"Thank god for Deadspin"

Eldridge II, Scott

"Thank god for *Deadspin*": Interlopers, metajournalistic commentary, and fake news through the lens of "journalistic realization"

Scott A Eldridge II
University of Groningen, The Netherlands

Abstract

Interlopers are a class of digital-peripheral journalists and outlets who position their work as journalism, but who have struggled to be recognized as such. While we have long acknowledged journalism's place online, as digital-peripheral journalists interlopers face challenges when it comes to appreciating their work as news and their contributions as journalism. This article argues their contributions warrant further evaluation as the journalistic field continues to confront change and engage new approaches to journalism, and as interlopers continue to produce news. Using *Deadspin*'s coverage of the Sinclair Broadcast Group as an exemplar of such contributions, this article details an approach which accounts for interlopers' unique approaches to news, locating in broader news discourse measures of "journalistic realization" as a legitimating discourse. Its findings tentatively suggest a weakening of historically hardened boundaries between journalism's core and its periphery, and argue for continued, nuanced exploration of the nature of the journalistic field.

Keywords

Boundary work, *Deadspin*, fake news, journalistic field, journalistic realization, metajournalistic commentary, Sinclair

Corresponding author:
Scott A Eldridge II, Centre for Media and Journalism Studies, University of Groningen, P.O. Box 716, 9700 AS Groningen, The Netherlands.
Email: s.a.eldridge.ii@rug.nl

Introduction

On 31 March 2018, Timothy Burke, at the time *Deadspin*'s Video Director, posted a video splicing together dozens of clips of local US TV news reporters reading a script, the same script, decrying bias and "fake news" and asserting their reporting was better than the rest. According to earlier reporting, these anchors were told by the stations' owners, Sinclair Broadcasting Group, these were "must-read" scripts (Stelter, 2018). While some reporters refused to read the scripts and some stations publicly complained, many followed through and Burke's video, posted on *Concourse*, a *Deadspin* subsite, introduced one clip after another of local news anchors reading the specified text, juxtaposing more and more clips of local TV journalists reciting the same lines until the screen filled with a mosaic of local news broadcast footage and layered audio highlighting the scale of this mandated groupspeak. As the cacophony grows, the reporters read aloud: "This is extremely dangerous to a democracy."

Sinclair owns or operates upward of 170 local television stations in the United States. It has a history of pushing conservative content, and famously considered running a lengthy political attack piece against John Kerry days before he lost the 2004 US presidential election to George W. Bush (CNN, 2004a, 2004b). While it is criticized for mixing national politics and local news provision by some, in conservative circles Sinclair is often praised, including by Donald Trump who has described Sinclair as being "far superior"[1] to CNN or NBC which he derides (often) as "Fake" and "a total joke." That Trump regularly uses "Fake News"[2] as a cudgel against news coverage he disagrees with and that Sinclair frequently promotes commentary in support of his presidency (including "must-run" pieces by former Trump advisor Boris Epshteyn) suggests more than coincidence in the tone of these must-read scripts decrying fake news. It is a comparison not lost on observers of U.S. news media, and one made explicit by Timothy Burke and *Deadspin*.

Alongside Burke's video, the *Deadspin* post calls attention to the more-than-coincidental nature of these scripted pieces deriding "Fake News" in terms similar to Trump's, showcasing an increasingly powerful media owner pushing a specific political message through local television news. *Deadspin*'s video was shared widely, seen on the *Guardian* and the HBO show *Last Week Tonight*, and on sites like *BuzzFeed* and *Mashable*. It was shared on Twitter where celebrities re-tweeted it, widening its reach. The following week it was used to kick off a discussion of Sinclair's conservative bent on the podcast *Pod Saves America* (2018), where Tommy Vietor remarked, "Thank god for *Deadspin*. We didn't expect them to call a foul on this one." It begs the question: "Why not?."

At first glance, the "unexpectedness" of *Deadspin*'s holding Sinclair's power to account seems to reference its digital nature, and how its approach to news goes "under the radar" in wider news conversations—Jon Lovett, on the same podcast, makes just such an observation. Yet this story did not go wholly under the radar, and the ways in which it was reacted to help us understand how digital actors engaging with journalism in provocative ways are contributing to the journalistic field. This article positions *Deadspin* under the umbrella of interloper media, a subset of digitally native media and journalistic actors who originate from outside the boundaries of the traditional journalistic field, but

whose work nevertheless reflects the socio-informative functions, identities, and roles of journalism. Interlopers differ from other digitally native news sites offering innovative approaches to journalism in online spaces (Küng, 2015), as they are further defined by an often-explicit critical metadiscourse on traditional journalism (Carlson, 2016), describing their own work as a "better approximation of journalistic ideals" (Eldridge, 2018: 83). While past work has shown interlopers' contributions to news and journalism are often dismissed as beyond the boundaries of the field (Eldridge, 2014), this article argues that interlopers' success at injecting news into public conversations provides cause for reconsidering such boundaries. "Journalistic realization" is a conceptualization of this dynamic, referring to the way news texts reflect either peer legitimation or marginalization of interlopers' journalistic contributions. This is offered here as one way of assessing interlopers' newswork as achieving journalistic ends when it provides the substantive basis for wider news coverage.

Interlopers: antagonists in the journalistic field

When considering whether interlopers are antagonists toward the core of the journalistic field, or contributors to the same, it is useful to first consider what they are up against. This begins by seeing journalism as a field of social actors, consolidated around a traditional core. Drawing from Bourdieu's work on the journalistic field (Bourdieu, 2005) and practice theory (Bourdieu, 1977), we can see journalism as a field of cultural production and of societal power, confident in the service it performs but also indebted to a public recognizing that its societal contribution—news—is valuable. In order to do so, the journalistic field and the actors within it are engaged in crafting its visions for two "audiences"—one vision guiding internal belonging, or field coherence, and the other for external, public, appreciation of what journalism offers.

In maintaining the field, journalists as the field's constituent members prioritize certain visions of journalism over others. Bourdieu (2005) describes this as part of an effort to have the field's vision of the social world seen as legitimate (pp. 36–37). This is achieved in part by asserting within the field's own structures a sense of vision and division; a sense of what it is to belong and, inversely, what is ill-fitting. This is the field's *nomos* (Bourdieu, 2005: 32), and it too is dually directed. Internally, it shapes the field for its members, offering a center point which guides practice. Externally, it is projected toward publics to distinguish journalism from other societal fields. This has resulted in an idea of what journalism is described through a relative agreement of the societal status journalism holds (Donsbach, 2010: 38). But this is also a conservative vision—in terms of ambitions, rather than its politics—which can imagine journalism somewhat narrowly, resulting in boundaries which exclude new types of news actors (Benson and Neveu, 2005: 5). As a field, the emphasis on internal cohesion and external appreciation reflects the social construction of journalism's societal space as distinct. This contributes to the structures of the journalistic *habitus* and the unspoken but influential dispositions of the journalistic *doxa* (Bourdieu, 2005: 42; Schultz, 2007). The *habitus* in particular is reflected in journalists' conceptions of their societal roles, highlighted in studies including Hanitzsch's (2011), which find journalists around the world expressing their work as journalism in these and similar terms:

Journalism is: 1) sharing of news as fact-based information, 2) with a public in their interest, 3) built on expertise, 4) as integral to democratic societies.

As "criteria of belonging," these both shape the dispositions and practices of journalists and they are also narrated to the public within news texts through "performances" of journalism which reflect these criteria (Broersma, 2010). This is done in ways which emphasize an idealized, dominant, understanding of journalism, and contribute to the way publics understand journalism and its importance and what is to be anticipated from journalistic actors. However, such efforts, while evident in news content (Eldridge, 2017), are not regimented. Furthermore, while they offer a shared perception of journalism, they have not led to fixed notions of what journalism is; Donsbach (2010) describes this as the large "gap between its undisputed importance for the whole of society and the perception of its borders, structures and competencies" (p. 38).

Boundaried or boundless: revisiting the journalistic field

To understand this gap, and in particular the "perceptions of its borders," journalism studies have in recent years opened up new ways of thinking about journalism's boundaries, including boundaries between those easily seen as journalism and those who wish to *also* be seen as journalism (Lewis, 2012). This is the ambition of this article as well. The literature on boundaries is extensive, with notable studies finding British professional journalists distinguishing themselves from paparazzi (Berkowitz, 2000) through discursive boundaries "meant to be seen" (Bishop, 1999: 91). Elsewhere, boundaries have been employed to excise "bad apples" and preserve a positive appraisal of journalism (Cecil, 2002), and to reinforce shared imaginations of what it is to belong (Carlson and Berkowitz, 2014).

As the field of journalism started to contend with digital actors, so too did boundary research. Work moved from locating "overt" boundaries between good and bad journalism toward finding boundaries between in- and out-groups of journalism through "covert" discourses reacting to new claimants of journalistic identities (Eldridge, 2013, 2014). Boundaries emerge in these contexts as reactions to change, with a traditional in-group reinforcing exclusivity over the journalistic realm through "media-to-media conversations [which] demark both the norms of appropriate practice and help define which organizations and media forms […] are part of the journalistic in-group" (Berkowitz and Liu, 2016: 157). From this body of work, we are unsurprised when traditional journalists project their work as exclusively journalism and when they portray digital-peripheral actors as otherwise. This reflects, "how dominant voices set the terms of belonging to the journalistic field, and how subversive voices are outside the field's parameters" (Eldridge, 2018: xi).

Boundaries are not inherent, though. They too are reflective of the social construction of the field, based in part on the assertion of boundaries by dominant actors whose status allows them to make such assertions. Boundaries around the journalistic field are also neither stable nor simply agreed to, even among dominant voices. Rather, they reflect power dynamics and agreed-upon "complicities" which mollify minor differences in the interest of solidarity, a smoothing over which allowed journalism to exist as a (largely) consolidated profession in the 20th century (Bourdieu, 2005: 36; Waisbord, 2013).

Benson (2006) sees this through Bourdieu's description of a struggle between "dominants" and "pretenders" toward crafting the field's dimensions, its boundaries (p. 188). In this scenario, the field is shaped more by some actors—dominants—than others, due to traditional journalistic actors throwing greater specific (or symbolic) weight at shaping an idea of what journalism "is," for both peers and publics (Benson and Neveu, 2005; Bourdieu, 2005: 43). At the simplest level, this is because traditional actors are better known (Benson and Neveu, 2005: 5), leaving them better able to effectively dictate the prevailing vision of a field compared to those who are new. This favors legacy media over digital upstarts. Joining fields with boundaries, the dominant vision can act as a bulwark against others vying to have their picture of the social world seen as "legitimate" (Bourdieu, 2005: 36), and further as a means of enforcing field cohesion. However, cohesion in this scenario is also a form of exclusion and in particular lessens the opportunity for new digital actors to be regarded as journalistic peers.

This review outlines a picture of journalism confronting change. However, it is only one facet of change (Deuze and Witschge, 2017), and as digital-peripheral actors *also* portray their practices as journalism, it becomes increasingly complex. While it would beggar belief to suggest the boundaries of the journalistic field have been rendered moot, we are nevertheless confronted by questions of their utility and encouraged to explore whether the lines between "dominants" and "pretenders" are reflective of a more dynamic journalistic field. Boundaries, while meaningful, also fail to account for digital actors' embrace of informative journalistic roles and favor extant power over emerging contributions which may yet "reorganize competition" within the field (Benson, 2006: 198). While we can expect to find boundaries between journalism's core and its peripheries, and are unsurprised when we do, the work here advocates pushing beyond locating boundaries to try and develop ways of *also* seeing journalism in digital-peripheral newswork. Boundaries, in this case, are useful reflections of power dynamics, while offering limited opportunities for weighing journalistic successes of interlopers as they presuppose their non-belonging.

Digital-peripheral journalism: antagonists toward journalistic boundaries

To be certain, a too-narrow imagination of the journalistic field was already under review in the 20th century, as contrasting narratives of commercial priorities and public service became apparent (Gans, 2010). This has only intensified as digital media have opened doors to new media actors claiming journalistic roles. Among online actors making such claims, interlopers implicitly and explicitly express their journalistic identities, intentions, and news performances as in service to society (Belair-Gagnon, and Holton, 2018), reinforcing a familiar understanding of journalistic roles while rejecting a "conservative vision" toward meeting journalistic ends. Defying the prevailing "narrative that journalism need adopt a non-adversarial sober voice," interlopers argue their willingness to push back against structures of power, including powerful news media, is wholly in line with tenets of the journalistic field (Eldridge, 2018: xi).

This antagonistic embodiment of journalism can be tied to many interlopers' roots in blogging culture, where news is often a mix of independent reporting and metajournalistic commentary on content from across the broader media environment. Blogging

journalists signal through hyperlinks, embedded tweets, and video, news narratives they wish to amplify and those they wish to assail (cf. Deuze, 2006; Shirky, 2008). As Carlson (2017b) writes, blogging journalists "depart from the isolated and impersonal tone of conventional news to instead stress the personality of the writer and signal connections to others through copious linking and quoting" (p. 73). Such connections allow digital-peripheral news sites to engage more actively with their publics, which Shirky (2008) places at the center of the community-oriented culture of journalistic blogging and which Sue Robinson (2015) finds in comments sections as part of the back-and-forth between online journalists and their readership.

Deadspin draws on such a heritage. Its origin within the Gawker Media Group (GMG), now Gizmodo Media Group,[3] combines blogging culture with a tabloid discourse and an active community of readers (Denton, 2016). GMG sites—including *Deadspin, Jezebel, Gizmodo*, and *Splinter*—publish content which holds power to account, presented in service to their readers' civic and social lives, and engage "signals" and "connections" by sharing, linking, and commenting extensively. GMG content also frequently calls out mainstream media for falling short of journalistic ideals (*Gawker*, 2016; Greenwell, 2018). They have a reputation for doing so in ways which push the boundaries of decency. One example of this is Tom Scocca's response to the *New York Post*'s inaccurate suggestion that two men in a video still from a surveillance camera were the 2013 Boston marathon bombers in a front-page splash, headlined "Bag Men" (Eldridge, 2018: 132–133). In Scocca's response, he calls the *Post*'s defense of its front-page "legalistic horseshit," excoriating then-editor Col Allan for using weasely language which distanced the *Post* from any direct accusation of guilt. Using a similar "legalistic horseshit" style, Scocca (2013) critiques Allan's decision, posing worsening hypotheticals as to how such a decision on the front page could have been made.

Scocca's piece is foremost a critique of Allan's editorial acumen, but he uses an overtly ribald approach unlikely to be found in traditional news to make his point. It is a showcase of how *Gawker* "specialised in irreverent web journalism" (Reed, 2016), and while there has been a slight tonal shift among its peer sites since *Gawker*'s shuttering, GMG content still incorporates such critique. This is an aspect of particular interest among scholars looking at shifting boundaries of journalism, as digital journalists position themselves as both outspoken adherents to journalistic paradigms and as irritants toward those they seen as failing to reflect journalistic values (Eldridge, 2018; Carlson and Lewis, 2015). Further examples within GMG sites can be found when Burke himself describes his job with *Deadspin* as "making weird dumb shit for your amusement, and [I] apologize in advance for any future wars, media or otherwise, that may result from their publication" (Burke, 2018), and when *Splinter News*' News Editor Katherine Krueger (2018) offers "another entry in the long list of Elite Washington Journalists groveling at the feet of the Trump administration," under a story headlined "Axios Can Fuck Right Off."

As much as these examples signal irreverence, they also highlight the importance of a critical metajournalistic discourse within digital-peripheral journalism. The result of this is twofold. On one hand, such commentary from digital-peripheral journalists can result in interlopers being dismissed by the objects of their critique (other journalists) as "just a blog," something digital and different and therefore insufficiently journalistic and not to

be taken seriously. Alternatively, they can be regarded positively, as independent from and not beholden to the larger forces and structures of the journalistic field. While the difference between these two appraisals can reflect a line between traditional and digital actors, it can also reflect ideological divisions (with certain digital journalists more likely to be considered positively by certain media, and vice versa). This was raised by Margaret Sullivan (2013), then the public editor of *The New York Times*, noting *Times* journalists' disregard for blogging journalists as "not quite one of us" ignored their contributions to news and holding power to account, though it was reflective of a certain discomfort among traditional journalists with the activist approaches digital journalists often adopt. Sullivan remarks, "not being one of us" is a categorization bloggers "may be just fine with," as it signals their specific difference from those they critique for being too close to those in power. Or, as Jane Singer's (2003) "who are these guys?" study points out, we can see news bloggers and digital-peripheral actors following in their footsteps as an affront to journalism in part because they confront familiar ideas of journalism. In doing so, they also challenge us to reflect on what constitutes journalism in a digital age.

Introducing "journalistic realization"

In examining boundaries between digital outsiders and a journalistic core, this article suggests one way to explore distinctions between journalism's core and its peripheries is to look at whether work emerging from the periphery of the field is legitimated, or not, within the field's core. "Journalistic realization" offers one assessment of this by analyzing not only whether interlopers' work is referenced by journalistic peers but also how their contributions are discussed qualitatively, either legitimated as the work of a journalistic peer—where interloper work is "realized" positively as news—or dismissed as the work of outsiders through a "what-a-story" narrative. This was briefly introduced among six concepts for considering digital-peripheral actors as within (or without) the journalistic field, put forward as ways of understanding an increasingly dynamic journalistic field (Eldridge, 2018). In this article, the framework for understanding realization is enhanced through a systematic mapping of media-to-media discourses and through more granular case analysis.

Realization as what-a-story

Under journalistic realization, boundary-building narratives emerge when in traditional news content from the core of the field, digital interlopers and their work are described as something novel and different, and this difference is emphasized. This is defined here as "realization as what-a-story." This adapts Tuchman's (1976) description of journalists' responding to attention-grabbing news stories through pronounced role performances, which intensify at moments of crisis or confrontation to "maintain and restore the core tenets of the culture's beliefs" of what journalism is (Berkowitz, 2000: 125). In this case, efforts to "maintain and restore" the culture's belief of journalism in the face of interlopers come in the form of discourses minimizing interlopers' work. Such discourses focus predominantly on interlopers' digital nature (their "digital novelty"), rather than on their newswork (Figure 1).
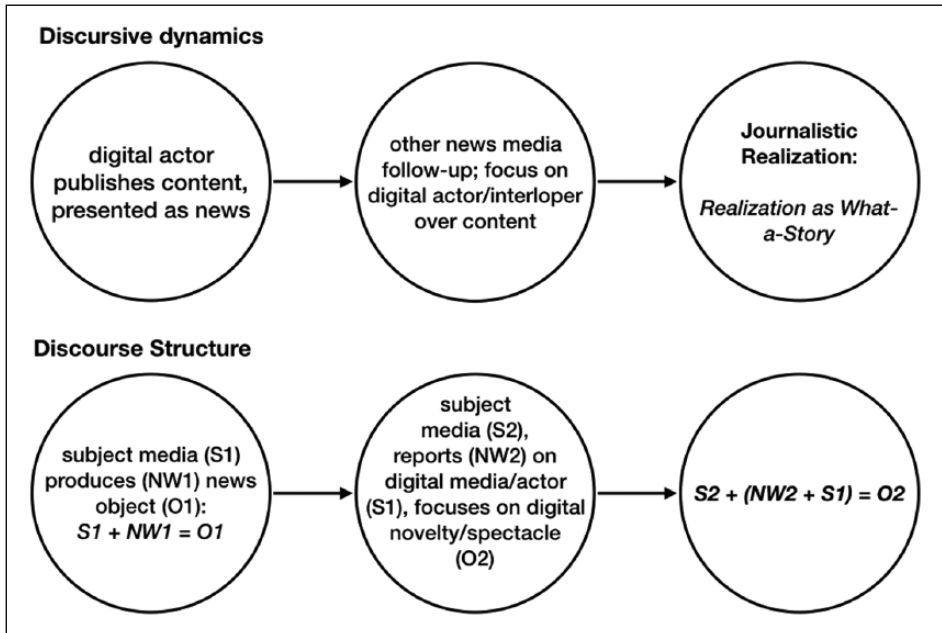
Figure 1. Realized as what-a-story.

"What-a-story" discourses reinforcing journalistic boundaries are found in the coverage of WikiLeaks' early work, delegitimating its claims of journalistic belonging by describing WikiLeaks instead as on the journalistic fringe (Eldridge, 2017; Wahl-Jorgensen, 2014). Similarly, early political bloggers were portrayed as "fleas on the dog" of journalism, cast as outsiders even when driving news agendas (Carr, 2008). They are also found in news content which amplifies traditional newswork by journalists working on stories with strong digital or data components, such as "megaleaks" (Eldridge, 2017). In these cases, "what a story" discourses draw a boundary between traditional journalists and those seen as outside the field. However, these discourses can also convey valid critique, including in coverage excoriating *Gawker* for unnecessarily salacious stories (Tandoc and Jenkins, 2016) and WikiLeaks for promoting a digital leak which instead fizzled as "media hype" (Eldridge, 2018: 160). Here, digital-peripheral actors positioning their work as journalism are marginalized for attention-grabbing sensationalism, contravening core tenets of the field.

Realization as news

A positive appraisal of digital-peripheral newswork can alternatively be described as "realization as news" when news discourses legitimate digital-peripheral actors' contributions as authoritative, particularly when interlopers' work is built upon in further coverage by other recognized journalistic actors. In these cases, adept reporting by digital-peripheral actors is elevated in coverage which emphasizes their contributions,
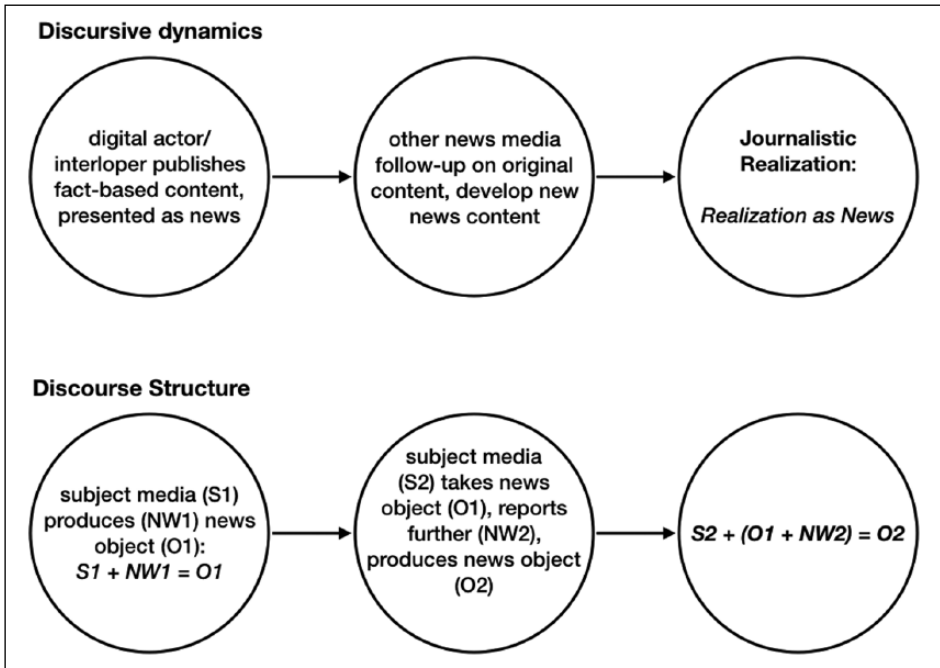
Figure 2. Realization as news.

rather than emphasizing their digital status. This is a legitimating discourse, reinforcing interlopers' claims of belonging and the journalistic authority they express (Figure 2).

This type of discourse has been found when *Gizmodo* revealed human editors tailoring Facebook's "Trending Topics" (Carlson, 2017a) and when *Gawker* revealed the US State Department's private emails with journalists. Both stories sparked follow-up coverage by the *New York Times, The Washington Post*, and others, building on *Gawker*'s (2016) and *Gizmodo*'s initial reporting.

To explore journalistic realization and the portrayal of digital-peripheral journalism within traditional news media, this article asks how interlopers are addressed within news coverage:

> *RQ1.* How are interlopers' informative contributions "realized" within the context of the journalistic field?

Methodological framework

"Journalistic realization" is found in textual representations of journalistic performances by one media within the content of another, assessed through qualitative close reading alongside structured textual analysis of media-to-media discourses. Employing Anabela Carvalho's (2008) textual analysis framework allows us to look at the portrayal of news
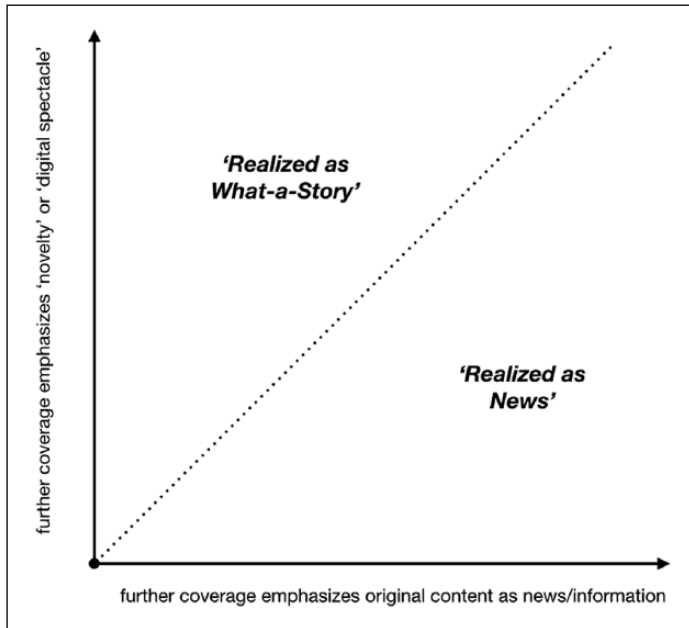
Figure 3. A mapping schema for journalistic realization.

actors for how "Actors are then both subjects—they do things—and objects—they are talked about" (p. 168). In terms of "realization as news," this is found within a positive emphasis of interlopers' newswork—when the "things they do" are the focus of coverage. Alternatively, when content focuses on interlopers as objects of coverage—when they are primarily talked about—they are minimized through rhetorical distancing (Carvalho, 2008: 169). This highlights their outsider status. In the schema below (Figure 3), legitimating discourses are mapped further along the *x*-axis and delegitimating discourses higher along the *y*-axis.

This study focuses on the 10 days following the publication of *Deadspin*'s video: 31 March to 10 April 2018 to look in-depth at a sample of prominent Anglo-American news media. This article utilizes purposive sample to select stories from CNN, *The New York Times*, and *The Washington Post*, where coverage of Sinclair was observed, as well as within the GMG sites *Jezebel, Splinter News*, and *Deadspin* (Table 1).

Analysis focuses on textual (i.e. discursive treatment of *Deadspin*'s work) and intertextual dimensions (i.e. uses of links, images, embedded artifacts) to present a picture of the subsequent coverage of the *Deadspin* post. This incorporates narrative structural mapping of texts to reflect the discourse structures highlighted above (Figures 1 and 2) by annotating quoted texts from the articles being analyzed per media to guide interpretation. In diagramming texts, annotations are relational, made between the media being analyzed and the way they reference *Deadspin*'s original post. Subjects are noted as (**S**), the verb transition highlighting newswork and journalistic performances as (**NW**), and any media object under discussion as (**O**) (Figures 4 and 5). The specific article is
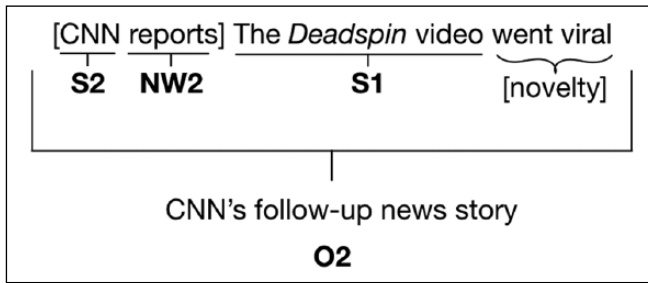
Table 1. Articles analyzed.

ID	Outlet	Date	URL (accessed 25 April 2018)
A	*Deadspin*	31 March 2018	https://theconcourse.deadspin.com/how-americas-largest-local-tv-owner-turned-its-news-anc-1824233490
B	*Jezebel*	2 April 2018	https://theslot.jezebel.com/sinclair-broadcasting-would-like-you-to-know-its-propag-1824266279
C	*Jezebel*	8 March 2018	https://theslot.jezebel.com/sure-sounds-like-sinclair-broadcasting-just-gave-local-1823613787
D	*Splinter*	10 April 2018	https://splinternews.com/sinclair-is-now-abusing-its-power-to-attack-cnn-1825154940
E	*Splinter*	10 April 2018	https://splinternews.com/sinclair-boss-gives-his-most-evil-sounding-interview-ye-1825143498
F	*Deadspin*	9 April 2018	https://deadspin.com/how-i-made-a-dumb-video-making-fun-of-sinclair-broadcas-1825106452
G	CNN	2 April 2018	http://money.cnn.com/2018/04/02/media/sinclair-promo-reactions-president-trump/index.html
H	CNN	8 April 2018	http://money.cnn.com/2018/04/08/media/sinclair-broadcasting-critical-ad/index.html
I	CNN	9 April 2018	http://money.cnn.com/2018/04/09/media/sinclair-broadcast-group-promo-fallout/index.html
J	CNN	4 April 2018	http://money.cnn.com/2018/04/04/media/sinclair-producer-resigns-protest/index.html
K	*NYT*	2 April 2018	https://www.nytimes.com/2018/04/02/business/media/sinclair-news-anchors-script.html
L	*NYT*	2 April 2018	https://www.nytimes.com/2018/04/02/business/sinclair-videos-renew-debate-over-media-ownership.html
M	*NYT*	4 April 2018	https://www.nytimes.com/2018/04/04/business/media/sinclairs-boss-responds-to-criticism-you-cant-be-serious.html
N	*NYT*	4 April 2018	https://www.nytimes.com/2018/04/04/opinion/trump-washington-post-amazon.html
O	*WP*	3 April 2018	https://www.washingtonpost.com/video/entertainment/what-is-sinclair-broadcast-group/2018/04/03/9b7d15e4-3776-11e8-af3c-2123715f78df_video.html
P	*WP*	3 April 2018	https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/the-real-and-disheartening-danger-of-the-sinclair-story/2018/04/03/f634b696-377f-11e8-8fd2-49fe3c675a89_story.html
Q	*WP*	4 April 2018	https://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/compost/wp/2018/04/03/a-statement-definitely-not-under-duress-from-sinclair/
R	*WP*	2 April 2018	https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/opinions/wp/2018/04/03/artificial-unintelligence-has-come-to-turn-newscasts-into-botcasts/
S	*WP*	2 April 2018	https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/the-fix/wp/2018/04/02/trump-says-a-local-tv-group-that-warns-of-fake-news-is-far-superior-to-cnn/

NYT: The New York Times; WP: The Washington Post.

Figure 4. Example discourse structure: "realized as what-a-story."

superscripted (e.g. S^A, NW^A, O^A, etc.). References to Burke and *Deadspin* as the originating source for the case study are labeled throughout as $S1^A$ and the video as $O1^A$ as the instigating object of coverage. Burke's gathering of clips and publishing the video—his newswork—is labeled $NW1^A$.

Structured mapping of news narratives offers one method for breaking down coverage of a news story which addresses how: "The discursive strategies of news professionals are implicated in the layout and structure of the text, in the construction of objects and actors in discourse, and in the language, grammar and rhetoric" (Carvalho, 2008: 171). As shown below, such approaches need to be considered in context to avoid an overly formulaic interpretation of dynamics at play, and a qualitative open-ended reading is incorporated so nuanced interpretations can be considered (Carvalho, 2008: 166).

Data and analysis

Beginning with *Deadspin*, Article A is headlined: "How America's Largest Local TV Owner Turned Its News Anchors into Soldiers in Trump's War on the Media." In the post, Burke describes how the scripts "brought upheaval to newsrooms already dismayed with Sinclair's consistent interference to bring right-wing propaganda to local television
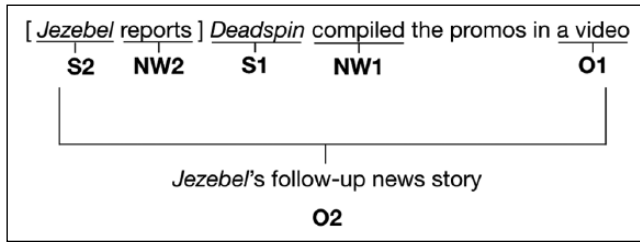
Figure 5. Example discourse structure: "realized as news."

broadcasts," at least in part because it departed from the local priorities of local news. He notes in particular Epshteyn and his "must-run" commentaries. As for the "fake news" scripts: "The net result of the company's current mandate is dozens upon dozens of local news anchors looking like hostages in proof-of-life videos."

Burke links to John Oliver's 2017 *Last Week Tonight* feature on Sinclair and its ties to conservative politics, and to CNN's 2004 coverage of the same. He includes a transcript of the mandated scripts "attacking the industry they'd chosen as a life vocation," linking to and attributing *ThinkProgress*. Among notable lines reporters are asked to read are the following: "we're concerned about the troubling trend of irresponsible, one sided news stories plaguing our country. The sharing of biased and false news has become all too common on social media." Detailing Sinclair's share of the US local television market, Burke highlights a US public's interest in particular. He notes its political messaging may be found "on your own local affiliate." He concludes with an appeal for information from Sinclair employees, linking to secure messaging platforms.

From this basis, we can explore how *Deadspin*'s post starts to unfurl across news media. Within GMG, *Jezebel*'s politics subsite *The Slot* has follow-up coverage by Ashley Reese (Article B). Burke's video is embedded, and Reese notes, "After *Deadspin*'s video compilation of anchors reading the creepy script went viral, many media personalities and politicians have called the move 'Trumpian' and propagandistic." This reflects at least some attention to its novelty, emphasizing it "went viral."

However, Reese goes further, writing of Sinclair:

> the Trump-aligned media giant, thinks everyone needs to chill the fuck out about the script it made all of its local news broadcasters read word for word! […] a move that was as impartial as Fox News is fair and balanced.

She includes Sinclair's response (obtained by and attributed to CNN), with Sinclair's claims their messaging was against genuine fake news and hoaxes, such as #pizzagate (see Phillips et al., 2017). This contrasts Burke's own reporting, a contradiction Reese nods to.

Reese describes Sinclair's response with the irreverence often found in interloper work as follows: "so goddamn combative, I feel like I'm in an aggressive group chat." While Reese points to Burke's story, she draws first on a *Slot* story from March (Article C), when the scripts were first discussed. Thus, Reese offers two demonstrations of "realization as news," one building on Burke's reporting (Article A), the other building on Article C

$$\mathbf{S2^B}\left[\textit{Jezebel}\right] + \left(\mathbf{O1^A}\left[\textit{Deadspin} \text{ post}\right] + \mathbf{NW2^B}\left[\text{Reese's newswork}\right]\right)$$

$$= \mathbf{O2^B}\left[\text{Reese's article}\right]$$

$$\mathbf{S2^B}\left[\textit{Jezebel}\right] + \left(\mathbf{O1^C}\left[\textit{Slot} \text{ March story}\right] + \mathbf{NW2^B}\left[\text{Reese's newswork}\right]\right)$$

$$= \mathbf{O2^B}\left[\text{Reese's article}\right]$$

On *Splinter News*, David Uberti (Articles D and E) also builds from Burke's story, hyperlinking and referring to the local news clips as "mashed up in a viral *Deadspin* video last week." Uberti (E) suggests Burke's video was the prompt for Sinclair's response, and in another story (D)—"Sinclair Boss Gives His Most Evil-Sounding Interview Yet"—he links to *Deadspin* twice, using Burke's reporting to contextualize an interview with Sinclair chairman David Smith. This follows "realization as news" discourse structures as

$$\text{Burke at } \textit{Deadspin}\left(\mathbf{S1^A}\right) \text{ produces } \left(\mathbf{NW1^A}\right) \text{ News video } \left(\mathbf{O1^A}\right) +$$

$$\text{Uberti at } \textit{Splinter}\left(\mathbf{S2^{D,E}}\right) \text{ follows-up } \left(\mathbf{O1^A} + \mathbf{NW2^{D,E}}\right)$$

$$\text{to report further news } \left(\mathbf{O2^D}, \mathbf{O3^E}\right)$$

These examples largely show a legitimation of *Deadspin*'s newswork by its closest peers within GMG. Burke's story is portrayed as (a) news, (b) built on facts and information, and (c) contextualized within a broader socio-political narrative, for (d) publics who may be affected by such demonstrations of political power. There is also significant outlinking to traditional media and to other digital-peripheral media, unsurprisingly as this is endemic to blogging and digital-native practices. The tone is both irreverent and interrogative, and while they malign Sinclair's approach and politics, they do so while reinforcing criticism through context and confirmation built on their own newswork. This legitimates *Deadspin*'s contribution, "realized as news," and provides further support for turning to traditional news media treatment of its digital-peripheral news practices (Figure 6).

CNN

CNN for the most part portrays *Deadspin*'s post as content to build on, legitimating Burke's work as a contribution to broader news coverage. Under the headline, "Sinclair Responds to Criticism of Media-Bashing Promos" (Article G), Brian Stelter refers explicitly to *Deadspin* as the impetus of ensuing coverage, leading with "Critics Are Calling Sinclair's Promos Pro-Trump propaganda." He elaborates,

the *Deadspin* blog produced ($\mathbf{NW1^A}$) a video compilation ($\mathbf{O1^A}$) of the exact same script being read by anchors across the country, reiterating the robotic and manipulative nature of the message.
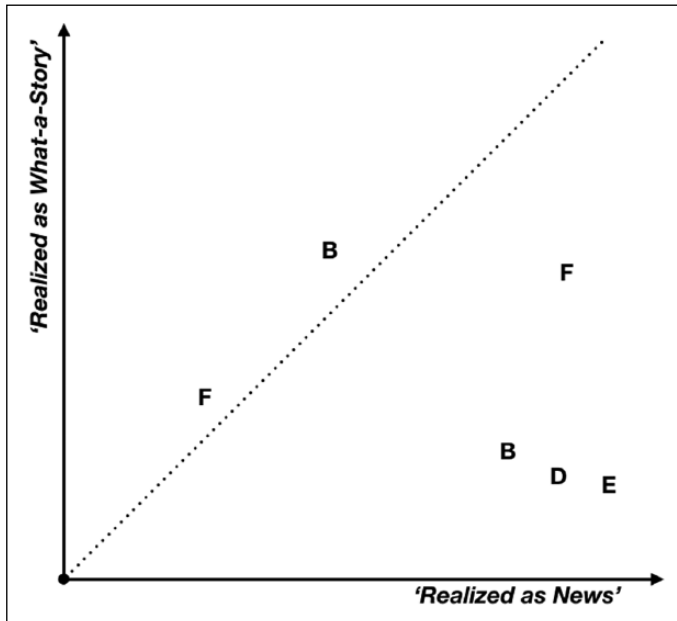
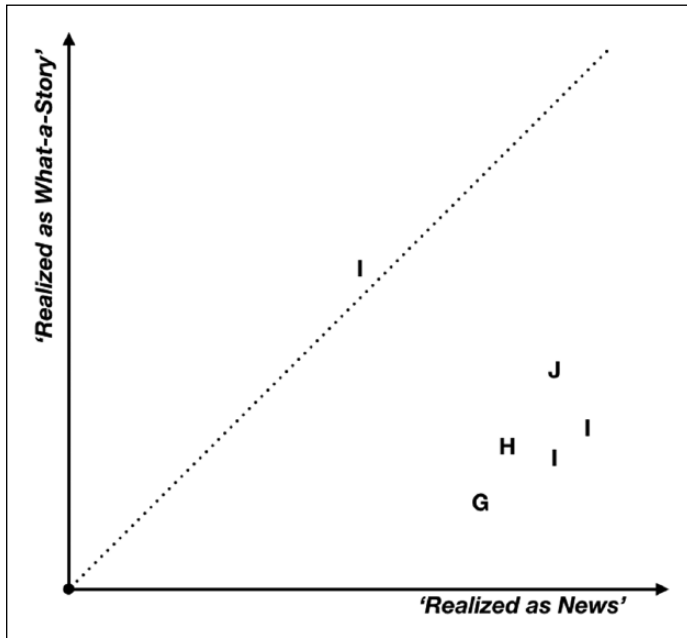**Figure 6.** Journalistic realization, Gizmodo Media Group.

"Everyone is really embarrassed after watching the *Deadspin* video (**O1^A**)," an employee at one of the stations said Monday (**NW2^G**).

While Stelter does not link to *Deadspin* (links go to CNN's content and a *Salt Lake Tribune* piece), he includes portions of it in the accompanying video clip from CNN's "Reliable Sources," which he hosts. Stelter's reporting builds on the substance of *Deadspin*'s work through its own newswork, following a "realization as news" discourse structure

$$[\text{Stelter}]\textbf{S2}^\textbf{G} + \left([\textit{Deadspin post}]\textbf{O1}^\textbf{A} + [\text{CNN Newswork}]\textbf{NW2}^\textbf{G}\right) = [\text{CNN story}]\textbf{O2}^\textbf{G}$$

Stelter refers to *Deadspin* again on 8 and 9 April (Articles H and I). In Article I, he writes of the backlash from Sinclair-affiliated journalists, directly linking to *Deadspin*'s video. This furthers journalistic legitimation, though with some minimalization. Specifically, Article I at once legitimates Burke's newswork—"*Deadspin* (**S1^A**) compiled the promos (**NW1^A**) in a video (**O1^A**)"—while also highlighting that the video "went viral (*novelty*: **NW2^I** + **S1^A**) a week and a half ago" (Article I). Stelter adds, "When the *Deadspin* video came out, a handful of anchors who had to read the promos tried to distance themselves from it via social media" (Article I). He concludes with an example of "realization as news" as Stelter reinforces the informative functions of Burke's video: "It showed dozens of local Sinclair anchors reading the same script decrying 'fake' and 'biased' reporting—echoing President Donald Trump's anti-media messaging."

Figure 7. Journalistic realization, CNN.

In further CNN coverage, all of which is by Stelter, emphasis remains on what *Deadspin*'s revelations prompted: "The backlash has been fierce on social media ever since *Deadspin* published a compilation of the promos last weekend" (Article J) (Figure 7).

On one hand, CNN's positive attribution of Burke's *Deadspin* work as "showing," and "producing" these promos legitimates its reporting, offering an acknowledgment of Burke and *Deadspin*'s contributions to journalism. That this is expressed by a "core" journalistic actor offers initial support for seeing digital-peripheral news media crossing previously hardened boundaries between mainstream and emerging news actors. Furthermore, as a reflection of legitimation, nearly all of Stelter's coverage refers to *Deadspin* directly, even while prioritizing CNN's own coverage. While there remain traces of distancing—emphasizing the way an online video has gone viral, and the social media pushback that followed—these are less prominent than positive appraisal of the news contribution *Deadspin* made.

The New York Times

The New York Times picks up this story on 2 April. In the story "Sinclair Made Dozens of Local News Anchors Recite the Same Script" (Article K), Jacey Fortin and Jonah Engel Bromwich interview Burke, highlighting and embedding his video. Emphasizing the virality of the video (noting a similar one produced by *ThinkProgress*), Fortin and Bromwich focus on the video as a web object, rather than its informative content. However, this is not the only type of treatment within the article, and "realization as

news" discourses are also employed to describe responses to *Deadspin*'s reporting, including quoting Trump's tweets and highlighting both Congressional Democrats' and Sinclair's responses, all described as in response to what Burke exposed.

That same day, Zach Wichter writes, "Sinclair Videos Renew Debate over Media Ownership" (Article L), an article which links to the *Deadspin* video in which Wichter ($S2^L$) describes the "renewed debate" *Deadspin* prompted ($O1^A$). By detailing Sinclair's bid to take over Tribune Media ($NW2^L$) in an explainer-style story for *Times* readers, Wichter legitimates Burke's contribution. He notes *Deadspin*'s post "led to concern on social media about how the company wields power over its news broadcasts." The discourse structure can be mapped as

$$\left[\text{Wichter}\right]S2^L + \left(\left[Deadspin's \text{ post}\right]O1^A + \left[\begin{array}{l}\text{Wichter's uncovering concerns}\\ \text{following the post}\end{array}\right]NW2^L\right)$$

$$= \left[\text{leading to Wichter's article}\right]O2^L$$

The picture of how *Deadspin*'s post is addressed within the field is developed further when, in a piece titled "Sinclair's Boss Responds to Criticism: 'You Can't Be Serious!'" (Article M), Sidney Ember explicitly mentions *Deadspin* and the video. Ember writes, it "prompted many critics to denounce Sinclair's practice of requiring its local television stations to air must-runs." Ember's story does not link to the video, but it addresses Sinclair's dismissal of the concerns *Deadspin* raises, linking to other criticism on the matter on *The Huffington Post* and *Facebook*, and to *The New York Times'* reporting on Sinclair. The final *Times* example comes with the 4 April 2018 Editorial, "The True Damage of Trump's 'Fake News'" (Article N), which links to the *Times'* own coverage of the video (Article K), rather than directly to *Deadspin*'s. This editorial nevertheless lauds the revelatory nature of the video, describing Burke as exposing "outrageous statements questioning the credibility of other news organizations" (Figure 8).

Overall, from *The New York Times*, we see a mixed treatment of *Deadspin*'s video as mostly news and sometimes spectacle, including within the same article, with far fewer direct attributions to *Deadspin*'s newswork. While Burke's reporting is taken seriously for their revelations, coverage prioritizes *Times* content and reporting. The *Times* nevertheless positions *Deadspin* in its approach and Burke in particular as fulfilling journalistic functions, which warrant follow-up by journalistic peers.

The Washington Post

Searching Washingtonpost.com for "Sinclair" in this time period turns up a higher number of articles than with the *Times* or CNN. Results includes explainer videos, opinion pieces, and news articles. One explainer (Article O) describes both the video's novelty and its substance, presenting a more complex discourse structure as the subject media— *The Washington Post* ($S2^O$)—write: "Before a video ($O1^A$) that showcased ($NW1^A$) news anchors reading a required script went viral ($S1^A + NW2^O$), Sinclair Broadcast Group was not a well-known name" ($NW2^O$). This Explainer video portrays *Deadspin*'s
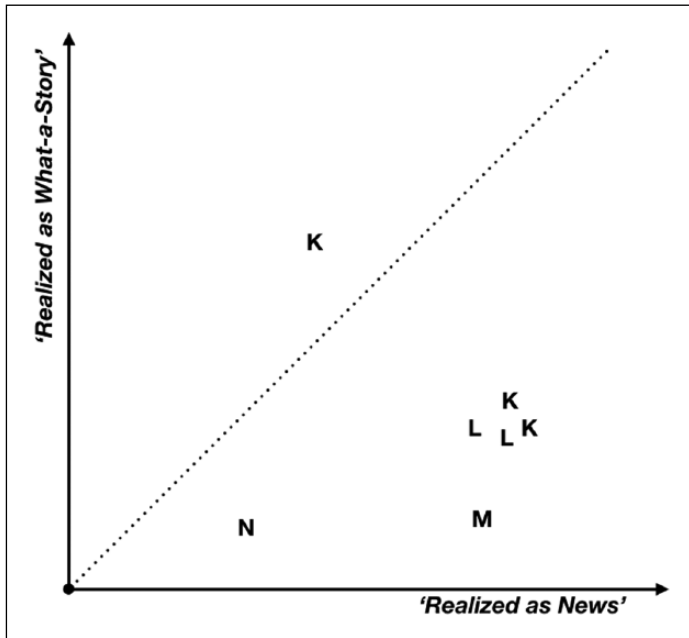
Figure 8. Journalistic realization, *The New York Times*.

work as both digital novelty and as presenting news to build upon through further report-ing. The video in Article O is re-used as illustration for other *Post* pieces, which do not otherwise acknowledge *Deadspin*. A commentary by conservative writer Kathleen Parker (Article P) includes the explainer, only mentioning *Deadspin* in the caption. Parker links instead to the *Times, Seattle Post-Intelligencer, Chicago Tribune*, CNN, NPR, a Monmouth University survey, and Sinclair's own website. A similar tacit acknowledgment is found in an Alexandra Petri (Article Q) column. Cartoonist Tom Toles, in a brief description accompanying an editorial cartoon with a "MAGA News" robot, links to *Deadspin*'s YouTube video without an explicit textual reference to *Deadspin* (Article R).

Callum Borchers, however, does refer to the video—explicitly in Article S as "a video mash-up of the promos," linking to *Deadspin* and embedding a *Deadspin* tweet, and implicitly in Article T which links to Article S. Analysis of Trump's approval rating by Phillip Bump (Article U) also highlights Burke's post as revealing "anchors reciting a mandated screed against the lack of objectivity at other media outlets," linking to *Deadspin*'s tweet. In a "What we know" piece, Eli Rosenberg (Article V) outlines the news around Sinclair, linking to the video and describing *Deadspin* as sparking news coverage by "creating a visceral portrait of corporate message control" which "renewed fears about the effects of greater consolidation in the news media world."

In these examples, Rosenberg and Bump explicitly, and Borchers explicitly and implicitly, highlight how *Deadspin* revealed problematic media dynamics, legitimating these revelations as substantive news. They emphasize how Burke's post prompted
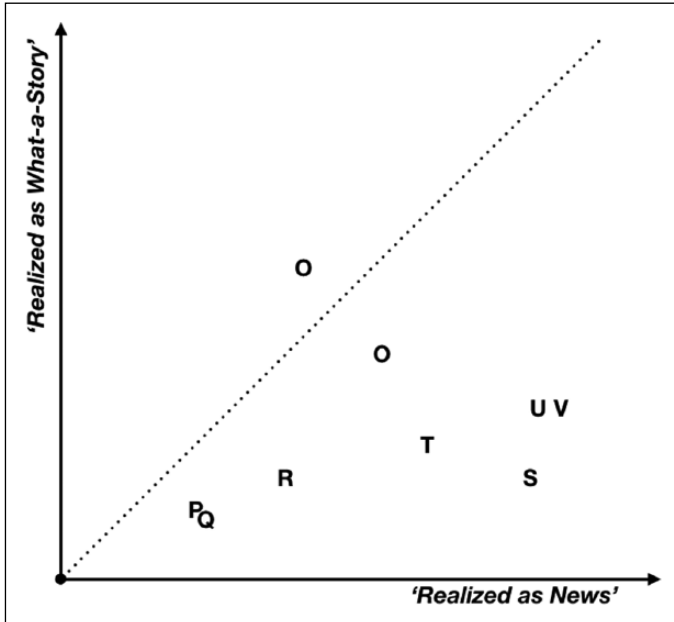
Figure 9. Journalistic realization, *Washington Post.*

follow-up coverage and analysis, and thus how his newswork informed further coverage of Sinclair. However, the *Post*'s treatment is at times legitimating and at times minimizing *Deadspin*'s contribution. More than others, oblique references to *Deadspin*, sometimes eliding *Deadspin* altogether, suggest a resilient core vision of the field at play. While overall *Deadspin*'s revelation is positively acknowledged when referenced, when it is not the picture is less clear (Figure 9).

Returning to *Deadspin*

Toward the end of the period under study, Burke (Article F) offers his own take on this story: "How I Made a Dumb Video Making Fun of Sinclair Broadcasting and Somehow Started a Media War." Burke links to his own video and highlights Uberti's stories, and reports on how his video was incorporated into ads both for and against Sinclair. He embeds a video in which Sinclair uses his original video within a reaction advertisement. He also discusses how his work was appropriated by the "alt-right," pointing out the absurdity of a post from a left-leaning site (*Deadspin*) against right-leaning media (Sinclair) being used this way.

Burke goes on to say the media response between Sinclair and opponents "was not my intention." As to his motivation in making videos for *Deadspin*, he writes, "I don't really want the videos to represent anything other than the farce that is the intersection of media and reality at this moment in time." Yet in framing the broader outcome of his work, and how it could affect perception of local news, he reflects on its impact and the possible

"meta-effect" of bringing down trust in news. He highlights in particular the likely effect of bringing down trust in Sinclair. Burke writes he merely wanted to expose "a strange, spooky thing that happened." Yet, he acknowledges that in doing so he provided "a 'document' of the degree to which Sinclair dictates what its local newscasts deliver to viewers at home." In presenting such a document, Burke has provided facts and information, to a public, in their interest, steeped in metajournalistic commentary, alongside the absurdity of a cacophonous video. That his post was picked up on and reported on by other news media offers one way digital-peripheral journalists are contributing to the journalistic field.

Conclusion

This article has worked from the outset under the perspective that the journalistic field is a complex domain, which has only been made more complex as new actors present work which performs journalistic functions. It outlined first how dominant actors with the benefit of their legacies have been able to paint a vision of what journalism is, and how we now see new actors expressing journalistic identities which challenge that vision. It also explored how interlopers have antagonized the boundaries which have surrounded the journalistic field by performing journalistic roles while pointedly criticizing their would-be journalistic peers.

In considering *Deadspin*'s video highlighting Sinclair's "must-run" political scripts and its broader treatment within the journalistic field, analysis here has looked to where digital-peripheral work predicated on journalistic criteria of sharing facts, in the public interest, and holding power to account can be regarded as news when it achieves "peer status", legitimated by being taken seriously within the broader journalistic field. Findings show the work of digital-peripheral actors, at times, prompts wider news coverage of an underlying news story.

Findings also suggest that even where treatment of digital-peripheral actors as journalists remains mixed, there are signs of a discursive shift in the ways at least *some* digital-peripheral actors are portrayed as journalists. The largely (though not exclusively) positive appraisal of *Deadspin*'s revelatory work hints at a more complex picture of journalism's boundaries—one where commentary and coverage originating on journalism's periphery can contribute to, rather than distract from, the work of the journalistic core. This breaks from past findings which saw such work largely marginalized. In part, this may be traditional journalists making use of interlopers' willingness to openly critique political media such as Sinclair's, where by utilizing a non-traditional critical voice within their own news coverage, they can "maintain and restore the core tenets of the culture's beliefs" of what journalism is (Berkowitz, 2000: 125). It nevertheless shows a departure from the parasitic terms once used to describe digital-peripheral journalists' relationship with traditional news (Carr, 2008).

While the non-sober voice adopted by digital-peripheral actors continues to be present, mixing familiar journalistic roles and antagonistic approaches, their successes in contributing to a broader news discourse invite us to revisit our understanding of the journalistic field and its boundaries. Methodologically, I have suggested one way of exploring change through media-to-media discourses, which either legitimate or delegitimate interlopers' work. This should be seen as a complementary approach to others within field and

boundary research. There are limitations to this study, in terms of breadth as a case study and focus on the US political and media context. Its findings should be read, therefore, as an argument for further exploration of journalism emerging from the peripheries of the field, taking such contributions seriously by evaluating how they are treated more widely.

Finally, while the work here explores digital-peripheral contributions in terms of their informative function, we are wise to remember this is just one aspect of journalism, and that understanding the journalistic field is improved when considering not only how news media engage with new types of content and actors but also how those actors portray their own journalistic identities and intentions, and the way these are perceived by the publics being addressed. As one extension of this, journalism performed by interlopers is ratified in part by realization, in part by intention, and in part when posts prompt dialogue among the media's publics—including those within an increasingly dynamic journalistic field.

Acknowledgements

Funding

Notes

1. See https://twitter.com/realDonaldTrump/status/980799183425802240.
2. There are numerous examples, including https://twitter.com/realdonaldtrump/status/920406959320371200.
3. When Gawker.com shuttered in the wake of a lawsuit brought by professional wrestler Hulk Hogan, the remaining sites were bought by Univision and rebranded as Gizmodo Media Group (GMG).

ORCID iD

Scott A Eldridge II https://orcid.org/0000-0002-2184-1509

References

Belair-Gagnon V and Holton A (2018) Boundary work, interloper media, and analytics in news rooms. *Digital Journalism* 6(4): 492–508.

Benson R (2006) News media as a "journalistic field." *Political Communication* 23(2): 187–202.

Benson R and Neveu E (2005) *Bourdieu and the Journalistic Field*. Cambridge: Polity.

Berkowitz D (2000) Doing double duty. *Journalism* 1(2): 125–143.

Berkowitz D and Liu M (2016) Media errors and the "nutty professor." *Journalism* 17(2): 155–172.

Bishop R (1999) From behind the walls. *Journal of Communication Inquiry* 23(1): 90–112.

Bourdieu P (1977) *Outline of a Theory of Practice*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Bourdieu P (2005) The political field, the social science field, and the journalistic field. In: Benson R, Neveu E (eds) *Bourdieu and the Journalistic Field*. Cambridge: Polity, pp. 29–47.

Broersma MJ (2010) Journalism as performative discourse. In: Rupar V (ed.) *Journalism and Meaning-Making: Reading the Newspaper*. New York: Hampton Press, pp. 15–35.

Burke T (2018) How I Made A Dumb Video Making Fun Of Sinclair Broadcasting And Somehow Started A Media War. Available at: https://deadspin.com/how-i-made-a-dumb-video-making -fun-of-sinclair-broadcas-1825106452 (accessed 9 April 2018).

Carlson M (2016) Metajournalistic discourse and the meanings of journalism. *Communication Theory* 26: 349–368.

Carlson M (2017a) Facebook in the news. *Digital Journalism* 6(1): 4–20.

Carlson M (2017b) *Journalistic Authority*. New York: Columbia University Press.

Carlson M and Berkowitz D (2014) The late news. In: Zelizer B and Tenenboim-Weinblatt K (eds) *Journalism and Memory*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, pp. 195–210.

Carlson M and Lewis S (2015) *Boundaries of Journalism*. Abingdon: Routledge.

Carr D (2008) In Denver, a thousand little pieces. *The New York Times*, 31 August. Available at: https://www.nytimes.com/2008/09/01/business/media/01carr.html

Carvalho A (2008) Media(ted) discourse. *Journalism Studies* 9(2): 161–177.

Cecil M (2002) Bad apples: paradigm overhaul and the CNN/Time "Tailwind" story. *Journal of Communication Inquiry* 26(1): 46–58.

CNN (2004a) Kerry campaign wants equal time after film. *CNN*, 15 October. Available at: http ://edition.cnn.com/2004/ALLPOLITICS/10/15/kerry.sinclair/ (accessed 25 April 2018).

CNN (2004b) McCain rebukes Sinclair "Nightline" decision. *CNN*, 29 April. Available at: http ://edition.cnn.com/2004/SHOWBIZ/TV/04/29/abc.nightline/

Denton N (2016) How things work. *Gawker*, 22 August. Available at: http://gawker.com/how -things-work-1785604699 (accessed 25 April 2018).

Deuze M (2006) Participation, remediation, bricolage: considering principal components of a digi tal culture. *The Information Society* 22(2): 63–75.

Deuze M and Witschge T (2017) Beyond journalism. *Journalism* 19(2): 165–181.

Donsbach W (2010) Journalists and their professional identities. In: Allan S (ed.) *The Routledge Companion to News and Journalism*. Abingdon: Routledge, pp. 38–59.

Eldridge S (2013) Perceiving Professional Threats: Journalism's discursive reaction to the rise of new media entities. *Journal of Applied Journalism and Media Studies* 2(2): 281–299.

Eldridge S (2014) Boundary Maintenance and Interloper Media Reaction: Differentiating between journalism's discursive enforcement processes. *Journalism Studies* 15(1): 1–16.

Eldridge S (2017) Hero or Anti-Hero? Narratives of newswork and journalistic identity construc- tion in complex digital megastories. *Digital Journalism* 5(2): 141–158.

Eldridge S (2018) *Online Journalism from the Periphery: Interloper Media and the Journalistic Field*. Abingdon: Routledge.

Gans H (2010) News and democracy in the United States. In: Allan S (ed.) *The Routledge Companion to News and Journalism*. Abingdon: Routledge, pp. 95–104.

Gawker (2016) Here's what Gawker media does. Available at: http://gawker.com/heres-what -gawker-media-does-1779858799 (accessed 25 April 2018).

Greenwell M (2018) Oh God, even our parent company is airing the Barstool Sports CEO's Evasive, Charming Bullshit. *Deadspin*, 6 April. Available at: https://deadspin.com/oh-god- even-our-parent-company-is-airing-the-barstool-1825053242 (accessed 25 April 2018).

Hanitzsch T (2011) Populist disseminators, detached watchdogs, critical change agents, and opportunist facilitators. *International Communication Gazette* 73(6): 477–494.

Krueger K (2018) Axios can fuck right off. *Splinter News*. Available at: https://splinternews.com /axios-can-fuck-right-off-1826424986 (accessed 20 June 2018).

Küng L (2015) *Innovators in Digital News*. London: I.B. Tauris.

Lewis SC (2012) The tension between professional control and open participation. *Information, Communication & Society* 15(6): 836–866.

Phillips W, Beyer JL and Coleman G (2017) Trolling scholars debunk the idea that the Alt-Right's shitposters have magic powers. *Motherboard*. Available at: https://motherboard.vice.com /en_us/article/trolling-scholars-debunk-the-idea-that-the-alt-rights-trolls-have-magic-powers (accessed 25 April 2018).

Pod Saves America (2018) Hold for Lou Dobbs. *Crooked Media*, 3 April. Available at: https ://crooked.com/podcast/hold-lou-dobbs/ (accessed 25 April 2018).

Reed J (2016) Former Gawker editors on the Hogan trial aftermath. *The Guardian*, 26 March. Available at: https://www.theguardian.com/media/2016/mar/26/former-gawker-journalists -hogan-trial-aftermath

Robinson S (2015) Redrawing borders from within. In: Carlson M and Lewis SC (eds) *Boundaries of Journalism*. Abingdon: Routledge, pp. 152–168.

Schultz I (2007) The journalistic gut feeling. *Journalism Practice* 1(2): 190–207.

Scocca T (2013) Is the New York *Post* edited by a bigoted drunk who fucks pigs? *Gawker*, 18 April. Available at: http://gawker.com/5994999/is-the-new-york-post-edited-by-a-bigoted -drunk-who-fucks-pigs

Shirky C (2008) *Here Comes Everybody*. London: Penguin.

Singer J (2003) Who are these guys? *Journalism* 4(2): 139–163.

Stelter B (2018) Sinclair's new media-bashing promos rankle local anchors. *CNN*, 7 March. Available at: http://money.cnn.com/2018/03/07/media/sinclair-broadcasting-promos-media -bashing/index.html (accessed 25 April 2018).

Sullivan M (2013) Who's a journalist? *The New York Times*, 29 June. Available at: https://publi ceditor.blogs.nytimes.com/2013/06/29/whos-a-journalist-a-question-with-many-facets-and -one-sure-answer/ (accessed 18 June 2018).

Tandoc EC Jr and Jenkins J (2016) Out of bounds? *New Media & Society* 20(2): 581–598.

Tuchman G (1976) Telling stories. *Journal of Communication* 26(4): 93–97.

Wahl-Jorgensen K (2014) Is Wikileaks challenging the paradigm of journalism? *International Journal of Communication* 8: 2581–2592.

Waisbord S (2013) *Reinventing Professionalism*. Cambridge: Polity.

Author biography

Scott A Eldridge II is an assistant professor with the Centre for Media and Journalism Studies, University of Groningen. His research examines the changing boundaries of the journalistic field in a digital age, focusing on confrontational new actors. He is co-editor with Bob Franklin of the *Routledge Companion to Digital Journalism Studies* (2017) and the *Routledge Handbook of Developments in Digital Journalism Studies* (2019), and he is an associate editor of the journal *Digital Journalism*.