using social media in their personal lives prior to adopting social media into their work practices. It could be suggested that radio producers or journalists who are very familiar with social media and have a good grasp on how social media websites work, may find the processes of adopting social media into their work routines a simple one; as opposed to someone who may have to learn how to use social media effectively for work purposes. It is also worth noting that the producers involved in this study each indicated that they already used social media in their personal lives. For an analysis to occur which can more accurately explore these aspects however, the fieldwork must be conducted either over an extended period of time, or be revisited on multiple occasions.

In the concluding chapter I provide several recommendations for ways in which future studies can continue to explore the use of Internet and new media technologies; this includes recommendations in relation to how social media websites are being used in news production practices and processes, and how it may or may not impact upon the media work of radio program producers.

## **Chapter 6: Conclusion**

While a considerable amount of scholarly enquiry into media convergence has focused on the apparent crisis facing the print media industry as it moves online and the future of journalism practices, the impact of the Internet and new media technologies on radio production and journalism has been somewhat neglected. This study set out to examine how three news talk program production teams within the community, commercial, and public service broadcasting sectors have integrated and adopted social media in their daily workflows.

In this study I have provided a qualitative ‘snapshot’ of how a selected group of radio producers use Internet and social media technologies in their media work. In doing so, this thesis has sought to add to the literature on media convergence in scholarship by considering radio production work as an evolving form of digital media work. It is through the theoretical framework offered by Deuze (2007) and his seminal text *Media Work*, that I have analysed the ways in which radio producers use social media in key areas of their work practices and routines including program pre-promotion and audience interaction. Further, I have explored the implications of social media use for workload intensification, radio training, and multiskilling.

This chapter outlines the findings of the study that are concerned with the changes currently occurring within journalism and digital media work. It then provides an overview of the micro impacts that the adoption and integration of social media is having on the ability of the radio producers in this study to effectively complete their media work, including issues such as workload intensification.

Finally this concluding chapter suggests future research issues that would be beneficial for consideration, in order to provide a more nuanced understanding of the impact social media on the media work of radio program producers.



## **6.1 The changing nature of journalism and digital media work**

This study has made several key findings regarding the adoption and integration of social media in the daily work practices and routines of radio program producers and their media work. I have found that radio producers, like journalists, have embraced new communication technologies in their workflows to meet the changing demands of their profession. In fact, they now heavily rely on mobile digital media technologies for a variety of reasons such as accessing social media in the studio, to integrate audience contributions into their programs, and as a response to the work intensification that this additional creative work entails.

This thesis has argued alongside scholars such as Hardt (1998) that journalism is an evolutionary profession that is changing alongside the Internet and new media technologies. As Hardt noted regarding the evolutionary nature of journalism - in addition to his arguments which position journalists as the early adopters of technologies - it is important to consider the types of communicative technologies used within the news production process, and their access to varied technologies within the newsrooms. With media professionals becoming increasingly dependent on various communicative technologies in their daily media work, from desktop computers to mobile devices such as laptops, tablets, and smartphones, this ultimately means that they require access to reliable communicative technologies.

Most significantly, this study has found that while radio producers and associated media professionals are using social media websites in their daily workflows, the access they each have to suitably reliable computing technologies remains a contentious issue within media organisations. This was seen most starkly within the commercial and community broadcasting stations where it appeared that in these locations there was not necessarily a high importance being placed on providing reliable computing technologies for their employees. It was also interesting to note that each of the producers within this study, bar one community producer, used their personal communicative devices for work

purposes, with the commercial producer explicitly stating that she had bought a device specifically for work purposes. In this study, I have considered how the use of the producers' personal devices might well be a result the lack of access to reliable computing technologies. However, I made the observation that this was not necessarily the case with the public service producers who, while claiming that they did use their personal smartphones for work purposes, they also indicated that they had access to adequate technologies within their working environment. The study suggests that the access each of the producers had to reliable online and mobile media technologies was foundational to their ability to effectively carry out their media work. I also noted that the specific access each producer had to reliable communicative technologies affected other aspects of their media work, such as their social media uptake and their increasing workloads.

In what can be described as an emerging industry standard operating practice, or perhaps a necessary competitive practice, media organisations are increasingly encouraging the use of social media in the daily work practices and routines of their employees. Further, the use of social media in the daily work practices and routines of journalists or more central to this study, radio program producers, in some cases are *directives* of management – a key finding in this study which is also inherently related to the renewed working expectations placed on convergent news workers. The radio producers in this study were being pushed by management to use social media for a number of purposes including program pre-promoting and audience interaction.

Considering that the use of social media was encouraged amongst employees at each of the three radio stations, and in two cases was a clear directive of management, I suggest that it is therefore an industry requirement for the radio stations to provide access to reliable computing technologies in order for radio producers and associated media professionals to effectively carry out their various roles. Further, I suggest that without access to basic and reliable computing technologies within their converged working environments, the media work of radio producers, and associated media professionals by default,

would be significantly impacted. Another key finding of this study was that radio producers' social media use has increased some individuals' workloads, and is demanding new types of skills and ongoing media training.

The next section of this chapter explores the individual social media usage in the media work of the radio producers involved in this study.

## **6.2 Social media usage in daily media work**

This section of the chapter recaps the way in which the use of social media impacts the daily media work of the radio producers as was noted in Chapter 5, particularly in terms of their increasing workloads.

Several of the radio producers involved in this study indicated that their workload was increasing, and that this was directly related to the use of multiple Internet and new media technologies. The growing attention required to monitor multiple real-time information feeds was exemplified by the studio practices of some of the producers, who would often switch between two or three computer screens while their shows were on air. This highlights the fact that the producers were ultimately required to not only be multi-skilled, but to also up skill themselves in learning how to use various technologies within their daily workflows.

The introduction of Internet and new media technologies such as search engines and social media websites has allowed users to bypass traditional media organisations to search for and access news and information (see also p. 32; p. 95). This may initially suggest that the gatekeeping function of radio producers is somewhat obsolete. However, this study has found that the radio producers observed have taken up *new* gatekeeping functions such as moderating comments on social media channels and filtering contributions for inclusion on air (see p. 95). Further, I suggest that the radio producers' traditionally appointed role of gatekeepers of information continues to evolve, much like their work practices and routines, alongside the continuous introduction of Internet and new media technologies.

The next section of this chapter specifically addresses the central research question posed within this study: *'How do radio producers' adoption and integration of social media in their daily work practices and routines impact on their media work?'*

### **6.3 Is the adoption and integration of social media impacting on radio producers' media work?**

The question therefore remains whether the adoption and integration of social media in the daily work practices and routines of radio producers is impacting on the media work of the radio producers involved in this study. The answer to this question, as suggested within this thesis is *yes*, but in ways that are more subtle and complicated than I first expected. Further, there are multiple factors to consider including whether the participants used social media outside of a work context, whether their personal social media preferences influenced the social media habits they formed at work, and whether station management influenced their use of social media in their workflows.

This study has explored how the specific use of social media impacted the media work of radio producers across the three broadcasting sectors. It sought to determine whether there was any difference in how each of the production teams integrated and adopted social media practices in their media work. In doing so, it has uncovered that there are impacts on the media work of radio program producers, however these may not be the same in all workplaces, or for all producers.

The access each production team had to reliable computing technologies however, was a major factor to consider in terms of how they were each able to efficiently conduct their daily media work. Further, the access to reliable technologies at each radio station was a controversial issue particularly amongst the commercial and community radio producers, whose access to reliable technologies was limited (see pp. 70-73).

The findings of this study, based admittedly on its relatively small scope, suggests that there is no definitive way to determine how the adoption and integration of social media in the daily work practices and routines of radio producers impacts their media work without more extensive research over a longer period of time, and a larger industry sample of radio producers.

Finally, I want to turn to future research issues that could be explored in order to provide a more comprehensive analysis of the adoption and integration of social media by radio producers and the impact it has on their media work.

#### **6.4 Considering future research issues**

This thesis has sought to reduce the current gap in scholarship concerning radio production and the introduction of Internet and new media technologies. It has done this by examining how the adoption and integration of social media websites in the daily work practices and routines of radio program producers has impacted on their media work.

As noted in the concluding remarks of Chapter 5 it is important to understand that 'social media' is not a unified medium within the current networked society as discussed by scholars such as Castells (2001; 2009). Therefore it is also important that social media is not discussed as an isolated medium; rather, it needs to be positioned within the wider context of contemporary media practices where its place amongst all existing and emerging technologies is considered in relation to media convergence.

My research has confirmed the earlier work of scholars such as Hardt (1998) and more recently reiterated by Deuze (2007); it recognises there must be an insistence on a new understanding of journalism as advances in Internet and new media technologies such as social media continue to shape the media work of radio producers, journalists, and media professionals alike. Further, it is important to consider the variety of access that radio producers and media

professionals alike have to computing technologies in order to complete their daily media work.

While media professionals still maintain their positions as 'key accelerators' of communication technologies (Deuze 2007, p. 68), recently, Deuze suggests that a paradox is created:

[...] as people engage in media in an increasingly immersive, always-on, almost instantaneous, and interconnected way, the very people whose livelihood and sense of professional identity depend on delivering media content and experiences seem to be at a loss on how to come up with survival strategies – in terms of business models, effective regulatory practices (for example regarding copyrights and universal access provisions), and perhaps, most significantly, the organization of entrepreneurial working conditions that would support and sustain the creative process needed to meet the demands of media life (2014, para, 21).

This observation by Deuze notes that the media work of media professionals, who Hardt regarded as the earliest adopters of new communications technologies (1998), continue to evolve with the introduction of various Internet and new media technologies; even when facing industry transformations and media convergence.

This study has provided a 'snapshot' of contemporary media practices of three radio production teams working across the commercial, community, and public service broadcasting sectors. In order to provide a more comprehensive analysis of the impact that social media may have on the media work of radio producers, future studies need to be conducted over a longer period of time, with case studies that examine specific radio programs or broadcasting sectors, with a larger sample of participants.

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## **Appendix One: Participant Information Statement**

### **News and Radio: Social media Adoption and integration by @RadioProducers and its impact on their #MediaWork**

#### **PARTICIPANT INFORMATION STATEMENT**

**(1) What is the study about?**

You are invited to participate in a study of how the adoption and integration of social media by radio program producers in their daily media work impacts on their media work. This study aims to offer a new perspective on the current scholarship available within the fields of media and journalism studies regarding how the integration and use of social media impacts on the media work of radio program producers.

**(2) Who is carrying out the study?**

The study is being conducted by Annita Becirevic as part of the degree of Master of Philosophy at the University of Sydney under the supervision of Dr Tim Dwyer.

**(3) What does the study involve?**

As an initial means of gauging the use of the Internet and social networking websites in radio news production, the researcher will initially observe the participants in their work environments. The observation will last approximately two (2) to three (3) days, while participants prepare the program for broadcast and then also as it goes to air. This will not interfere with participants while they are working and will serve as a means of understanding Internet and social media usage in the production of radio news content.

Participants will partake in individual face-to-face semi-structured interviews, which will run for approximately 30-45 minutes in length. These interviews are an integral part of this research project allowing the researcher to question radio producers about their use of the Internet and social networking sites in the news production process. Each interview will be audio-recorded with consent and participants will have access to their transcript should one be requested. Participants will be asked questions regarding their use of the internet and social networking platforms in the production process of news talk and current affairs content, as well as questions concerning how new media technologies may negatively or positively impact on their work processes as media professionals.

Participants in this study will not be interviewed as 'agents' or 'representatives' of the organisation, but as professionals working within radio production or as experts in academic journalism and media studies. All viewpoints and comments by the participants will only be used as a reflection of their personal experience and not of their organisation.

There are no substantial risks attached to participating in this research project. The confidence of each participant will be honoured.

**(4) How much time will the study take?**

The participant observation will take approximately two (2) to three (3) days in length and the individual interviews will take approximately 30-45 minutes to complete.

**(5) Can I withdraw from the study?**

Being in this study is completely voluntary - you are not under any obligation to consent and - if you do consent - you can withdraw at any time

You may stop the interview at any time if you do not wish to continue, the audio recording will be erased and the information provided will not be included in the study.

**(6) Will anyone else know the results?**

All aspects of the study, including interview data and results, will be strictly confidential and only the researchers will have access to the information provided by the participants.

A report of the study may be submitted for publication, but individual participants will not be identifiable in such a report.

**(7) Will the study benefit me?**

We cannot and do not guarantee or promise that you will receive any benefits from the study.

**(8) Can I tell other people about the study?**

Yes.

**(9) What if I require further information about the study or my involvement in it?**



When you have read this information, Annita Becirevic is happy to discuss it with you further and answer any questions you may have. If you would like to know more at any stage, please feel free to contact Annita Becirevic (M: 0406 751 822 or email: [abec8970@uni.sydney.edu.au](mailto:abec8970@uni.sydney.edu.au)) or Dr Tim Dwyer (Ph: 02 9036 5058 or email: [timothy.dwyer@sydney.edu.au](mailto:timothy.dwyer@sydney.edu.au)).

**(10) What if I have a complaint or any concerns?**

Any person with concerns or complaints about the conduct of a research study can contact The Manager, Human Ethics Administration, University of Sydney on +61 2 8627 8176 (Telephone); +61 2 8627 8177 (Facsimile) or [ro.humanethics@sydney.edu.au](mailto:ro.humanethics@sydney.edu.au) (Email).

This information sheet is for you to keep

## Appendix Two: Participant Consent Form

### PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM

I, .....[PRINT NAME], give consent to my participation in the research project

#### **News and Radio: Social media adoption and integration by @RadioProducers and its impact on their #MediaWork**

In giving my consent I acknowledge that:

1. The procedures required for the project and the time involved have been explained to me, and any questions I have about the project have been answered to my satisfaction.
2. I have read the Participant Information Statement and have been given the opportunity to discuss the information and my involvement in the project with the researcher/s.
3. I understand that being in this study is completely voluntary – I am not under any obligation to consent.
4. I understand that my involvement is strictly confidential. I understand that any research data gathered from the results of the study may be published however no information about me will be used in any way that is identifiable.
5. *I understand that I can withdraw from the study at any time, without affecting my relationship with the researcher(s) or the University of Sydney now or in the future.*
6. I understand that I can stop the interview at any time if I do not wish to continue, the audio recording will be erased and the information provided will not be included in the study.
7. *I consent to:*

- |                      |     |                          |    |                          |
|----------------------|-----|--------------------------|----|--------------------------|
| • Audio-recording    | YES | <input type="checkbox"/> | NO | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • Receiving Feedback | YES | <input type="checkbox"/> | NO | <input type="checkbox"/> |

If you answered YES to the "Receiving Feedback" question, please provide your details i.e. mailing address, email address.

**Feedback Option**

**Address:** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Email:** \_\_\_\_\_

.....  
Signature

.....  
Please PRINT name

.....  
Date