ABSTRACT

Title of Dissertation: JOURNALISTS OR CYBER-ANARCHISTS? A QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS OF PROFESSIONAL JOURNALISTS' COMMENTARY ABOUT WIKILEAKS

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New media for sharing information online have presented a challenge to professional journalism in a variety of ways, as new tools or media for communicating information allow more of the public to share information in a publicly available way. WikiLeaks, an online site that began publishing secret and classified information in 2007, provides a useful lens through which to examine professional journalists' responses to one such challenge. In responding to these challenges, journalists may engage in paradigm repair, making efforts to reinforce and police their professional norms and practices by identifying and normalizing violations. This study examines the terms and the frames used in commentary about WikiLeaks by professional journalists, in an attempt to understand how professional journalists define and defend their own profession through their efforts at paradigm repair, and to consider the professional, social, and political consequences of those efforts. Journalists primarily framed WikiLeaks as a non-journalist actor, one that threatened the national security of the United States. This framing can

be seen as paradigm repair, as journalists excluded WikiLeaks from their profession on the basis of its lack of editorial structure, physical location, and concern for U.S. public interest. The consequences of this exclusion are to leave WikiLeaks and other non-traditional journalistic actors more vulnerable, and to make it more difficult for professional journalists to stay relevant and adopt improved practices in the changing media ecology.

JOURNALISTS OR CYBER-ANARCHISTS? A QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS OF PROFESSIONAL JOURNALISTS' COMMENTARY ABOUT WIKILEAKS

by

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CHAPTER 1. Introduction: The significance of what journalists say about WikiLeaks, and how they say it

WikiLeaks is a non-profit organization that collects and disseminates private, secret and classified information that has been submitted by anonymous sources through a secure site. Part whistle-blower, part wiki and part publisher, its activities defy the established editorial and business models for mass communication of information and, like so many online information-sharing sites, have had repercussions for journalism, and incited many journalism professionals to comment on, criticize, or commend the organization. WikiLeaks' activities challenge the ideology espoused by professional journalists by providing a different model for satisfying the information needs of a democratic public. As Coddington (2012) put it, WikiLeaks "stands at the forefront of an emerging iteration of the Fourth Estate marked by increased advocacy, networked collaboration, and aggregation as a means of processing information" (p. 378). Its activities raise provocative questions about how information is shared and by whom, and what role professional journalists will play in the world of new media. Most importantly, the commentary and editorials by journalists in response to WikiLeaks provide a lens through which to examine how journalists define their profession, and their ability to adapt to a changing role in the emerging media ecology.

In 2010, WikiLeaks provoked extraordinary controversy, particularly in the United States, when it made public on its website hundreds of thousands of confidential documents, including U.S. military dispatches from the battlefields of Iraq and Afghanistan and U.S. State Department diplomatic cables, generally believed to have been obtained from Private Bradley Manning. Manning was an Army private working as an intelligence analyst near Baghdad during the war. U.S. government prosecutors said Manning downloaded hundreds of thousands of documents to which he had access through his work. The content of the documents, which

provided insight into U.S. operations overseas, including torture and the maintenance of foreign relations, were the subject of dozens of news stories by professional journalists (although I think the labels and distinctions among journalists and citizen journalists and others are not useful and may even be confusing, for the purposes of clarity, throughout this dissertation I will refer to professional journalists as "journalists," and refer to other kinds of journalists using modifiers). However, the release of the documents, the organization that had put them online, and the individuals associated with that organization were just as much a story as the classified or secret information they revealed. Journalists shared their opinion through commentary and editorials, and in special notes accompanying the news articles published about the information in the documents.

Analyzing how professional journalists responded to the confidential documents published by WikiLeaks, how they framed their attack or defense of the release of various documents, and what terms they used in describing the organization, whether invoking or denying the title of "journalist," including as citizen journalist, can provide insight into how professional journalists define themselves and others, in response to challenges from non-traditional sources of information and what the status of journalist means to those who claim it as a profession or simply an occupation. Paradigm repair theory suggests that journalists rely on a particular professional ideology and they respond to challenges to that ideology. Researchers have identified many ways that professionals can respond to real or perceived threats to their paradigm, including by efforts to identify and discredit anomalous entities or behavior, either by drawing boundaries that exclude the anomalies, or by reaffirming the tenets of their professional ideology and condemning the violator of that ideology. Journalists' response to WikiLeaks reveals how, in this major, extraordinary case, they attempted to define the boundaries of their

profession and the characteristics of their ideology, whether they set themselves apart from or align themselves with new media organizations and what place they establish for themselves in the world of information-sharing, underscoring the negative effect of their response on new media organizations and their own relevance. WikiLeaks' activities in 2010 provoked sufficient response to make a study of that response worthwhile, although my analysis is not limited to that specific critical moment, and instead goes on to discuss the larger implications of the response for the freedom to share information online and the quality of information shared online, as well as the continuing relevance of professional journalists. The case of WikiLeaks may be one the first of its kind to attract this much attention from journalists, but it certainly will not be the last.

The WikiLeaks website was registered and went live in 2006, officially launching in 2007 as a typical wiki site open to edits by users. (A wiki is a website that allows users to create and edit web pages through their internet browser; wiki is a Hawaiian word meaning quickly.) Over the few years of its operation, it moved toward a more closed publication model. It no longer allowed edits or comments from users, rather accepting information through secure online servers, and processing that information internally before publishing it online. The site now describes its work as providing a secure and anonymous way for sources to leak information to "our journalists," although it is not explained who those journalists are. Much information about the organization is not public, such as the names of most of the individuals involved in its daily operation, their locations or even how many people are involved. The site's "About" page describes it as an "independent global group of people with a long standing dedication to the idea of a free press and the improved transparency in society that comes from this" (Wikileaks About, 2011). The independent group is said in various reports and in its self-description to have included accredited journalists, software programmers, network engineers, mathematicians and

others. While a few names have been made public through other sources, such as articles published in newspapers and books written by former members, the site lists no names other than the group's primary public face—quite literally, his face is on the site's home page banner— Julian Assange. Assange is a former computer programmer, Internet activist and hacker who serves on the WikiLeaks advisory board and is described in some reports as its director or editor-in-chief. The site itself does not explain his role in the organization and in fact only says regarding the people behind WikiLeaks that it is "a project of the Sunshine Press" (WikiLeaks About, 2011). Assange gained attention as the sole public figure and spokesperson for WikiLeaks through various profiles and news reports, although he has insisted in interviews that the organization is not run by him, or by any particular individual. The sketch comedy program *Saturday Night Live* featured parodies of him. He also appeared in a video implying WikiLeaks' publication of documents was partly responsible for the revolutions in the Middle East. His role will be further discussed in the chapter on WikiLeaks and its history.

The stated purpose of WikiLeaks is to "bring important news and information to the public" through the use of high-end security technologies combined with journalism and ethical principles (WikiLeaks About, 2011). It claims: "Publishing improves transparency, and this transparency creates a better society for all people. Better scrutiny leads to reduced corruption and stronger democracies in all society's institutions, including government, corporations and other organisations. A healthy, vibrant and inquisitive journalistic media plays a vital role in achieving these goals. We are part of that media" (WikiLeaks About, 2011, section 1.3). Within a year of its launch, the site boasted it had accumulated a database of more than 1 million documents. However, it wasn't until 2010 that WikiLeaks received much attention from the news media and public for the information it posted. In April 2010, WikiLeaks published "gun-

sight" footage from a 2007 airstrike in Baghdad, in which 12 to 18 Iraqi civilians and journalists were killed by a U.S. Apache helicopter, as both an edited video and raw footage. The video was titled "Collateral Murder." In July 2010, WikiLeaks released the "Afghan War Diary," a cache of more than 76,900 documents about the war in Afghanistan that had previously not been publicly available. In October 2010, the organization released the "Iraq War Logs," nearly 400,000 reports documenting that war and the U.S.-led occupation of Iraq. The documents were posted concurrently with the publication of stories in a handful of major commercial media organizations in the United States, the United Kingdom, Germany, France and Spain that had been granted exclusive access to the documents before release. In November 2010, WikiLeaks began releasing U.S. State Department diplomatic cables, again cooperating with major commercial media organizations to facilitate the publication of stories about the documents at the same time they were released. In February 2011, the organization posted "The WikiLeaks Threat," a document outlining a plan by three data intelligence companies to attack WikiLeaks— a plan that was drafted at the request of a law firm working for the Bank of America. Citing WikiLeaks' engagement with activities "inconsistent" with internal policies, the bank had announced it would not process any transactions intended for WikiLeaks. Rumors also circulated on some forums that WikiLeaks was going to release confidential documents from Bank of America. In April 2011, WikiLeaks published 779 previously classified files relating to prisoners held at Guantanamo Bay. Each of these document releases was accompanied by coverage and analysis—sometimes extensive—by the legacy media. Updates were posted to the site's Twitter account implying that documents it released were responsible for initiating the revolutions in Tunisia, Egypt and other nations in the Middle East. Meanwhile, under threat of arrest and extradition to Sweden to face sexual assault charges, Assange entered the embassy of Ecuador in

London. The government of Ecuador granted him asylum, apparently because it was angry over comments made by U.S. officials about it, as indicated in documents released by WikiLeaks. Assange has not been able to leave the embassy since he entered it.

As the documents WikiLeaks published or released to newspapers and other news media organizations for publication gained attention, the organization became the subject of public scrutiny by professional journalists, media critics, academics and politicians, who commented on the activities of WikiLeaks in newspaper articles, on television, as well as on online news sites, personal blogs and Twitter accounts. These comments revealed how journalists view their work in relation to the alternative sources of information that have appeared online, as they both attacked and defended WikiLeaks and its activities. Many journalists raised or attempted to answer the question of whether the activities of WikiLeaks constituted "journalism"— presumably an activity associated with a particular code of ethics and ideals—or whether its actions constituted espionage, a threat to national security, and irresponsible risk-taking. Since no reasonable argument could be mounted or criminal charges filed against WikiLeaks that would not also apply to *The New York Times* and other news media that publish confidential information, these commentaries and editorials provide insight into how journalists have represented WikiLeaks to the public, and on what basis they have distanced themselves from or aligned themselves with the actions of WikiLeaks. Editorials, op-eds and other commentary— specifically those written by professional journalists—are the primary object of analysis in this document. WikiLeaks is a useful case for analysis because it generated so much response, whereas isolated incidents of citizen journalism may have received only limited attention from professional journalists, and comments on the general trend of citizens sharing information

online are too broad and relate to too many different kinds of activities to allow for a coherent analysis.

In some cases the documents made public by WikiLeaks had been designated classified by the U.S. government, were damaging to the public image of the United States abroad, or were perceived to cause difficulties for U.S. foreign relations or foreign operatives and informants overseas. Some in the U.S. government, including key figures in the administration of President Obama, called WikiLeaks and its supporters "cyber-anarchists." Several banks and online funding sources, such as PayPal, froze WikiLeaks' accounts, while web hosts were either unwilling or unable (due to attacks and visitor traffic) to continue to host the site. A grand jury in the U.S. investigated whether there was sufficient evidence to charge Assange with espionage or some other crime. Professional journalists questioned whether the organization was a threat to national security concerns or the safety of those whose identity was revealed in the documents, asserting that the editorial processes of journalism were more effective in filtering privileged information appropriately. News coverage of the legal battles often featured Assange, and coverage of his personal legal troubles, including sexual assault charges in Sweden—the allegations surfaced around the time that the Afghan War Diary documents were released, although charges were dropped, only to resurface again at the time of the diplomatic cables release—was prominent. Bradley Manning, the Army private who leaked many documents to the site, has been held on charges of espionage and has been held in a prison by the U.S. military since May 2010. Assange has never said whether Manning was or was not the source of the information, Manning has also not said and has not entered a plea on charges that he wrongfully caused intelligence to be published on the Internet, knowing that it was accessible to the enemy

and multiple counts of theft of public records. The most serious charge—aiding the enemy—makes Manning eligible for the death penalty.

On the other hand, some, particularly champions of citizen journalism and new media, defended WikiLeaks as journalism, or at least expression warranting the same free speech protections granted to journalists. When WikiLeaks' site servers were shut down or failed, dozens of mirror sites appeared to ensure that the site's content would continue to be available. In essence, WikiLeaks' position on the fringes of institutional media allowed it to continue to receive information and publish it despite official opposition. In addition, Daniel Ellsberg—the first person to be prosecuted for a leak under the Espionage Act—compared the negative response to WikiLeaks' activity to the reaction to the publication of the Pentagon Papers, which he leaked to the *New York Times*. The Pentagon Papers offered a clear precedent for WikiLeaks, suggesting that legal charges could not be successfully brought against the organization. The chapter on the history of WikiLeaks will provide a very specific explanation of exactly how this particular set of documents came to the site and how they were distributed.

WikiLeaks is a good case for this analysis because the organization's activities do not fit into current commonly accepted conceptions of professional journalism, and yet seem to provide a similar service: making information in the public interest publicly available. Coddington (2012) pointed out that "WikiLeaks' core activities—gaining access to closely guarded information about important issues in the public interest, then publishing it—have traditionally been thought of as journalistic in nature" (p.383). The distinctions made by journalists between themselves and "quasi-journalistic actors" (Coddington, 2012) such as WikiLeaks, must therefore be of an institutional, procedural, ethical or structural nature. In other words, if new media provide information to the public that concerns the conduct of its government or other

issues of public interest, then professional journalists must distinguish between themselves and those media on the basis of the institutions with which they are affiliated, their work practices or routines, their codes of ethics, or their organizational structure. Their attempts to make these distinctions can be seen as efforts at paradigm repair, through which journalists try to define their ideology and reassert their authority by distancing themselves from those they perceive to have violated their professional ideology. WikiLeaks demands we consider whether the public interest—and whose public interest—is best served by a Fourth Estate that is institutionalized as the professional press, or one characterized by "increased advocacy, networked collaboration, and aggregation" (Coddington, 2012), and the rules that govern that kind of system. There is good evidence that the processes and structures of a collaborative networked public can produce useful information, as well as foster participation, with a greater degree of flexibility than legacy media. By criticizing WikiLeaks, journalists make it more difficult for themselves to consider the value of and potentially adopt aspects of such systems. This results in a professional ideology that is likely to become stagnant, and professionals who are wedded to and defensive of a stagnant and even irrelevant ideology.

Complicating these issues somewhat is the nature of WikiLeaks as an organization: some of its characteristics and activities would qualify it as a publisher in a new media context. Others regard it as nothing more than as a leaker/whistle-blower. Besides this, WikiLeaks is apparently free from the traditional organizational structures, hierarchies and even legal limitations governing many media organizations. The organization does not have a traditional editorial process, ownership, or national affiliation—it may be the first truly global news site. Documents are submitted to the site through a secure server and then analyzed (to verify authenticity) internally by unidentified individuals. Like many digital organizations and online information or

news sites, its offices are virtual and, according to reports, WikiLeaks operates out of several different offices in different countries. The site was registered using domain registrar Dynadot's privacy service, so no identifying information, such as an address or phone number, about the organization is publicly available. The relative freedom from state boundaries and therefore jurisdiction makes it a largely unregulated means of publicly releasing information, one that represents a threat to government secrecy, as it claims on its site. It also disdains the responsibility to which many journalists claim they are beholden: serving the national public interest. Rather, it states that it opposes "authoritarian governments, oppressive institutions and corrupt corporations" in every nation, and this is one of the elements that differentiate it from U.S. journalists' professional ideology. The reality of the organization's operation in many ways does not conform to the espoused ideal of free, unconventional and unregulated information: WikiLeaks is very secretive about its own operations; it has sought cooperation from major commercial media organizations in the release of many documents; and it promotes news coverage by traditional journalism organizations on its site. In addition, banks have had some success stopping donations to WikiLeaks, revealing that the site is at some level constrained by financial institutions, at the very least. In other words, WikiLeaks is not as free from the restrictions of the legacy professional news media as it may appear or aspire to be. These issues will be further developed in the chapter on the history of WikiLeaks.

The value of the analysis of the response to WikiLeaks lies in what it indicates about journalists' response to a more general trend. The increasingly broad reach of internet access in the U.S. has brought faster, easier and more extensive access to information than the average citizen has ever had. Citizens online have the ability to find information and share it, and they are using that ability, generating, sharing, and aggregating content at a blistering pace. Clay Shirky

(2008), a leading scholar of digital media and technology, compares the changes affecting public information and journalism now to the advent of the printing press and the expansion of literacy, which made scribes irrelevant. These changes have created new roles for people who are not professional journalists but are able to engage in many of the same activities out of personal interest, perceived need or civic duty. Participants online share information through various media and on various platforms, ranging from amateur photographers posting pictures online to committed bloggers regularly reporting on the activities in their neighborhood to "pro-ams" (Leadbetter & Miller, 2004), a new social hybrid whose "activities are not adequately captured by the traditional definitions of work and leisure, professional and amateur, consumption and production. We use a variety of terms – many derogatory, none satisfactory – to describe what people do with their serious leisure time: nerds, geeks, anoraks, enthusiasts, hackers, men in their sheds" (p. 29). In this emerging media ecology, distinctions between professionals and amateurs, professional and citizen journalists, become less helpful. Journalism can be defined as the act of making public information in the public interest. Jane Singer's (2006) suggestion is helpful here: "the definition and self conceptualization of the journalist must shift from one rooted in procedure—the professional process of making information available—to one rooted in ethics— the professional norms guiding determinations about which information has true societal value" (p. 15). This shift to a definition based on providing information in the public interest is not only more useful, but it is also more relevant in a world in which the means of sharing information is not limited to those working within a particular editorial system or under the employ of a particular institution. If we accept such a definition, we would evaluate WikiLeaks based on whether the information has true societal value—which I believe it does—rather than whether it conforms to the professional practices and institutional forms of professional journalists.

As the ability to share information on a mass scale extends beyond the limited control of newspaper publishers, power over information is taken from a centralized institution or set of organizations and extended to many other entities in society: individual, collective, professional, amateur, etc. The increasing ability of citizens to share information in various forms online tests professional journalists' self definition and the limits of free speech protections and other privileges claimed by those who also claimed the title of journalist. So-called citizen journalism and other forms of information-sharing outside the purview of professional legacy journalists have been the subject of much discussion. Debate continues, between those who celebrate the extension of direct representation through expression to more citizens (Shirky, 2008, Bruns 2008) and those who worry that the glut of information dilutes the overall quality of information, or that many of the citizens sharing information lack the ethical standards or sense of responsibility that govern the behavior of professional journalists and others who have recently maintained more control over media of mass communication (Lemann, 2006, Skube, 2007).

Journalism in the modern context, in both common parlance and academic study of mass communication, had been defined as the activities of a particular group of people employed in the production and dissemination of information as news, entertainment and opinion, along with a variety of related activities. In many ways the professionalism of journalism provides the basis of the exclusive claim to a particular set of privileges and responsibilities by an elite group that attempts to control the modes of production of information. Some have criticized the designation of journalists as professionals and the movement towards professionalism in journalism in general. James Carey (1995), albeit at a time when he was particularly interested in the work of Pierre Bourdieu called journalism's professional orientation "the great danger in modern journalism," given the way the client-professional relationship takes control over information

from the public and makes the public dependent on journalists for knowledge about the real world. This professionalism is relatively new. Over the past two centuries in the United States, newspapers, and then radio and television networks, established themselves as part of an institution of journalism and lay claim to the privileges and protections provided for freedom of speech and the press in the First Amendment to the Constitution. The Bill of Rights does not limit freedom of the press to professional news organizations, but those organizations act as if they have special rights to enjoy that freedom, claiming the rights and concurrent responsibilities for shaping democracy, informing the public and monitoring government and other sources of power to protect their activities. Newspapers have fought for, and won, breathing room in reporting about public officials through stronger requirements in libel suits brought by public officials (see *New York Times v. Sullivan*, 1964), as well as the ability to protect their sources in some states. Although not uniform, shield laws in many states protect journalists from having to reveal sources even in court, and standards for libel cases brought by public officials against journalists are more stringent. Nonetheless, Supreme Court rulings have generally held that membership in the institutionalized press is not required for an individual to claim journalistic privilege to protect sources. In practice, however, individuals are often excluded from events of public importance (i.e. press conferences, conventions) or institutions (i.e. the Senate floor, the Supreme Court) by allowing access by invitation only or requiring credentials. Many journalists continue to invoke the First Amendment protection for free speech as a fundamental basis for their right to publish. The literature review will include an analysis of legal cases and what they indicate about the value of journalistic status and the efforts by various players to confer or deny that status.

Dan Gillmor (2004) argued convincingly that the Bill of Rights afforded no extraordinary legal protection to professional journalists as individuals. Rather, protection is provided to anyone engaged in gathering and sharing information with the public. Support for Constitutional protection based on the First Amendment for all who engage in public information-sharing activities can be found in both Supreme Court decisions and arguments by media theorists and ethicists. Supreme Court decisions, which will be discussed in the literature review, suggest that the First Amendment can be interpreted to provide equal protection to members of the press as well as citizens not employed as journalists but nonetheless engaged in journalistic activity. Justice Black made no distinction between the rights of the press and individual citizens when he wrote in *New York Times v. Sullivan* (1964): "We would, I think, more faithfully interpret the First Amendment by holding that at the very least it leaves the people and the press free to criticize officials and discuss public affairs with impunity." In view of the ideas of John Stuart Mill, freedom of speech can be understood as a multi-faceted negative right that prevents the government from making a law inhibiting the right to express, or disseminate, information and ideas, and also from abridging the right to seek information and ideas, the right to receive information and ideas, and the right to impart information and ideas (Puddephatt, 2005). In such a model, WikiLeaks might be considered a legitimate component of a healthy public sphere open for public debate, rather than an entity of dubious or questionable status in a media information environment controlled by clearly labeled professionals.

While journalists' claims to institutional authority are based on procedure and editorial hierarchies, a more sustainable and democratic model might be one based on the ethics of information-sharing and the peer-determined value of information. Wikipedia and other models rooted in collaborative creation and evaluation more closely approach this ideal, and challenge

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journalists to adopt changes such as greater transparency. WikiLeaks undoubtedly revealed information that is of interest to the public of the United States, as well as other nations, whether WikiLeaks' actions would be considered journalism or a valuable contribution to journalism based on the norms that guide its actions is a question that deserves consideration. In forcing this question, WikiLeaks challenged the professional ideology of journalists that presumes to serve the public interest in a democracy.

Questions regarding what counts as journalism, who is a journalist, to whom journalists owe their loyalties or whether journalists have specific kinds of "responsibilities" not only have existential implications for those journalists employed in a profession facing economic difficulties due to shrinking advertising dollars and functional challenges from the mass participation of citizens in journalistic activities, but legal and ethical implications for all those sharing information online. If journalists assert exceptional rights to share information of public importance, they may limit the role for others who are enabled by technology to communicate information online. Relevant to—and in some ways overshadowing—these questions are implications of power, authority or status stemming from the conferral of journalistic labels. These questions are brought into focus by the changing media of mass communication, and its effect on a business (i.e., the news industry) and profession (i.e., journalism) built around the gathering, analyzing and sharing of information. How professional journalists attempt to situate themselves in the world of mass communication and mass self-communication (Castell's 2007 term for online many-to-many communication) will help determine their role and the perception the public has of their rights and responsibilities, as well as the rights and responsibilities of individuals and other non-journalistic organizations sharing information.

These issues of power and authority relate to what is gained or lost in rhetorical power, authority, and status when journalistic status is invoked, refused, offered or withheld. Jane Singer (2003) suggested that "people who claim membership in a profession and delineate its attributes do so at least in part to justify inequality of status, as well as to limit and control access to that status" (p. 139). Likewise, Shirky (2008), in discussing how changes in communication and information affect journalism, noted: "Professional self-conception and self-defense, so valuable in ordinary times, become a disadvantage in revolutionary ones, because professionals are always concerned with threats to the profession." The changes in communication and information represent a revolution in both technology and behavior, and journalists are in a profession that is threatened by these changes. How are professional journalists responding to this threat to their profession? In response to which activities do journalists decry the involvement of citizens in journalistic activities and which do they condone? When do journalists align themselves with those who are not generally considered part of the established journalism profession? How does their response affect these new actors in the emerging media ecology? How does their response affect their own relevance? WikiLeaks is a particularly useful case for this analysis because it represents an unconventional type of information-sharing organization when compared to existing institutions and professionals, but one that shares many traits with professional journalism organizations and claims to promote many of the ideals professional journalists hold sacred. The definitions and activities of citizen journalists will be discussed at length in the literature review.

WikiLeaks and other new sources of information online, such as independent blogs, Twitter, and photo- and video-sharing sites, that do not conform to the rules of professional journalists—lacking the physical location and resulting ties to a state and its legal system, the

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editorial structure, the commitment to a code of ethics, and the formal publication procedure—complicate public information-sharing, and by extension journalism, by providing alternatives to and challenging the hegemony of professional journalism. How professional journalists respond to these new players, which values and practices they assert as crucial to the differentiation of journalism from other communication, and how they position themselves in relation to new media, reveals how they see their role in a democratic society, particularly relative to government and other institutions of power, and what factors they consider relevant in separating their work from other information shared in public. For example, journalists claim to provide a version of events that is "objective," "fair," "balanced," or authoritative based on particular qualities attributed to the report, claims that amount to an attempt to assert greater legitimacy of their version of reality. The multiple voices and perspectives reflected by users online represent a challenge to this version of reality, undermining the claim to legitimacy of any particular view and asserting the value of a "neutral" point of view that acknowledges various perspectives. The information found on Wikipedia, Twitter and other similar sites is legitimized by the billions of users who seek information there and by the open process involving a multitude of users through which content is created, evaluated and edited. These processes and how they differ from those of legacy journalism will be discussed at length in the literature review.

The extent to which journalists distinguish their activities from other sources of information can be problematic for those excluded from the profession. The professionalism of journalists can limit the application of First Amendment protections to non-professionals, which Benkler (2012) asserted are "more socially-politically vulnerable members of the networked fourth estate," or at the very least it may change the dynamic so that the onus is on non-professionals to prove that their speech also merits protection. The efforts of professional

journalists to distinguish themselves from other kind of information-sharing can also contribute

to their own increasing irrelevance: as more information is reported, distributed, shared and

analyzed outside their control, the less influence they have and the more their attempts to assert

influence, or claim special status or importance appear defensive and increasingly out-dated.

WikiLeaks challenged journalists' claim to a gate-keeper role, promoting an ethic of

greater source transparency and indeed greater transparency in government and other institutions.

This analysis explores how professional journalists responded to that challenge, considering how

they attempted to position themselves relative to WikiLeaks through frame analysis of editorials

and other opinion pieces or commentary, and the consequences of those attempts. The primary

object of analysis is the published critique and commentary, in the form of editorials, op-eds and

columns, written by professional journalists about the WikiLeaks organization and its activities.

This analysis focuses on the response of journalists to the main actions of WikiLeaks in 2010: (1)

the posting, in April, of a video from an incident in which Iraqi civilians and journalists were

killed by U.S. forces; (2) the release in July of the "Afghan War Diary"—more than 75,000

documents about the U.S. war in Afghanistan, (3) the release in October of the "Iraq War

Logs"—more than 400,000 documents about that war, and (4) the November release of U.S.

State Department diplomatic cables. The greater part of my attention in this study is given to the

three major document releases in 2010, because with these, the discussion of WikiLeaks in major

news media became particularly prominent, but of course commentary written during other times

was included when relevant. Following the controversial publications in 2010, WikiLeaks faced

various difficulties—banks and PayPal blocked payments to the site and the site's server hosts

dropped it, although its content remained available online through "mirror sites"—such that in

2011 and 2012 it was largely inactive, but still managed to publish a few collections of

documents, including more than 5 million emails from the intelligence analyst Stratfor and 2 million emails from Syrian political figures, ministries and associated companies. Despite the international nature of WikiLeaks, its activities, and the effects of its activities, my analysis will be limited to the United States because the ethics of journalism in this country have a basis in its founding documents, because its government was the owner of so much of the confidential information released by WikiLeaks, and because WikiLeaks itself referred to the importance of freedom of information in a democracy, citing the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution on its own "About" page.

I consider questions about the profession of journalism and the activities of professional journalists, and how the expansion of abilities to gather and disseminate information has affected their processes. I use textual analysis of the framing of WikiLeaks in the discourse of professional journalists, analyzing how the organization has been discussed by professional journalists in published commentary. The primary research questions here are: How did professional journalists frame the actions of WikiLeaks, and how did professional journalists situate WikiLeaks in relation to journalism? I began with an analysis of how WikiLeaks is described in various commentaries, particularly which terms are used, and by whom, in discussing the organization. Questions used in this analysis include: Where and when is the work of WikiLeaks described as journalism? Who calls it journalism? What terms have been used, and by whom (academics, government officials, banks, professional media personalities, citizen journalists) in discussing the organization? Following this I analyze the framing of WikiLeaks, and how the problem or issue of WikiLeaks is defined. This analysis facilitates consideration of what is offered to WikiLeaks when it is defended by journalists as an important component of public information and when journalists align themselves with the site, and what is denied to

WikiLeaks when journalistic status is refused, or another status is conferred. I specifically examine the use of the word "journalist" and "journalism" in discussions of WikiLeaks by professional journalists and consider what journalists gain by maintaining exclusive claim to journalistic status and what the significance of a journalistic label might be to WikiLeaks.

This dissertation includes the following chapters: In the literature review I examine definitions of journalism and the professionalization of journalism, as well as citizen journalism and other activities in computer-mediated communication that resemble journalistic work, offering an analysis of the ways in which new ways of sharing information process and evaluate content and participants. It also considers literature on publishing confidential information, and addresses the issue of journalistic status and what it provides, legally and professionally. The methods chapter describes the sample selected for analysis, the frame analysis used to analyze the commentary and opinions of professional journalists, and the process through which the articles were coded and organized. The fourth chapter details the history of WikiLeaks and its information-sharing activities, considering where they fit in the new environment of media and information-sharing. The fifth chapter analyzes the terms used by professional journalists in describing WikiLeaks and how they largely distinguish the organization from journalism. In the sixth chapter I analyze the frames journalists used in commentary about WikiLeaks and its activities, discussing the ways in which most commentary framed WikiLeaks as outsiders to the profession, and even part of a conflict. In the conclusion I argue that the response of journalists to WikiLeaks may have negative consequences for journalists, as well as for WikiLeaks and other non-traditional media. I also suggest how future journalists and others sharing information of public interest online might contribute to information-sharing and what guidelines ethical frameworks should govern their activities in these new models.

Ultimately, I hope to use the response to WikiLeaks as a way to examine how professional journalists have defined their role in the world of public information, and to suggest how they might do so in a way that will allow them to remain relevant participants in a more diverse media ecology. As journalists engage in paradigm repair to define their role in the world of public information, they must re-consider and re-imagine what responsibilities they have and what roles need to be filled. Some consideration of how they have thus far defined their roles and responsibilities will inform how they can best do so in the future, and where they may have to adjust their self-conceptualization and self-definition. In an era of mass self-communication, professional journalists may not be able to follow the same procedures as they had for the past century, but they may want to consider the ethical principles that have guided their actions. WikiLeaks, in promoting greater source transparency and extolling the virtues of transparency in government, banking and other institutions, offers a challenge to the entrenched ideology of professional journalists, as Coddington (2012) wrote, "setting the prototype for the geographically diffuse 'stateless news organization' and creating a potential model for gathering and disseminating news in the networked information age" (p. 378). Whether professional journalists wholly reject this new model or adapt to new ways of sharing information is a key to determining both their relevance in the next iteration of mass communication of information and the status and legal protection for those who are not members of their profession. I will argue that as long as journalists defend a professional paradigm based on work routines and practices rather than value to the public, they will become increasingly irrelevant.

CHAPTER 2. Literature Review

In order to lay the groundwork for an analysis of professional journalists' response to WikiLeaks, this review of the literature attempts to explore the basis on which professional journalists define their work and claim professional status, and how those definitions compare to the work of non professionals in new media, and WikiLeaks in particular. First there is a discussion of scholarship on the development and definition of journalism, as well as professionalism in journalism, since professionalism in particular reveals how journalistic status and the associated privileges have been invoked and defended. Literature on editorials and opinions, and journalists' efforts at self-critique, mutual critique and paradigm repair theory will be included here. Consideration follows of the research on the various activities enabled by computer-mediated communication that resemble journalistic work but generally involve non-professionals, including various kinds of citizen journalism and collaborative journalism, and how these activities' engage audiences in work and how those work processes vary from traditional journalism. A review of literature about the relationship between professional journalists and others engaging in similar or related information-sharing activities will follow, considering in particular how journalists have responded to other non-professional sources of information. Finally, I will discuss literature specifically about WikiLeaks and other cases in which information was "leaked," considering the degree to which earlier cases are similar to WikiLeaks. An in-depth discussion of WikiLeaks, its history, structure, and activities is the subject of chapter 4, and therefore is not included here.

Defining professional journalism

Despite the fact that "sociological definitions of professionalism have never been a comfortable fit," as Singer (2003) wrote, and that some fear professionalism may stifle diversity and reduce journalistic autonomy (Glasser, 1992), this analysis assumes the existence of a profession of journalism, at least in terms of how most journalists view themselves. Professional journalism as it developed in the United States over the last two centuries has never precluded the participation of non-journalists in journalistic activities. Citizens and members of organizations not otherwise employed as journalists have long engaged in a variety of reporting and writing activities: documenting events around them in words or pictures; reporting information to news organizations, authorities and each other, both in press releases in news stories; and commenting on, criticizing or sharing information with professionals and with each other. These activities included submitting letters to the editor and opinion pieces and expert commentary (see, e.g., Wahl-Jorgensen, 2007); this is the essence of the public sphere, and one is not required to be a professional journalist to report an event, take a picture of a noteworthy occurrence, or share an opinion with a neighbor. With the development of the Internet and its spread to an increasingly large public, as well as the introduction of devices that allow for constant online access, the possibility to participate and ease of participation in information-sharing activities by non-professionals has expanded to a greater swath of the public than ever before. For purposes of clarity and convenience—and despite the problems to be addressed later—I will use the term professional journalist to refer to a journalist employed at a legacy media organization and the term citizen journalist to refer to an individual who engages in journalistic activity (whether gathering, reporting, analyzing or sharing information) but is not engaged to do or paid for that work.

Notwithstanding the participation of non-professionals in journalistic activities, before the emergence of this network of mass self-communicators, wikis, blogs and user-generated content, professional journalists enjoyed a fairly undisputed reign over news for about a century (see, e.g., Stephens, 2007 and Sloan, 2008). It was clear what was journalism: All the news "fit to print," to quote *The New York Times*, or to broadcast. The development of that self-evident understanding of what counted as journalism and who counted as journalists can be traced back to the First World War. Journalism historian Michael Schudson (2001) wrote that colonial printers in the United States, "ran their newspapers with little consistent purpose or principle. They understood themselves as small tradesmen, not learned professionals" (p. 153). Schudson (2001) elaborated on how "the rising status and independence of reporters relative to their employees, [led to] a change in journalism that developed gradually between the l870s and the First World War" (p. 159) and transformed the press into an institution differentiated from political parties. Quoting McGerr, (1986), Schudson agreed that after World War I, journalists were "more likely to see themselves as journalists, or as writers, rather than as political hangers-on" (p. 161). He argued that, self-conscious about the manipulability of information in the propaganda age, journalists "felt a need to close ranks and assert their collective integrity in the face of their close encounter with the publicity agents' unembarrassed effort to use information (or misinformation) to promote special interests" (Schudson 2001, p. 162-3).

Burton St. John (2007) likewise wrote that professionalization of the press "developed in the aftermath of the U.S. government's successful use of propaganda to promote citizen support for World War I, [and] inculcates objectivity and detachment as journalistic defenses against manipulations by paid persuaders." The first journalism school was established at the University of Missouri in 1908, before which time there was no degree in journalism (Schudson, 2001).

Schudson (2001) also pointed out, when Joseph Pulitzer endowed the School of Journalism at Columbia (which formally opened in 1913), the publisher declared that he wanted to "'raise journalism to the rank of a learned profession'" (p. 163). The first professional association of newspaper editors, the American Society of Newspaper Editors, was founded in 1922-23. The National Association of Radio News Editors (now tellingly called the Radio Television Digital News Association) was founded in 1946, and in 1952 became the Radio Television News Directors Association. Those individuals employed by these "legacy media"—including newspapers, magazines, radio, and television—were now declaring themselves to be professionals.

As Schudson (2001) concluded, "What had really happened is that journalists had become their own interpretive community, writing to one another and not to parties or partisans, determined to distinguish their work from that of press agents, eager to pass on to younger journalists and to celebrate in themselves an ethic and an integrity in keeping with the broader culture's acclaim for science and non-partisanship" (p. 165). What is most relevant is that these behaviors are one of the ways professional journalists distinguish themselves from other communication media or individual communicators. Nonetheless, critics note drawbacks. St. John (2007) wrote that "the legacy of this professionalism is about more than work practices. It has inculcated a press ideology that is vigilant against co-option and is, therefore, concerned that public engagement really entails newspaper reporters and editors propagandizing at the behest of the privileged and influential." Carey (1995) claimed that the making of news into a commodity divorced it from its democratic purposes: "That is, the production of culture, including most importantly the news, becomes disarticulated from existing national societies and policies" (p. 253). The result, he said, was "acquisitive" individuals rather than engaged citizens, in which

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case the "notion of citizens of a common polity who participate in a common political tradition becomes increasingly difficult to imagine" (Carey, 1995, p. 254).

The definition of journalism is inevitably colored by the institution of the press and the rights, roles and responsibilities it claims, as well as the various functions it serves. Some, such as Zelizer (2005), pointed to the behaviors and practices of journalists to make the point that the professional label in journalism is primarily based on established routines and procedures: "Largely associated with journalism's craft dimensions, the term tends to reference the evolving skills, routines, and conventions involved in making news" (p. 66). Zelizer noted a "growing gap between 'the realities of journalism and its official presentation of self,'" which she said "has grown more severe as journalism continues to be responsible for shaping public events" (2005, p. 67). Literature about journalism's presentation of self will be discussed later in this chapter. Others have asserted journalists' adherence to ethical and occupational principles as the element that makes their contribution to public information more valuable than that of the non-professional (see, e.g., Lemann, 2006 and Skube, 2007). These occupational values may include accuracy, independence or autonomy, fairness, transparency, professional responsibility and objectivity (see Kovach and Rosenstiel, 2001).

Objectivity in particular is often touted, and was called "the chief occupational value of American journalism" (p. 149) by Schudson. Schudson (2001) traced the adoption of objectivity by journalists to the 1920s and a desire to "affiliate with the prestige of science, efficiency, and Progressive reform" and disaffiliate from public relations specialists and propagandists (p. 162). He claimed that by the 1920s,

> the objectivity norm became a fully formulated occupational ideal, part of a professional project or mission. Far more than a set of craft rules to fend off libel suits or a set of

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constraints to help editors keep tabs on their underlings, objectivity was finally a moral code. It was asserted in the textbooks used in journalism schools, it was asserted in codes of ethics of professional associations. (Schudson, 2001, p.163)

However, Burton St. John (2007) noted that "this vigilance against undue influence has also informed journalistic skepticism about the press immersing itself in stories that are designed to further 'public interest.'" Likewise, Theodore Glasser (1984) made the point that objectivity can preclude responsibility:

> First...objectivity in journalism is biased in favor of the status quo; it is inherently conservative to the extent that it encourages reporters to rely on what sociologist Alvin Gouldner so appropriately describes as the 'managers of the status quo'— the prominent and the elite. Second, objective reporting is biased against independent thinking; it emasculates the intellect by treating it as a disinterested spectator. Finally, objective reporting is biased against the very idea of responsibility; the day's news is viewed as something journalists are compelled to report, not something they are responsible for creating….What objectivity has brought about, in short, is a disregard for the consequences of newsmaking.

Alternatively, Kovach and Rosenstiel (2001) identified verification as the distinctive practice of journalists: "the discipline of verification is what separates journalism from entertainment, propaganda, fiction, or art.... Journalism alone is focused first on getting what happened down right" (p. 78).

Ethics

One of the key criteria of a profession is ethics. Journalists' ethics codes vary, but as Singer (2003) noted, "journalists generally see themselves as abiding by ethical guidelines, in the interests of fulfilling their public service responsibilities" (p. 146). The Society of Professional Journalists (1996), for example, calls for journalists to seek truth and report it, minimize harm to sources and subjects, act independently and be accountable.

For professional journalists, their ethics is largely based on the idea that a free press has a special role in a democracy. Singer (2003) pointed out "most agree that journalism is distinguished because of its contributions to society, providing the information people need" (p. 146). Carey (1995) argued that the interpretation of the First Amendment as granting special rights to the press developed in the 1960s, with what he called Justice Potter Stewart's development in 1975 of a "constitutional theory justifying an adversary and watchdog press: 'The primary purpose of the constitutional guarantee of a free press was…to create a fourth institution outside the government as an additional check on the three official branches.…The relevant metaphor is of the Fourth Estate. The Free Press guarantee is, in essence, a structural provision of the Constitution. Most of the other provisions in the Bill of Rights protect specific liberties or specific rights of individuals" (p. 249). In contrast, Carey said, citing Justice Stewart, the Free Press Clause extends protection to an institution.

The First Amendment is often invoked by journalists as the clause that protects their right and even sets aside a special duty to pursue their work. Among other protections, the First Amendment states that Congress shall make no law "abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press." However, as Gillmor (2004) convincingly argued, protections for free speech and press did not apply to any particular organization or type of organization, but to the spoken and printed word, regardless of who said or wrote it. As such, the right to say and publish without legal restrictions (although of course some restrictions have been imposed by courts) applies to all citizens under the Constitution. The institution of the press developed long after the First Amendment was written. James Carey (1995) contended that in a series of court cases in the 1960s, "the press sought special privileges and powers and developed a view of the First Amendment that would secure [those privileges and powers]," rather than individual citizens'

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rights to engage with each other in a public sphere. He concluded, "Ultimately this view creates a passive role for the public in the theater of politics. The public is an observer of the press rather than 'participators in the government of our affairs' and the dialogue of democracy" (Carey, 1995, p. 249-250). Carey (1995) outlined how the press, initially an institution engaged in community life and public interests, by the mid-1900s had taken over the citizens' role in public life and enabled the citizenry to adopt the attitude of an audience rather than participants: "The press no longer facilitated or animated a public conversation, for public conversation had disappeared. It informed a passive and privatized group of citizens who participated in politics through the press" (p. 245). Harsher criticism came from Calvert (1999): "As journalists serve up a profitable commodity they call news—all the while pandering to readers' and viewers' wants rather than to their needs—the Free Press clause increasingly seems to serve merely as a shield to protect bottom-line interests rather than as a sword to protect democracy" (p. 417).

The basis for an understanding that the press plays a special role in a democracy can be found in several earlier arguments, such as those of John Stuart Mill and the Hutchins Commission. John Stuart Mill (1859) argued that the free exchange of information and opinion, including erroneous and even offensive information, makes it more likely for the truth to come out, for the truth to be more strongly accepted or affirmed if challenged, and for the truth arrived at to be improved by alteration or combination with dissenting opinions that may also hold some element of truth. These same ideas used in other Supreme Court decisions—beginning with Holmes' assertion that "the ultimate good desired is better reached by free trade in ideas" (*Abrams v. U.S.*, 1919)—that protected freedom of the press or freedom of speech in the interest of maintaining a marketplace of ideas, even if it meant tolerating some inaccurate or negative speech. Mill's argument about the value of free expression and free deliberation of all ideas in a

public forum provides strong support for a journalistic responsibility to provide a forum for, and indeed promote, public deliberation and debate. Certainly over the course of several decisions, from *Near v. Minnesota* to *New York Times v. Sullivan*, the Supreme Court's establishment of a standard of protection for freedom of speech and the press based on the desire to maintain a free marketplace of ideas indicated as much.

The report of the Hutchins Commission (1947) took as fundamental the idea that free expression was necessary in a free society: "Where freedom of expression exists, the beginnings of a free society and a means for every extension of liberty are already present. Free expression is therefore unique among liberties: it promotes and protects all the rest" (p. 6). The Commission (1947), which was founded to inquire into the proper function of the media in a modern democracy, concluded that the information requirements of a free society meant that the press ought to provide a "truthful, comprehensive, and intelligent account of the day's events in a context which gives them meaning," "a forum for the exchange of comment and criticism," "the projection of a representative picture of the constituent groups in the society," "the presentation and clarification of the goals and values of the society," and "full access to the day's intelligence." Like Mill, the Commission emphasized deliberation and access to information, asserting that the fundamental value was free expression for citizens rather than a professionalized press, and rather than arguing that the press was granted special rights by the First Amendment, focused on the duties of the press in a free society.

Jürgen Habermas (1981) argued that in direct democracies, the activist public sphere—where individuals freely discuss social problems and "put the state in touch with the needs of society"—is needed for debates on matters of public importance and as well as the mechanism for that discussion to affect the decision-making process. In his view, the public sphere "stood or

fell with the principle of universal access.... A public sphere from which specific groups would be ex ipso excluded was less than merely incomplete; it was not a public sphere at all" (Habermas, 1981). Much as Carey argued that the press taking the role of informing the public rather than facilitating their active engagement with each other, Habermas saw the growth of commercial mass media turning the critical public into a passive consumer public. He argued that the ideal speech situation occurs in an environment of social equality when participants in the public sphere have the same capacity for discourse. His theories suggest that the modern professional view of journalism is not the most useful for the good of society, but rather that journalists might be more if they better facilitated public interaction.

More than sixty years after the Hutchins Commission, the Knight Commission (2009) on informing communities in a democracy identified the three objectives necessary for informed communities: "Maximize the availability of relevant and credible information to all Americans and their communities"; "Strengthen the capacity of individuals to engage with information"; and "Promote individual engagement with information and the public life of the community." The commission concluded that American communities "need accurate, relevant news and information to fuel the common pursuit of the truth and the public interest" (Knight Commission, 2009, p. 62). Again news and information were emphasized as the most valuable commodities, but only insofar as they promote shared actions of pursuing truth (through deliberation) and the public interest. Leonard Downie and Michael Schudson (2009) followed the Knight Commission's report with their own report and recommendations for addressing the information needs of communities in a democracy, including a call for greater access to government information: "More should be done—by journalists, nonprofit organizations and governments— to increase the accessibility and usefulness of public information collected by federal, state, and

local governments, to facilitate the gathering and dissemination of public information by citizens, and to expand public recognition of the many sources of relevant reporting."

These arguments can all be read as lending support to the idea that the elements most important to a free society are not newspapers or reporters, but information in context and a forum for public debate about that information. Carey (1995) wrote, "a medium of communications is defined by the democratic aspirations of politics: a conversation among equals, the organ of a political ideology, a watchdog on the state, an instrument of dialogue on public issues, a device for transmitting information, the tool of interest groups" (p. 234). When it comes to journalists, Jane Singer (2006) has suggested that "the definition and self conceptualization of the journalist must shift from one rooted in procedure—the professional process of making information available—to one rooted in ethics—the professional norms guiding determinations about which information has true societal value" (p. 15). The ethical justification for free expression can guide thinking about what counts as journalism, and what is worthy of legal protection.

Journalistic status

Although professionalism is not the primary focus of this dissertation, it merits consideration in that the professionalism of journalism is the basis for some behaviors that exclude certain information-sharing activities and those who engage in them from special status. Singer (2003) noted agreement about these three general dimensions of a profession: cognitive— the "body of knowledge and techniques"; normative—the "service orientation and ethics"; and evaluative—the unique characteristics of autonomy and prestige. She added that while no

profession perfectly satisfies these criteria, "sociological definitions of professionalism have never been a comfortable fit" for journalism (Singer, 2003, p. 143). While journalists may have identifiable core skills, Singer claimed that journalists' "strongest claim to professional status may lie on the normative dimension" (p. 144). And Kovach and Rosenstiel (2001) reported that when journalists were asked what they considered "the distinguishing feature of journalism," "Those working in news volunteered this democratic function by nearly two to one over any other answer" (p. 14).

Professional identity is associated with "a sense of common experiences, understandings and expertise, shared ways of perceiving problems and their possible solutions.

> This common identity is produced and reproduced through occupational and professional socialization by means of shared and common educational backgrounds, professional training and vocational experiences, and by membership of professional associations (local, regional, national and international) and societies where practitioners develop and maintain a shared work culture. One result is similarities in work practices and procedures, common ways of perceiving problems and their possible solutions and shared ways of perceiving and interacting with customers and clients. (Evetts 2003, p. 401)

The normative value system of professionalism in work and behavior is thus reinforced in individual practitioners and in the workplaces in which they work, and journalism is no exception.

There are some concerns about tying journalists to professional status, such as the fear that professionalism can stifle the "diversity that is a core strength of a free press, implying homogeneity and standardization rather than healthy differences among journalists," reduce individual autonomy, or be used by organizations to control the behavior of reporters and editors, and justify that control (Singer, 2003, p. 143). Significantly, Evetts (2003) noted: "Sometimes professional groups are also elites with strong political links and connections" (p. 398), an

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observation that is certainly applicable to journalists, who may rely on political connections to do their job.

The professional title of journalist or the support of a major news organization allows an individual to claim privileged access as well as some legal protection. Singer (2003) wrote, "Those who claim membership in a profession do so at least in part to justify inequality of status and to limit access to that status" (p. 139). Professional journalists are granted special access to news sources. Press passes are issued to members of the press in order to attend various political and official events, and the press is provided access to Congressional sessions. This privilege is not extended to members of the public without a formal affiliation with a news organization, forcing the public to receive their information through the interpretive filter of professional journalists.

As Calvert (1999) pointed out, "Determining who is a journalist is more than just an esoteric question debated by ivory tower academics and journalism professors. The determination has major legal implications" (p. 412). Journalists claim protection from some legal charges—*New York Times v. Sullivan* (1964) established a stronger standard of proof that must be met for public officials to be awarded punitive damages in defamation suits against journalists. A large body of rulings based in *Branzburg v. Hayes* (1972) has held that members of the press are worthy of special protection from the law in order to allow for a press that is free to pursue information of public interest without a "chilling" fear of punishment for publishing inaccurate information. The Supreme Court's decision in *Branzburg v. Hayes* (1972) indicated that the First Amendment did not establish a reporters' privilege that protects them from subpoena, but a test established in that decision was used in several lower courts to justify protection of reporters from subpoena. So-called "shield laws" in many states now protect

journalists from being called to court to reveal their sources. A federal shield law, called the Free Flow of Information Act has been introduced and referred to committee by the U.S. Congress several times over the last few years. The bill would establish a national standard for protecting journalists in court. While many states already have shield laws, they vary in terms of how much protection they offer, whether in civil or criminal cases, or cases of national security. As the Supreme Court acknowledged in *Branzburg v. Hayes* (1972) however, "The administration of a constitutional newsman's privilege would present practical and conceptual difficulties of a high order." As Linda Berger (2003) put it, "When anyone can be a journalist, it may be impossible to decide who should be protected by the 'journalist's' privilege afforded by thirty-one states and, in most federal circuits, by the First Amendment" (p. 1373). Berger (2003) proposed that a shield law could be used to protect "the kind of journalistic work process that seems most likely to result in the publication of information that will be important to decision making by a self-governing citizenry" (p. 1375). However, she defined journalistic work as "involved in a process that is intended to generate and disseminate truthful information to the public on a regular basis" (Berger, 2003, p. 1411), which may be problematic given the requirement for "regular" participation.

In case law, journalists—and the protections to which they are entitled—have been defined by intent, action and content. The appellate court in von Bulow (1987) held that in order to claim journalist's privilege, a claimant "must demonstrate an intent to use the material…to disseminate information to the public and that such intent existed as the inception of the newsgathering process," noting that "the talisman invoking the journalist's privilege is intent to disseminate to the public at the time the gathering of information commences." However, as Calvert (1999) noted, "The Second Circuit emphasized that one need not be a member of the

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'institutionalized press' to successfully claim the privilege, so long as the person is involved 'in activities traditionally associated with the gathering and dissemination of news" (p. 419), although experience as a professional journalist is not required. The court wrote that the journalist's privilege "emanates from the strong public policy supporting the unfettered communication of information by the journalist to the public" (*von Bulow ex rel. Auersperg v. von Bulow*, 1987). Drawing on the court's decision in von Bulow, the Madden (*In re Madden,* 1998) test is a three-pronged test that is used to determine journalistic status, holding that an individual may claim journalist's privilege when engaged in investigative reporting (activity), gathering news (content), and in possession of the intent at the inception of the newsgathering process to disseminate the news to the public (intent). The judgment read, "We hold that individuals are journalists when engaged in investigative reporting, gathering news, and have the intent at the beginning of the news-gathering process to disseminate this information to the public." This makes clear that this is not dependent on any particular medium, but that "the test does not grant status to any person with a manuscript, a web page or a film" (*In re Madden*, 1998). So merely possessing a URL, html skills and posting information on a web page does not constitute journalism or warrant privileged status.

Benkler (2011) concluded, "We come, then, to the conclusion that as a matter of First Amendment doctrine, Wikileaks is entitled to the protection available to a wide range of members of the fourth estate, from fringe pamphleteers to the major press organizations of the industrial information economy", motivated by a desire to preserve "the continued access of the public to a steady flow of truthful publicly relevant information about its government's inner workings" (p. 41).

Classified information

Discussion of classified or sensitive information—when it can be widely shared, by whom and who decides such things, as well as the differences between professional journalists and non-professional journalists related to these issues—has been a subject of several Supreme Court rulings. The court has generally held that any restriction of publication of information requires strong justification. The court invoked the Espionage Act of 1917—which made it illegal to interfere with military operations, support enemies of the U.S. during wartime, to promote insubordination or to interfere with military recruitment. In *Schenck v. United States* (1919), the court ruled that a defendant's First Amendment rights to free speech could be limited during times of war. The ruling in Schenck established the "clear and present danger" test, which allowed for restriction of speech that represented a clear and present danger to national security, and was used until 1969, when the court established the imminent lawless action test ruling in *Brandenburg v. Ohio* (1969). In *New York Times v. Sullivan*, the court said, "Any system of prior restraints of expression comes to this Court bearing a heavy presumption against its constitutional validity" and that the government "thus carries a heavy burden of showing justification for the imposition of such a restraint."

However, specifically regarding the publication of classified information, the clearest analogous case is the Pentagon Papers, or *New York Times Co. v. United States* (1971), in which the Court ruled that the government had not met the strong burden of proof required to justify prior restraint. Referring to the Pentagon Papers, Henkin (1971) claimed that the law allows for some government secrecy: "any right of the people to know was not considered violated if government maintained secrecy in some matters; it was assumed, no doubt, that the people agreed it should not know what could not be told it without damage to the public interest" (p.

273). The justification, he explained, was that "Confidentiality and privilege are recognized as essential to many working relationships, and many believe that government would become impossible if all communications between officials might readily become public knowledge" (Henkin 1971, p. 275). As he points out, however, "The standards for determining the need to withhold are less than exact, and reasonable men differ widely as to them and as to their application in particular cases" (Henkin 1971, p. 275).

In December 2010, the House Judiciary Committee held a hearing about WikiLeaks and the Espionage Act. Chairman John Conyers of Michigan, opened by saying "it is clear that prosecuting WikiLeaks would raise the most fundamental questions about freedom of speech, about who is a journalist and about what the public can know about the actions of their own government" (Committee of the Judiciary, 2010, p. 2). Hank Johnson of Georgia later added, "The *New York Times* is also publishing this information and we aren't shutting down their Web site or encouraging an international manhunt for its editors. And we cannot allow whatever outrage that we may have, whether or not it be justified or not, to cloud our judgment about our fundamental right to a freedom of the press" (Committee of the Judiciary, 2010, p. 114), making it clear that WikiLeaks was also granted that right.

Citizen journalism

As noted in the introduction, the development of computer-mediated communication and of new media tools has lowered the barriers to participation in journalistic activities in terms of the cost, effort, technical skill and expertise required to reach a mass audience. It is now possible for practically any internet user to engage in what Coddington (2012) called "quasi-journalistic"

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acts—reporting information, sharing photos, offering analysis or commentary on news events—on a daily basis in a forum that is available to the rest of the online world. While a prohibitively expensive printing press was required to put out a newspaper, any computer user with an internet connection can create a blog or a Twitter account, where the user can post content that is publicly available online. Notwithstanding the digital divide (the separation between those who have internet access and those who don't), literacy and digital literacy (see Knight Commission, 2009), the control of bandwidth by powerful institutions and organizations (see Bagdikian, 2000), attempts to regulate internet by the government, the difficulty of getting substantial numbers of site views as an unknown blogger (see Shirky, 2008), and other obstacles to a "pure" democracy of information online, the opportunity to share public information has undeniably extended to a greater part of the public.

The result has been an increase in the growth of public information-sharing sites, where users post information that may be of interest to others (Twitter, some blogs, Flickr, aggregation sites and others) as well as sites of strictly individual interest, where users post information not intended for public consumption (personal blogs and online journals), even if only 1 percent contribute original content and another 10 percent participate in synthesizing content (Horowitz, 2006). Even sites of major commercial journalism organizations seek user participation in the form of comments on stories, letters to the editor, and, in some cases, personal accounts of events. The coinciding decrease in the cost of cameras as well as mobile devices with the capacity to post information online has resulted in a population more enabled than ever before to capture the world around them and transmit that information to the rest of the world online (see, e.g. Shirky, 2008 and Gant, 2007). In August 2012, Pew data showed 85 percent of Americans use the internet, with higher percentages in the lower age groups, higher income and higher

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educational attainment (Pew Internet & American Life, 2012). While the vast majority look for

information, 46 percent report that they upload photos, 37 percent rate products or services, 32

percent post comments to news groups, blogs or other sites, 22 percent engage in an online

discussion or listserv, and 14 percent create or work on their own webpage or blog (Pew Internet

& American Life, 2012). Many changes in computer-mediated communication relate to the

communication of information that is of public interest, changing the dynamic of mass

communication—what Castells (2007) called the new phenomenon 'mass self-

communication'—and journalism. A population of mass self-communicators may have different

information needs and a profession devoted to serving the information needs of that population

will have to adapt to those needs.

Citizen journalism is a label broadly applied to the various journalistic activities of people

not employed by the legacy media—activities that are the subject of much debate and research.

Bowman and Willis (2003) defined citizen journalism as members of the public: playing an

active role in the process of collecting, reporting, analyzing and disseminating news and

information," however the term citizen journalism is both problematic and provocative, loaded

with implications and used to describe a wide variety of information-sharing activities, from

blogging to tagging photos online to participating in crowd-sourced projects. As a label it is

problematic in part because it suggests that citizen journalists are formal citizens of the countries

in which they reside and/or that they define themselves as having the rights of citizens, a

problem noted by Costanza-Chock (2008). Also of concern is the extent to which it may suggest

that citizens are represented, when in fact a very narrow segment of the population is likely

involved in citizen journalism. The term also implies that those who engage in more formalized

or professional types of journalism are somehow excluded from the citizen label, perpetuating an

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ideal of professional journalism that promotes objectivity to such a degree that journalists are expected to consider themselves impartial observers rather than interested participants in their political system, a problem noted by many critics of objectivity in professional journalism (see, for example, Patterson, 2007). Finally, citizens often do not label themselves in this way: Jan Schaffer (2007) found that although 78 percent of survey respondents said they provided 'journalism,' and 46 percent said they provided mainly news and information, they did not consistently call themselves journalists (p. 23).

Despite problematic terms and labeling, the various phenomena that are described as citizen journalism are nonetheless important ways of gathering, analyzing and sharing information that fall outside the field of journalism as traditionally understood or defined by professional journalists. User-generated content, participatory journalism and wikis, as well as more independent efforts such as blogging, Tweeting and posting content on video- or photo-sharing sites are ways internet users are contributing to public information, regardless of their professional standing or citizenship status.

Dan Gillmor's "We the Media" (2004) traced citizen journalism back to 18th century pamphleteers such as Thomas Paine and the authors of the Federalist Papers around the time of the founding of the United States. Abraham Zapruder's recording with a home-movie camera of President John F. Kennedy's 1963 assassination and George Holliday's home video of the beating of Rodney King in 1991 are notable examples of citizens documenting newsworthy events in the 20th century. Axel Bruns (2008) dated modern citizen journalism to activists' proactive and highly networked organizing of Indymedia before the 1999 World Trade Organization meeting in Seattle. The pioneering South Korean site OhmyNews launched in

2000; by 2009, some 70,000 citizens had written stories that were edited by volunteer editors (Woyke, 2009).

Somewhat complicating the discussion of citizen journalists is the fact that many citizens online—as is often the case with video spontaneously capturing an event of interest—document, share, or filter information without the intention to produce journalism. However, in the course of taking a picture, posting an event or sharing a news story, newsworthy information is often brought to the public by a citizen. Many of the activities arising from computer-mediated communication have relevance to journalism and citizen engagement with public life, so the changes wrought by a "networked society" (Benkler, 2006) likewise have an effect on journalists. The direct connection of millions of users to other users rather than to a central source of information creates new opportunities for communication. Manuel Castells (2007) described the activities enabled by new communication media as "mass self-communication":

> It is mass communication because it reaches potentially a global audience through the p2p networks and Internet connection. It is multimodal, as the digitization of content and advanced social software, often based on open source that can be downloaded free, allows the reformatting of almost any content in almost any form, increasingly distributed via wireless networks. *And it is self-generated in content, self-directed in emission, and self-selected in reception by many that communicate with many.* (p. 248; emphasis in original)

In recent years, crowd-sourced projects, Twitter, and a variety of other activities online have been included under the umbrella of citizen journalism. Enthusiasts (e.g. Rosen, 2006, Bruns, 2008) have lauded the contributions of the "cloud" or the "crowd," but it is often unclear whether any or all contributions ought to be considered citizen journalism, and if not, how mass self-communication differs from citizen journalism, and whether or how the intentions of those in the crowd matter. Professional journalists have also worked in partnership with citizens, further complicating the question of what ought to count as journalism. I find the legal definition of

journalism established through the Madden rule as determined by the activity, content and intent of the individual, regardless of medium or professional experience, most useful here.

While many of the activities of online citizens do not originate from intentions on the part of the participants to contribute to public knowledge, some acts of citizen journalists are intended to do so. Those citizen journalists go online to post videos of events they have witnessed, or share stories and events on citizen media sites. Jay Rosen was an early advocate of the involvement of citizens in journalism, describing "the people formerly known as the audience" (2006) in glowing terms, while Gillmor (2004) calls them "the former audience" in celebrating "Grassroots journalism by the people." They and other proponents argue that citizen journalists offer perspectives and information that are outside the purview of professional journalists. As Scott Gant (2007) put it in his book "We're All Journalists Now," "Much of what is worth knowing, and worth thinking about, is neglected by the mainstream media. Now, with the rise of citizen journalism, many more people are passing on their observations and ideas, playing a role previously occupied only by members of the institutional press" (p. 45). Chris Atton (2002) also argued for the value of individual experiences, particularly as they are not limited by the embedded routines of professional news media: "These non-professional journalists who gather and present news as part of their own lives embody their own history, experience and opinions within a publication… '[O]rdinary people' can in various ways disrupt the framing of the mass media, and denaturalize the dominant social processes of the media." Sue Robinson (2011) called this part of "journalism as process," in which citizens play a participatory role in news production.

Clay Shirky (2008) connected what he called the "mass amateurization" of information-sharing to the "radical spread of expressive capabilities, and the most obvious precedent is the

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one that gave birth to the modern world: the spread of the printing press five centuries ago." As Willis and Bowman (2003) wrote, "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, by the audience it serves." Shirky compared the technological changes taking place in online communication to literacy, "wherein a particular capability moves from a group of professionals to become embedded within society itself, ubiquitously, available to a majority of citizens" (Shirky, 2008). If we accept his claims, then the capacity to create and share news content has already spread far beyond the borders of the news profession. As Castells (2007) noted "the ongoing transformation of communication technology in the digital age extends the reach of communication media to all domains of social life in a network that is at the same time global and local, generic and customized in an ever-changing pattern" (p. 239).

Axel Bruns (2008)—the Australian-based new media researcher who coined the term "produsage" to describe the activities of users who produced, consumed, used and interacted with content online, and has written extensively about the subject—contended that not only are citizens capable of providing diverse information, but that the act of communication in itself is of great benefit: "Although the shift away from professional journalists, which is also a shift to a broader base of variously qualified contributors and commentators, necessarily diffuses the messages of news, the detrimental effects of such diffusion are well made up for by the benefits from a wider societal involvement in discussing, debating, and deliberating on the implications of events in the news" (p. 91). He suggested that allowing more participants to report and analyze public information, rather than relying heavily on professionals, will provide benefits in

terms of public discourse, despite the loss of a clear focus, narrative or structure to news reporting.

Several studies have suggested that participation itself is beneficial. Daugherty et al. (2008) found that creating user-generated content, including videos, pictures, audio, blogs, drawings, and contributions to discussion forums and wikis, helped minimize self-doubt, helped people feel important, and connected users with others. Likewise, Wikipedia editors said (Johnson, 2008) they enjoyed developing skills (in both writing and collaborating), got personal satisfaction from editing, and identified with the online encyclopedia's values and its community. Many scholars have pointed to Carey's (1989) ritual communication model, which suggested that culture is constructed through the communication of news, except that now the model could include a much larger group sharing online.

Extending the discussion beyond the exchange of information, Shirky (2008) suggested that communication tools are key to citizens taking more active roles in public life, roles that are not limited by participation in public debate, but extend to governance: "our social tools have been increasingly giving groups the power to coalesce and act in political arenas. We are seeing these tools progress from coordination into governance, as groups gain enough power and support to be able to demand that they be deferred to." Jan Schaffer (2007) suggested that citizen journalism is "emerging as a form of 'bridge' media, linking traditional forms of journalism with classic civic participation." In this vein, Leadbetter (2008) argued that participation, rather than consumption or production, will be the key organizing principle of society. The benefits of participation may therefore simply lie in the users' increased sense of involvement in the public discourse. Andrew Barry, author of "Political machines: Governing a technological society" (2001), in writing about interactivity, suggested that technologies that treat people as

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participants, rather than observers, encourage—among other things—agency, democracy and self-regulation. "A crucial step in this advance towards a more participatory, active, monitorial form of citizenship is the embedding of such practices into everyday life, and again blogging and other forms of participation in continuing, produsage-based, deliberative models for discussing and debating the news provide a useful model" (Bruns 2008, p. 364).

Of course, even the ways citizens become involved in the creation of news content online vary significantly. Schaffer (2007) suggested the term 'hyperlocal citizen media' to label all of the following: sites entirely run by volunteers; owned and controlled by legacy organizations; hybrids of citizens supervised and/or trained by paid staffers; totally independent yet professional journalists operating either for profit or nonprofit, sometimes with foundation support or investors, and also incorporating citizen-written material; profit and nonprofit sites begun by individuals; and community cooperatives where volunteers, share decision-making, sometimes at formal meetings. Allan (2007), in examining the role ordinary citizens played in capturing unfolding events during the London bombings of July 2005, described the effect of computer-mediated communication on the effect and reach of citizens' contribution: "Online news is an increasingly collaborative endeavour, engendering a heightened sense of locality, yet one that is relayed around the globe in a near-instant" (Allan, 2007).

Despite enthusiasm about the presumed "outsider" perspectives of citizens widening the scope of information published, citizen journalists may use many of the same techniques for finding information as their professional counterparts. Zvi Reich (2008) studied citizen reporters published on a citizen media Web site and compared their news-discovering and news-gathering practices to those of professional journalists. He found a great deal of overlap in the types of sources used by citizen journalists and traditional journalists—senior officials of organizations

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and corporations, non-senior sources, PR and spokespersons, the Internet, firsthand encounters, information published by other media outlets, news room updates, archival material, and documents. The differences Reich found were in the extent to which the two types of journalists relied on the various kinds of sources. Likewise, citing Schudson (2003) and Tuchman (2002), Hermida (2010) noted, "The professional and cultural attitudes surrounding Twitter have their roots in the working routines and entrenched traditional values of a journalistic culture which defines the role of the journalist as providing a critical account of daily events, gathered, selected, edited and disseminated by a professional organization." Gillmor (2004) quoted former newspaper editor Tom Stites, who criticized citizen journalism as mostly the province of "a rather narrow and very privileged slice of the polity – those who are educated enough to take part in the wired conversation, who have the technical skills, and who are affluent enough to have the time and equipment." The limits of access to technology still hamper any claims to be made about the democratizing potential of citizen journalism.

Yet, as "the people formerly known as the audience" (Jay Rosen's 2006 term) increasingly engage in journalistic activities, professional journalists face a challenge to their authority, and how they respond may reveal exactly how they define their role in society, and what role that leaves for citizens and others outside the profession. Hermida (2012) wrote, "Open, networked digital media tools challenge the individualistic, top-down ideology of traditional journalism (Deuze, 2008), while services like Twitter question a news culture based on individual expert systems over knowledge-sharing (Singer, 2003)" (p. 1). WikiLeaks is but one of many organizations sharing information outside the channels of legacy journalism—one that provoked a great deal of discussion and debate, some criticism and some defense.

Collaborative journalism, crowd-sourcing and collective intelligence

Regardless of whether they are considered by scholars or critics to be citizen journalists, users who are active in the creation of content require a re-conceptualization of the audience in journalism and mass communication studies. One of the strongest arguments made by proponents of citizen journalism and other forms of collaborative journalism is that the collective intelligence created by millions of people sharing information online is a vast and valuable resource that should be promoted, not stunted. Sunstein (2006) described new media technologies that enable collective intelligence as those that allow a user to "obtain immediate access to information held by all or at least most, and in which each person can instantly add to that knowledge" (p. 219). Long before the widespread use of computer-mediated communication, Friedrich Hayek (1979) proposed that ignorance could be conquered, "not by the acquisition of more knowledge, but by the utilisation of knowledge which is and remains widely dispersed among individuals" (p. 15). A quarter century later, James Surowiecki (2004) promoted the idea that the shared wisdom of a large diverse group resulted in higher quality information: "the best collective decisions are the product of disagreement and contest, not consensus and compromise" (p. xix), much as Mill's (1859) theories about free expression proposed that allowing all opinions to be aired would ultimately result in better opinions. Surowiecki (2004) argued that larger, more diverse groups could often result in better decisions and higher quality information than smaller, elite groups. The diversity of opinions, perspectives and experiences represented by a crowd is expected to produce information that is more accurate or useful than information acquired or produced through other means. This perspective was further developed by Shirky (2008) and Bruns (2008), who separately argued that the mass of individuals online could effectively produce and filter content. Bruns coined the term "produser"

to describe individuals who both use and produce content online. Shirky (2008) noted that production by non-professionals "means that the category of 'consumer' is now a temporary behavior rather than a permanent identity." He suggests that the collective of individuals online can publish information and then filter through it ("publish, then filter"), rather than rely on legacy journalism institutions to filter the information and then publish it. Some argue, as Yochai Benkler (2006), author of "The Wealth of Networks" did, that the network of users online "promises to offer a platform for engaged citizens to cooperate and provide observations and opinions, and to serve as a watchdog over society on a peer-production model" (p. 177) and in that capacity could serve the role journalists have reserved for themselves.

Perhaps one of the reasons citizen journalism meets some resistance from journalism professionals is that the process for creating content, whether by individual citizens or a collective, differs from that of professionals. Editors, reporters and media critics (such as Skube, 2007, Dowd, 2009) have pointed to citizens' lack of qualifications and editorial oversight, sometimes mocking the image of a "guy in pajamas" pontificating about news events. Critics, including the Dean of the Columbia journalism school, Nicholas Lemann (2006), have cited such mistakes as the inaccurate reporting of Steve Jobs' death, which lead to a major drop in the stock market, and other instances of misinformation that originated from citizens sharing information online. However, this view of citizen journalism, focusing on the behavior of isolated individuals, ignores the context within which the pajama-clad blogger posts online.

Bruns (2008) listed the principles that govern the activities of produsers as open participation, communal evaluation, fluid heterarchy (as opposed to hierarchy), ad hoc meritocracy, continuing unfinished work process, common property and individual rewards. These principles informally govern much of the content creation that takes place online, and

have advantages over the more closed and hierarchical systems that generally rule legacy media organizations.

Open participation means that anyone (limits on literacy, access to technology, etc. notwithstanding) is free to participate, and draws on such theory as Surowiecki's (2004) wisdom of the crowds and Mill's (1859) theories about freedom of expression. As noted previously, researchers find benefits of participation that may be experienced by individuals, as well as the positive outcome of combining the ideas of a large, diverse group. Benkler (2006) also praised the open participation and other aspects of online produsage in describing the effect of the networked society on journalistic functions: "We are seeing the emergence of new, decentralized approaches to fulfilling the watchdog function and engaging in political debate and organization. These are being undertaken in a distinctly nonmarket form, in ways that would have been much more difficult to pursue… before the networked information environment" (p. 11). While it remains to be seen whether the network of users is able to fulfill watchdog function, at least in a few cases thus far it is evident that citizens have contributed to the monitoring of society's institutions. The cases of Senator Trent Lott's resignation as house majority leader for using a racial slur on the campaign trail and then-Senator Barack Obama referring to rural Americans "clinging" to their guns and religion are both often cited as examples of the ability of citizen journalists to bring attention to events otherwise ignored by professional journalists.

Communal evaluation was Bruns' label for the process through which the community of users online evaluates either directly or indirectly through their use of content. Echoing Shirky's (2008) "publish, then filter," the collaborative production of content online allows all information into the public eye, where it is then subject to evaluation by the whole community of users. This is the part of the process that allows participation through filtering, sorting, or rating

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rather than creating content. In many cases, it is not only content that is evaluated, but users themselves, as happens in strong online information-sharing communities, where members are invested in the success of the site and the quality of information available (Jenkins, 2006, Bruns, 2008). This type of evaluation takes place on sites as various as Wikipedia, Slashdot and Reddit, all of which depend on users to create, filter and evaluate content (Reagle, 2004).

Communal evaluation of users leads to fluid heterarchy, the term Bruns (2008) used to describe the lack of fixed structures or hierarchies in produsage, where information does not move through an established hierarchical system, thus theoretically avoiding the negative influence of entrenched structures that limit development and innovation. The difference in work processes in the creation of content by professional journalists and citizen journalists is a point of both praise and criticism. Those who champion collaborative journalism and the value of collective intelligence are opposed by those who challenge the lack of editorial oversight and hierarchical responsibility for content.

Ad hoc meritocracy describes the idea that authority is earned and can be lost, and is based not on an established role, but on performance. As Bruns (2008) wrote, "Embedded into the community on such terms, then, experts would be 'organic' members of the community rather than artificially introduced foreign bodies; they would derive their influence on the community just as much from the merits of this organic status of leadership as they would from any externally recognized expertise which they have to contribute" (p. 218). In this model, no individual or institution maintains control or authority without merit—rather influence and authority is gained and lost through the relative merit of contributions. Benkler (2006) wrote, perhaps optimistically, "the networked public sphere, as it is currently developing, suggests that it will have no obvious points of control or exertion of influence—either by fiat or by purchase"

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(p. 177). Similarly, Allan (2007) said, "The familiar dynamics of top-down, one-way message distribution associated with the mass media are being effectively, albeit unevenly, pluralized."

Continuing unfinished work process is how Bruns described the content creation process that takes place online, in which content created by users is evaluated by other users, which also further engages users in work processes that contribute to the improvement of content, and the content is never considered finished, but rather open to constant and further updating. Benkler (2006) claimed that the networked environment "makes possible a new modality of organizing production: radically decentralized, collaborative, and nonproprietary; based on sharing resources and outputs among widely distributed, loosely connected individuals who cooperate with each other without relying on either market signals or managerial commands" (p. 60). This is part of what Robinson (2011) called "journalism as process" and what Shirky (2008) pointed to in claiming that "social tools provide a platform for communities of practice." Robinson (2011) said that the process begins when a reporter or blogger or commenter "writes an article or blogs a news tip, at which point the news story comprises not only the reporter's work, but also all the comments, blogs and follow-up content sparked as a result of that original tidbit" (p. 140).

While many efforts at collaborative journalism occur organically, some are directed or led by particular organizations, whether governmental or media-related. Legacy media organizations have successfully used crowd-sourcing in an organized effort to engage users in information-seeking. The *Guardian* (UK) successfully used an online tool that allows users to search through government documents for those pages worthy of closer analysis, marking them for reporters to review later. Daniel and Flew (2010) used the case of the *Guardian* to study computational data sets in journalism and concluded, "By the use of emerging software across vast datasets, journalists may identify clues that lead to original investigations and enhanced reportage." Other

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examples include political blog TalkingPointsMemo's asking readers to read through thousands

Department of Justice documents relating to the firing of district attorneys looking for those

worth closer scrutiny. In addition, more long-term collaborative efforts between citizens and

professional journalists exist in many smaller communities (see Roberts and Steiner, 2012, for

examples of such sites).

Twitter, launched in 2006 and now boasting 175 million registered (not necessarily

active) users, made participating in online sharing and engagement even easier than blogging and

other media tools. Java et al. (2007) noted that Twitter lowered "users' requirement of time and

thought investment for content generation" (p. 2), which further lowers the barriers for

participation and thus increases the number of participants and the ease with which they can

participate, but also may increase the sheer volume of content. While Hermida (2010) noted that

social media technologies like Twitter are part of a range of Internet technologies "enabling the

disintermediation of news and undermining the gatekeeping function of journalists," he also

claimed that micro-blogging can be "seen as a form of participatory or citizen journalism, where

citizens report without recourse to institutional journalism" (p. 300). Twitter appears to be

another step in the trend in journalism that Deuze (2005) described as a shift from

"individualistic, 'top-down' monomedia journalism to team-based, 'participatory' multimedia

journalism."

Twitter has provoked some criticism from professional journalists. Alfred Hermida

(2010) cited Arrington (2008) and Sutter (2009) in noting that professional journalists have

voiced concern that "many of the messages on Twitter amount to unsubstantiated rumours and

wild inaccuracies are raised when there is a major breaking news event, from the Mumbai

bombings to the Iranian protests to Michael Jackson's death" and Goodman and Stelter in

adding, "The unverified nature of the information on Twitter has led journalists to comment that 'it's like searching for medical advice in an online world of quacks and cures' (Goodman, 2009) and 'Twitter? I won't touch it. It's all garbage' (Stelter, 2009)." *New York Times* columnist Maureen Dowd (2009) described Twitter as "a toy for bored celebrities and high-school girls."

Illustrating the complicated nature of an audience involved in producing its own content, Leadbetter & Miller (2004) called pro-ams a "new social hybrid" whose activities are "not adequately captured by the traditional definitions of work and leisure, professional and amateur, consumption and production" (p. 29), noting that as researchers they "use a variety of terms – many derogatory, none satisfactory – to describe what people do with their serious leisure time: nerds, geeks, anoraks, enthusiasts, hackers, men in their sheds" (p. 29). Other scholars have taken a more critical stance toward efforts to engage users, such as Costanza-Chock (2008), who wrote, "'User Generated Content' means free cultural product for monetization and cross-licensing, 'participation' means free user data to mine and sell to advertisers, and all user activity is subject to surveillance and censorship" (p. 857). Besides concerns about exploiting users' free labor, there are legitimate criticisms to be made about much of the content posted online. A major concern in the growth of collaborative work online is the volume of information created by these projects. Plenty of content, whether original information content or comments on content created by others (professional and citizens), is inane at best, and offensive or destructive at worst. Hermida (2010) acknowledges this: "The need to reduce, select and filter increases as the volume of information grows, suggesting a need for information systems to aid in the representation, selection and interpretation of shared information." However, advocates of a J.S. Mill approach would defend this as a necessary part of free expression, and Shirky and Bruns

might argue that the network's ability to filter that content to find what is most valuable or useful will overcome the content that is judged to be least valuable or relevant.

The model online community: Wikipedia

Wikipedia is particularly relevant to the discussion of WikiLeaks because it uses the kind of open public verification process that WikiLeaks initially implemented, and that Julian Assange has insisted provides greater accuracy than traditional journalism methods. In many ways, Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia (www.wikipedia.org), represents one of the most successful examples of collaborative work online, in which the collective intelligence of all site users is brought to bear on the creation of content. A wiki, from the Hawaiian word meaning quickly, is "a website that allows the creation and editing of any number of interlinked web pages via a web browser using a simplified markup language or a WYSIWYG [what you see is what you get] text editor. Wikis are typically powered by wiki software and are often used collaboratively by multiple users" (Wikipedia, 2011). Wikis can be used for different purposes, but the simplicity of the interface allows various users, even those with limited technical skills, to contribute to the site. Some wikis permit control over different functions and levels of access, meaning that editing rights may permit changing, adding or removing material, or simply organizing content.

Reagle (2004) called Wikipedia an "open content community," which he defined as one whose goal is to "cooperatively produce, in public view, software, technical standards, or other content that is intended to be widely shared." Wikipedia has garnered enough support and loyalty from volunteer editors who keep the site free from vandals, pranksters and inaccurate information and even prevent controversial or heavily debated pages from being overrun by

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partisans passionately divided on those subjects. Of course, this does not mean that every user is a contributor—in fact the numbers are much smaller than that: Of the billions of users, only around 100,000 participate in editing pages, and about 0.2-0.3 percent of users are very active editors (WikiStats, 2010). Without logging on, a user can immediately begin editing content on the site, which nonetheless remains largely free of vandalism due to the vigilance of other users and editors (Reagle, 2004). The content of Wikipedia, created, edited and managed entirely by users, compares favorably with the content of traditionally produced encyclopedias in terms of number of errors, and is superior in terms of breadth and timeliness of content (Giles, 2005). In addition, Bruns (2008) noted, "Wikipedia advances beyond the closed production model precisely because it can harness the enthusiasm of participants with deep knowledge in topical areas whose inclusion in a conventional encyclopedia might be considered frivolous" (p. 122). However, Bruns (2008) pointed out that "the considerable variations in content quality within the Wikipedia and the continuing lack of clarity about administrative structures within its community of users have generated a significant amount of criticism of the site and its model of content produsage" (p.118-19). Kittur et al. (2007) found that "conflict and coordination costs in Wikipedia are growing," in part caused by vandalism and user disputes. As Reagle (2004) noted, besides concerns about the small percentage of users who regularly edit content, there are also concerns about the vast disparity in participation when it comes to gender, suggesting that Wikipedia is not truly representative of the public. Nonetheless, it offers an example of the potential for an open participation system of creating information content.

Paradigm repair

Paradigm repair theory provides a useful framework for analyzing the response of professional journalists to new media, and in particular the commentary of professional journalists about WikiLeaks. Paradigm repair theory is based on Thomas Kuhn's idea of paradigm as "an accepted model or pattern." Reese (1990) compared journalists to scientists, in that, in order to make sense of the world, both professions "rely on a paradigm, which remains of value so long as it provides a useful practical guide for them and they share its underlying assumptions" (p. 391). The theory posits that professional journalistic status is based on the rituals and occupational values of a particular ideology or view of journalism. Moreover, journalists must respond with attempts to "repair" the paradigm when that ideology is challenged either by the failings of a member of the community, or by outsiders who claim to share their status. Berkowitz (2000) wrote that repairing the journalism paradigm is another practice of journalists in response to crisis: "If membership among the ranks of journalism professionals is based upon everyday ritual that produces 'correct' news, then the activity of paradigm repair can be viewed as a practice intended to bind together the interpretive community of journalists during times of stress" (p. 128). This practice involves pointing out and condemning cases that violate the paradigm and threaten to undermine its validity. Ruggiero (2004) described paradigm repair as a process by which "journalists attempt to identify and normalize violations of central tenets of the mainstream news product." In other words, "when journalists stray from correctly enacting their professional ideology in a way that is visible to both their peers and to society, ritual newswork in the form of paradigm repair is begun to demonstrate that while individuals might have strayed, the institution itself has remained intact" (Berkowitz, 2000, p. 129).

Paradigm repair comes into play when the authority or validity of the profession is challenged, as a way to reaffirm the ideology and the professional authority derived from it. Besides pointing out and reprimanding outliers or violators, paradigm repair also means establishing boundaries and excluding those who do not conform to the ideology. Ruggiero (2004) pointed to Reese's notion of "an entrenched professional community that regularly 'repairs' its hegemonic journalistic paradigm by discrediting 'rogue' media conduits as anomalies" (p. 99). As Steiner et al. (2012) explained, "If 'renegades' can be identified, journalists can blame the greed, stupidity, laziness, or pathology of individual reporters, editors, publishers or entire organizations – that is, as not merely deviant but 'exceptional.' Often a specific platform or genre is blamed" (p. 4). Efforts to identify and discredit rogues and blaming the platform or genre are part of the work of repairing the paradigm. "The professional community discursively tries to repair the damage by collectively closing ranks against perceived or real threats and clearly drawing boundaries between who can be a part of the interpretive community and who cannot, between what is and what is not acceptable practice" (Steiner et al., 2012, p. 4). The theory implies, then, that as much as journalists would be better served to respond more proactively and productively to criticism, to admit when they are wrong, and to change and improve in the face of challenges to the paradigm, such changes will be difficult. While paradigm repair may look like "defensive ossification,"[1] such efforts are nearly inevitable to a professional group.

New media, in this case online and digital media have been a target of blame and condemnation by journalists attempting to repair the news paradigm. Ruggiero's (2004) analysis of journalists' perceptions of online news content indicated that "those particularly in the

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[1] Soltan, Karol. Personal communication, Nov. 1, 2012

mainstream media were often vociferous in condemning the internet as a non-credible news source" (p. 99). In examining how professional journalists were "engaging in paradigm repair against the internet and online content," Ruggiero (2004) identified the following four areas of focus: journalistic authority, accountability, credibility of news content, and authenticity. However, he concluded that "concerted effort by journalists to repair the dominant news paradigm against incursion by the internet, while stronger a decade ago, has weakened over time" (p. 102); he suggested that new targets would emerge. WikiLeaks, as a different kind of information-publishing site, may prove to be a target of efforts at exclusion by journalists engaging in paradigm repair.

The act of paradigm repair may primarily take place in the opinion pages of the newspaper: "Often in paradigm repair, the media institution accomplishes its task by engaging in a series of editorials and opinion pieces identifying a scapegoat and explaining how the wrongdoing occurred" (Berkowitz, 1997, p. 500). Likewise, Ruggiero (2004) wrote, "In the last decade newspaper editorialists and columnists, in particular, appeared to engage in paradigm repair" (p. 99). The editorials, columns and op-eds that were the object of analysis in this study are thus likely to be the site of efforts at paradigm repair.

The defensive stance of journalists engaged in paradigm repair may not be beneficial for society at large. As Shirky (2008) wrote in discussing professions generally: "Professional self-conception and self-defense, so valuable in ordinary times, become a disadvantage in revolutionary ones, because professionals are always concerned with threats to the profession…But in some cases the change that threatens the profession benefits society, as did the spread of the printing press; even in these situations the professionals can be relied on to care more about self-defense than about progress."

Relationship between professional journalists and newcomers

One of the effects, and even requirements, of professionalization is the exclusion of non-professionals from the practice, and paradigm repair is an effort to clarify who is excluded. But if professional journalists are distinguished from non-professionals on the basis of their work routines and occupational values and ethics, new media of communication that have extended mass communicative abilities to a larger part of the public have also made it more difficult to determine what counts and does not count as journalism. The occupational control of professional journalists is increasingly challenged by citizens with the means to record, share and analyze information in text, visual and audio, as well as the ability to access data from a variety of sources, and engage with fellow citizens online. Legacy media's adoption of new technologies has further confused the issue, as newspaper reporters keep blogs and post Twitter updates. Meanwhile, many blog sites unassociated with legacy media organizations pay writers.

Clay Shirky (2008) compared the changes happening to journalism professionals to those that affected scribes (workers who copied books and other documents by hand): "A professional often becomes a gatekeeper, by providing a necessary or desirable social function but also by controlling that function…sometimes it is embedded in technology, as with scribes, who had mastered the technology of writing." He described gatekeepers [not to be confused with journalists' description of their work as gatekeeping] as those who were charged with "providing and controlling access to information, entertainment, communication, or other ephemeral goods" and wrote, "The pattern here is simple—what seems like a fixed and abiding category like "journalist" turns out to be tied to an accidental scarcity created by the expense of publishing apparatus." He concluded, "anyone in the developed world can publish anything anytime, and the instant it is published, it is globally available and readily findable. If anyone can be a

publisher, then anyone can be a journalist" (2008). Lowrey and Anderson (2005) suggested that increased transparency in journalism and audience participation could contribute to a weakening of journalists' authority, explaining: "increased transparency may weaken the occupation's authority as well as its 'specialness' in the eyes of the public." The question this raises, then, is how do professional journalists position themselves in a world full of would-be journalists who no longer need special skills to put information in public view? This is a key point in understanding the relationship between WikiLeaks and professional journalists.

Professional journalists have been critical of new players making forays into journalism in various contexts. Public journalism, bloggers, user-generated content and Tweets have all received skeptical, if not explicitly dismissive treatment from professional journalists. Allan (2009) described the negative response of professional journalists to citizen journalism: "A further line of attack was to challenge the credibility of the internet as a news provider, typically by characterizing online sites as being inherently untrustworthy—and lacking in the objectivity, professionalism, and independence members of the public expected" (p. 20). As Ruggiero (2004) found in his analysis, "those particularly in the mainstream media were often vociferous in condemning the internet as a non-credible news source" (p. 99).

Of course, an exclusionist attitude towards newer media is nothing new. Ritchie (2005) noted several examples of journalists taking concrete action to limit the activities of those working in new media: "The newspapermen who ran the original press gallery in the U.S. Congress set rules that denied press passes to magazine writers and radio broadcasters. The excluded correspondents petitioned Congress and received their own separate galleries, from which they in turn excluded newcomers who failed to meet their rules" (p. xiii); "Associated Press members took the most rigid stance by restricting radio's use of AP News to late-breaking"

(p. 50). "From the telegraph to radio, television, and digital electronics, technological innovations not only speeded delivery of the news but stimulated competition within the media. Each invention introduced a new group of reporters who felt less bound by their predecessors' rules and traditions. Over time, the outsiders invariably forced the veteran insiders to adjust to new practices. But initially reporters for each new media met stiff resistance from the press corps's establishment" (Ritchie, 2005, p. xiii). Online media have been no exception. Singer (2003) noted, "As the Web entered their consciousness in the mid-1990s, [journalists'] immediate reaction was to distinguish between their skills and values and those of the people producing content online" (p. 147). The consequences in some cases might have meant exclusion from press areas or news services, but there may be other consequences with even greater import.

On the other hand, how journalists adopt and use new media reflects a more complicated relationship. Hermida (2010) wrote that in dealing with Twitter, legacy journalists have not adopted new work processes, but rather that "Journalists apply normative news values to determine if a specific tweet is newsworthy." He also suggested that in response to the growing volume of content on micro-blogging networks, "one of the future directions for journalism may be to develop approaches and systems that help the public negotiate and regulate this flow of awareness information, facilitating the collection and transmission of news" (Hermida 2010, p. 302). The purpose of journalists and those systems would be to "identify the collective sum of knowledge contained in the micro-fragments and bring meaning to the data" (Hermida 2010, p. 302). In a similar vein, Lynch (2010) suggested that "something unexpected might be happening in the interaction between Wikileaks and the media; rather than Wikileaks simply influencing journalists' reporting practices, it might also be the case that journalists have begun to influence

the direction of the site, changing it from a place where they might come across unfamiliar material to a place where they might store documents they have obtained in their own reporting without fear of legal reprisal" (p. 316-7). Despite resistance from professional journalists, there are many ways in which legacy media have incorporated the new media practices or tools. Hermida (2010) noted that "Twitter has been rapidly adopted in newsrooms as an essential mechanism to distribute breaking news quickly and concisely, or as a tool to solicit story ideas, sources and facts" (p. 300), a development that has led "news organisations such as the New York Times (Koblin, 2009), Wall Street Journal (Strupp, 2009), and Bloomberg (Carlson, 2009) to institute Twitter policies to bring its use in line with established practices."

Meanwhile, some excluded from the profession appear to want and seek validation from professionals, while denying professionals' exclusive claims to authority. Specifically, Lynch (2010) cited WikiLeaks' own "aggressively proactive" attempts to bring their leaks to the attention of journalists and the apparently contradictory ambivalence expressed by the WikiLeaks collective with regards to their relationship with the press: "But it is also apparent on the site's own website, which is critical of the media even as promises to serve as a tool for and ally of reporters" (p. 312).

WikiLeaks

WikiLeaks is an emerging area of research, presumably because, although the site was launched in 2007, it only became well known—and highly controversial—years later, in 2010. Various conferences and symposia on the subject indicate a great deal of interest in WikiLeaks; for example, UNESCO, Personal Democracy Forum, Georgetown Law Constitution Project, and

the Center for 21st Century Studies have all hosted symposia or panels on WikiLeaks. There have also been several books published about WikiLeaks, including one by a former member of the organization, and, for the most part, these are discussed in chapter 4 on the history of WikiLeaks, given that they document the organization rather than offer research about it.

WikiLeaks was not the first site to offer the functionality it did. Cryptome.org was established several years before WikiLeaks by John Young and Deborah Natsios, self-described architects of information. The site bears the banner "Unauthorized disclosures of secrets are essential for democracy. 'Responsible disclosure' is corrupt." The site has hosted documents, including a list of agents working for MI6, the British secret service, suppressed photographs of U.S. soldiers killed in Iraq, and 4,000 photos of the Iraq War killed and maimed. It has received far less attention than WikiLeaks from the legacy news media, but has nonetheless faced similar difficulties in terms of evictions from servers, PayPal blocking payments, and criticism from professional journalists (Cryptome, 2012). Nor will WikiLeaks be the last such site. Similar sites have been created with far less public attention, but nonetheless provide for useful comparison and may indicate the value of what WikiLeaks does. OpenLeaks.org was launched in September 2010 by several people formerly involved with WikiLeaks, according to the site, and offers an alternative to the model developing at WikiLeaks: "OpenLeaks is unique in that we do not receive or release documents ourselves. Instead, we provide the technology and experience from our past to enable more entities, institutions and others, to process information that may be vital to our society" (OpenLeaks, 2011). However, the site is not yet operation and has not been the subject of any news coverage or commentary. Significantly, in May 2011, *The Wall Street Journal* launched "SafeHouse," a site where users can "securely share information with The Wall Street Journal" (SafeHouse, 2011) and the *New York Times* was reportedly developing its own

version of a document-leaking site. These and other related developments will be discussed in the chapter on the history of WikiLeaks and in the literature review, which addresses how legacy journalists have adopted elements of new media.

Charlie Beckett and James Ball (2012) offered a definitive account of the history of WikiLeaks in terms of its significance for journalism, noting that WikiLeaks experimented with many of the forms and means of alternative media, including Wikis, crowd-sourcing, forums and email lists (Beckett and Ball, 2012). They argued that WikiLeaks is significant because it is a prototype for the shift in the nature of news "from a closed, linear structure to a more open, networked and collaborative process" (Beckett and Ball, 2012, p. 3), with these simple guiding principles: "to protect sources, to publish everything" (p. 6). However, they also called WikiLeaks a "disruptive political project" designed to "attack the networks of information secrecy that sustained the networks of power" (Beckett and Ball, 2012, p. 40). Their account of WikiLeaks was written largely from a perspective accepting the claims of the ideology of professional journalists.

Yochai Benkler (2011) wrote the most comprehensive examination of the various attacks on WikiLeaks by the government, journalists, banks and others, as well as the constitutional framework, and the causes of action available to members of the Fourth Estate facing attack. He wrote,

> We cannot afford as a polity to create classes of privileged speakers and press agencies, and underclasses of networked information producers whose products we take into the public sphere when convenient, but whom we treat as susceptible to suppression when their publications become less palatable. Doing so would severely undermine the quality of our public discourse and the production of the fourth estate in the networked information society. (Benkler, 2011, p. 42).

He also noted that law is not the only "operative dimension," and that the "social-political framing of the situation, alongside the potential constraints the government feels on its legal chances and political implications of attempting to prosecute, as well as the possibility of using the various extralegal avenues we saw used in this case, have a real effect on how vulnerable an entity is to all these various forms of attack" (p. 64).

Benkler found in his analysis of major print newspaper stories about the release of the diplomatic cables that "(t)raditional media outlets provided substantial support for the Administration's framing by exaggerating the number of cables and implying a careless approach to their release" (p. 18). He also found inaccuracy and misleading reports in news articles about WikiLeaks in terms of phrases used and numbers of cables leaked: "About 20% of the stories in major newspapers were clear and accurate on the question of how many cables were released at that time, and how vetted and redacted those cables published were" (Benkler, 2012, p. 19). This is to say that 80 percent were not clear and accurate. Add to that the "relatively heavy emphasis on the sexual molestation charges against Assange in Sweden" (p. 20), and the news coverage as analyzed by Benkler appeared to be both inaccurate and focused on personal attacks on Assange.

Mark Coddington (2012)—whose research was published after the analysis for this dissertation was completed, but nonetheless provides a useful exploratory study to put it in context—examined how the *New York Times* and the *Guardian* (UK) responded to WikiLeaks, in particular three dimensions of the professional journalistic paradigm that were violated by WikiLeaks: institutionality, source-based reporting routines, and objectivity. He found that the *Times* portrayed WikiLeaks as "journalistically deviant to defend its profession's institutionality, source-based reporting routines, and objectivity against what it perceived as breaches of its paradigmatic boundaries," while the *Guardian* "largely did not consider WikiLeaks' lack of

relationship with official sources or its advocacy-based approach threatening to its professional norms, though it also emphasized WikiLeaks' noninstitutional characteristics as a way to separate the group from its profession" (Coddington, 2012, p. 378).

Terry Flew and Bonnie Riu Liu (2011) studied the reactions of Australian online news sites to the WikiLeaks release of the diplomatic cables through opinion and commentary. They claimed that WikiLeaks "exemplifies a wider context of what McNair has termed cultural chaos, where digital media and ubiquitous computing power are shifting the boundaries between journalism and the wider society, from a context of information scarcity to one of information abundance" and also "raised issues about who and where are the investigative journalists of the 21st Century" (Flew and Liu, 2011, p. 5). The authors claimed that WikiLeaks "has revived an understanding of journalism as being about promoting radical transparency and challenging government secrecy in foreign policy….consistent with earlier traditions of investigative journalism, such as the publication of the Pentagon Papers in 1971, updating such techniques to an age of digital networks and ubiquitous information" (Flew and Liu, 2011, p. 9). Their study found "little in the way of calls for punitive action against Assange" in Australian media

Lisa Lynch (2010), at Concordia University, explored the extent to which the site was used by professional journalists and how the site articulated its relationship with the press, claiming that WikiLeaks is radical not only in its content, practices and form, but "because its form, content and practices are inextricably woven together in a new kind of delivery platform only made possible through the emergence of technologies that many journalists are still negotiating with a fair amount of caution" (p. 311). In connecting WikiLeaks to the various new media sites and phenomena enabled by computer-mediated communication, Lynch (2010) agreed with Benkler (2006) that WikiLeaks exemplifies "the emergence of a critical information media

that is indebted neither to states nor markets" (Benkler, 2006, p. 310). The fact that WikiLeaks is

free from the traditional structures, hierarchies and even legal limitations governing many media

organizations means that it is both a potential threat to authority figures and one of the most

unconstrained means of releasing information. The reality of the site's operation, however, may

not truly be free from the structures and legal limitations that are imposed on legacy media

organizations. At the very least, WikiLeaks frequently worked with legacy journalists to report

information in context before releasing the unfiltered documents, and even extolled the reports

by professional journalists about their document dumps, indicating reliance on and promotion of

the authority of mainstream journalists—and through that at least some degree of indebtedness to

states or markets.

University of Tennessee graduate students Iveta Imre, Ivanka Radovic and Catherine

Luther (2012) conducted discourse analysis of WikiLeaks in newspapers in Great Britain,

France, Australia and China, finding three shared thematic patterns in news items: "the idea that

Internet speech should not be censored and that those who protect it are heroes"; "that the

Internet empowers ordinary people to fight against governments"; and "that the U.S., as a free

speech advocate, is a hypocrite when it tries to suppress Internet free expression in cases in

which the content endangers U.S. national interests." Edgar Simpson (2012), professor at Central

Michigan University, found evidence of a "transborder public sphere" by examining viewer

comments posted online in response to the publication of reports in *The New York Times* and *The

Guardian* (UK) based on the documents published by WikiLeaks.

Micah Sifry (2011) wrote in "WikiLeaks and the Age of Transparency" that "The 'Age of

Transparency' is here: not because one transnational online network dedicated to open

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information and whistle-blowing named WikiLeaks exists, but because the knowledge of how to build and maintain such networks is now widespread."

Conclusion

This chapter has attempted to provide an analysis of how the profession of journalism has evolved, on what basis journalists claim professional status, including work practices and occupational ethics and how their work practices and ethics compare to those of new digital communication media. These practices form an ideology that guides the processes of paradigm repair, as journalists lay claim to and construct boundaries around these professional characteristics and exclude outsiders. A significant body of literature on new media for sharing information, how they work, and what happens when people engage with these media suggests that the new media create and are governed by new hierarchies, new rules for participation and evaluation, and new ways to determine accuracy and authority. As Singer (2005) aptly pointed out, "The question of 'who is a journalist' online will only become more, not less, provocative as roles, norms and practices become increasingly fluid" (p. 193). Paradigm repair theory would predict that raising this question is likely to provoke efforts from journalists to strengthen the boundaries of their profession. Lynch (2010) claimed, "Though one can make the claim that Wikileaks' pushing of legal and ethical norms makes it marginal to such conversations [about innovative efforts to reinvigorate journalism], it is equally true to say that Wikileaks is unsettling to journalists because it represents a radical shift in the way information is collected and distributed in the media landscape" (p. 310). However, if WikiLeaks made public information being kept secret by governments and provided to it by insiders with access, this process may

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only be radical from the perspective of an entrenched profession interested in protecting its place in the media landscape. As WikiLeaks promotes an ethic of greater source transparency, and challenges journalists to reconsider their roles relative to government and power elites, it raises the question of which practices better fulfill the ethical goals that journalists claim. If journalists attempt to repair the news paradigm by chastising an organization that performs the very functions it has claimed, they may risk defining the journalism paradigm too narrowly.

This research seeks to examine journalists' opinion of, and support for, WikiLeaks, an element that holds crucial importance when it comes to the status of professional journalists, and others in new media who seek to contribute to public information. While it seems apparent that the work of providing the voting public with the information it needs to make choices for self-government has been dramatically changed by the technology that enables information sharing, it remains to be seen whether journalists—who consider themselves specially charged to provide that information—will redefine who or what counts as journalism, and why. The response to WikiLeaks by professional journalists offers insight into how journalists define themselves, how they engage in paradigm repair to distinguish their profession from WikiLeaks, and how they respond to challenges from new media for information-sharing.

CHAPTER 3. Methods

      This study analyzes the responses of professional journalists to WikiLeaks, using the case of WikiLeaks as a lens through which to view journalism's response to challenges from new media for communication and information-sharing. The assumption is that these responses provide some insight into how professional journalists define their status and those who are excluded from journalistic status in the face of changing communication media. As discussed in the previous chapter, a great deal of research has been done on the practices of citizen journalists and the inclusion of participatory journalism practices in professional media organizations. The various seminars, panels and symposia on WikiLeaks indicate a great deal of interest in the site and its activities, most of it focused on the site's role as a tool or replacement for investigative reporting. But as a newcomer to the information-sharing world, WikiLeaks has been the subject of little research published to date, although, in the wake of the controversy, a flurry of studies are just now starting to emerge. The primary object of analysis is the published critique and commentary by professional journalists of the WikiLeaks organization and its activities. Frame analysis is used to examine the discourse around WikiLeaks. This method is particularly appropriate for analyzing discourse and will provide a rich understanding of the commentary about WikiLeaks and what the case of WikiLeaks reveals about professional journalism and journalists, broadly defined.

      The published commentary and critique by journalists is a useful object of analysis in examining the response to WikiLeaks for several reasons. First and most importantly, published commentary is an explicit expression of opinion or stance on the WikiLeaks organization, rather than the implicit opinion or stance that may be embedded in news coverage but would necessitate more interpretation to draw out. As Richardson and Lancendorfer (2004) note,

"Editorials are a particularly robust site for examining press attitudes toward controversial issue…Unlike news personnel, editorial writers are not constrained by journalistic norms of objectivity and balance. The opinion page is just that—a place where editors can bluntly state exactly what they think" (p. 75). Secondly, the explicitly stated opinions are available for analysis, discussion and response; directly entered in the discourse. As the object of interest in this study is the response of journalists—the assertions or critiques they made, delineations they attempted to make—it is only necessary to examine the encoded message, trying to determine what meaning journalists have put forth.

A qualitative approach is well-suited to exploring these questions because of the complexity of the language and the terms used, as well as the negotiations of relationships they represent. Rich textual analysis will provide an opportunity to make sense of the public communication of and about the information and what can be learned from it. Frame analysis allows for an examination of the meaning created or the interpretative framework suggested by the author. The openness of the analytical approach, as well as its reliance on both deductive and inductive interpretation, leaves room for exploration.

The object of analysis

The major area of analysis was the discourse created around WikiLeaks, including how the organization was discussed by journalists—professional and citizen, which is revealing in terms of both the language used and the messages promoted by different players. The focus of this analysis is commentary and critique, rather than news stories, published in text in print or online by professional journalists. I defined commentary as written pieces clearly reflecting an

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opinion and found in the opinion or editorial section of the publication, although the borders between commentary and analysis and news are blurred; and these distinctions are not always hard and fast. Where I encountered materials where the definition was unclear, I have erred on the generous/inclusive side. For example, many articles that featured a narrative tone of voice and expressed a clear opinion but were not published in the opinion section were included, as well as commentary published online that was not explicitly labeled as either opinion or news (although web-published commentary was included only when it came from professional journalists).

Research questions

RQ1: How did professional journalists frame the actions of WikiLeaks?

How is the organization described in the article? What terms are used, and by whom (academics, government officials, banks, professional media personalities, citizen journalists) in discussing the organization? How is the problem or issue defined?

RQ2: How did professional journalists situate WikiLeaks in relation to journalism?

Where and when is the work of WikiLeaks described as journalism? Who calls it journalism? What is offered to WikiLeaks when it is designated an organization of journalism? What is denied to WikiLeaks when journalistic status is refused, or another status is conferred? What do journalists gain by maintaining exclusive claim to journalistic status? What is the significance of journalistic status to WikiLeaks?

Population and sample

A thorough search of opinion pages was conducted, in an effort to find all the columns, op-eds and opinion pieces published about WikiLeaks by mainstream commercial newspapers and legacy news media. Trade publications (such as *Quill*, *Columbia Journalism Review*, and *American Journalism Review*) and weekly magazines (*Forbes*, *The Atlantic*, *The New Republic*) were included, as they also employ professional journalists, and provide a forum for journalists to share opinions. Various searches of U.S. publications were conducted using LexisNexis, Factiva, and ProQuest. These searches were supplemented with Google search and individual newspaper database searches to ensure thoroughness. The *Editor & Publisher International Year Book* list of the top 100 dailies by circulation was used to identify the top 20 daily newspapers, by circulation. Those newspapers were: *The Wall Street Journal*, *USA Today*, *The New York Times*, *The Los Angeles Times*, *Washington Post*, *The New York Daily News*, *New York Post*, *Chicago Tribune*, *Houston Chronicle*, *Philadelphia Inquirer*, *Newsday*, *Denver Post*, *Arizona Republic*, *Minneapolis Star Tribune*, *Detroit Free Press*, *St. Petersburg (Fl.) Times*, *Chicago Sun-Times*, *Cleveland Plain Dealer*, and *The Boston Globe*. The online archives of those newspapers were searched to find any articles that may not have appeared in the database search results. Further snowball sampling was used when reading commentary published on the websites of newspapers or magazines, as columnists often referred to or linked to commentary by other journalists. Opinion-based blog posts published on the websites of legacy media organizations were included, as they were written by professional journalists working for legacy media organizations, albeit publishing on a new medium.

The analysis was limited to commentary in U.S. publications, largely due to the importance of the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution in the conception of professional

journalists' roles and responsibilities in this country, and the fact that the four most substantial

and commented-upon leaks were of documents containing information classified as secret by the

U.S. government and relating to activities of the U.S. government or armed forces. Commentary

from outside the United States was excluded in order to maintain a single national context, with a

common legal and institutional framework for journalism. News stories that appeared in the

search results were excluded. Commentary that was primarily about the U.S. government's

behavior or conduct as reflected in the leaks, and mentioned WikiLeaks only as a background

fact in the story—specifically, if "WikiLeaks" did not appear more than twice in the piece, was

excluded from the analysis. Op-eds written by non-journalists were excluded. Editorials or

opinions that were about Julian Assange personally (about the sexual assault charges against

him, for example) and did not address WikiLeaks' activities or the legitimacy of the organization

were also excluded. However, as a central figure in the organization, and its main

spokesperson—who was often used as a proxy for WikiLeaks—Julian Assange received special

consideration in the analysis. News coverage of the legal battles often centered around Assange,

and news coverage of his personal legal troubles featuring sexual assault charges was prominent

at exactly the same times that stories about the documents released by WikiLeaks were

published—appearing when the Afghan War Diary was released, disappearing, then resurfacing

again at the time of the diplomatic cables. Several profiles were written about him, the sketch

comedy program *Saturday Night Live* featured parodies of him, and he appeared in news

programs as the focus of reports about his legal troubles, as well as the WikiLeaks controversy.

Altogether, 187 editorials, columns, and op-eds were found that fit the criteria for this

analysis. Of these, 107 were opinion columns or blog posts written by columnists, staff writers or

journalists, including editors, public editors and the founder of *USA Today*, Al Neuharth; 49

editorials (attributed to the editorial board of the newspaper rather than to an individual author), and the remaining 31 were by op-ed contributors (academics, attorneys, government officials, and activists), who were included only when they were also journalists in some capacity, even if not employed by the newspaper in which they were published. Most of the commentaries were published by a handful of newspapers: *The Washington Post* (42), *The New York Times* (41), *Wall Street Journal* (20), *New York Post* (14), *The Christian Science Monitor* (13), *New York Daily News* (11), *USA Today* (8), and *Houston Chronicle* (8). Two individual columnists wrote about WikiLeaks five times: L. Gordon Crovitz for the *Wall Street Journal*, and Marc Thiessen for *The Washington Post*. Several others wrote about WikiLeaks at least three times: Noam Cohen in *The New York Times*, Anne Applebaum, Richard Cohen, Al Kamen, and Dana Milbank in *The Washington Post*. However, the editorial boards of these newspapers were most frequently commenting on WikiLeaks. The boards of the *New York Daily News* and the *New York Post* each published seven editorials about WikiLeaks; the *Wall Street Journal* published six; *The New York Sun* five; *The Christian Science Monitor*, *The Washington Post* and *USA Today* four each; and *The New York Times* four (in addition to three special notes from the editors about using the WikiLeaks documents as a source, published alongside stories based on the documents).

Only seven of the commentaries in the sample were published before July 2010. In July 2010, 29 were published; another 11 were published in August 2010 and one more in September 2010. Following the release of the Iraq War Logs, eight more commentaries were published, and then—following the publication of the diplomatic cables in November 2010—107 commentaries were published before the end of December 2010. In 2011, 22 more were published, more than half before April, and in 2012 two more were published, one a "postscript" about WikiLeaks in

2010, and the other about the publication in 2012 of another set of secret documents. The greater part of my attention in this study is therefore given to the November 2010 release of diplomatic cables and the three months following this "data dump," during which discussion of WikiLeaks in major news media became particularly prominent. The main period under consideration included the major actions of WikiLeaks in 2010: the April posting of a video from an incident in which Iraqi civilians and journalists were killed by U.S. forces, the July release of the "Afghan War Diary"—more than 75,000 documents about the U.S. war in Afghanistan, the October release of the "Iraq War Logs"—in excess of 400,000 documents about that war, and the November release of U.S. State Department diplomatic cables.

Although not part of the analysis, Chapter 4 provides a brief history of WikiLeaks and a description of its structure and operations. I describe WikiLeaks' newsgathering and publication activities, the levels of editorial oversight and control in the organization, as well as transparency and how participation is sought from users, comparing the site to other media and websites. This chapter provides the context needed to determine how the portrayal of WikiLeaks compared to the reality. In other words, knowing whether and how the site is misperceived or mistaken by journalists requires knowing how it operates. In the literature review and in chapter 4, I attempt to situate the activities of WikiLeaks in the current model of information-sharing. Other elements of the WikiLeaks affair besides commentary may bear on the discussion. For example, although not the object of analysis, the fact that the same newspapers published articles based on the information released by WikiLeaks may indicate a more complicated relationship between journalists and the site. In addition, opinions of others who think about journalism—media scholars, government officials dealing with media, and citizen journalists—were used as a point of comparison for the opinions of professional journalists, but these opinions were the primary

object of analysis. Commentary published in newspapers and websites based outside the U.S. were also considered for comparison, again, not as a primary object of analysis, but in order to provide context or a point of comparison for commentary published in the U.S.

Frame analysis

Frame analysis was used to determine how the problem or issue was defined in each commentary, who or what is blamed for causing the problem or issue, and what solutions are implied or offered. I was particularly interested, of course, in how journalists constructed, negotiated, renegotiated, defended and/or criticized WikiLeaks; the responses or behaviors of their own news organizations and, more likely, their competitors for using or not using the documents released by WikiLeaks, and the justifications for those criticisms; and how they distanced themselves from Assange.

Frame analysis is often described as a method of discourse analysis, primarily concerned with determining how an issue is defined and problematized, and the effect this has on the broader discussion of the issue. According to Entman (1993), "Analysis of frames illuminates the precise way in which influence over a human consciousness is exerted by the transfer (or communication) of information from one location—such as a speech, utterance, news report, or novel—to that consciousness" (p. 51).

Defining framing

Entman (1993) defines framing as follows: "To frame is to select some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a communicating text, in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation for the item described" (p. 52). News frames "are constructed from and embodied in the key words, metaphors, concepts, symbols, and visual images emphasized in a news narrative" (Entman, 1991, p. 7). According to Kuypers (2009), frames operate in four key ways: they define problems, diagnose causes, make moral judgments, and suggest remedies. Kuypers (2009) offers the following useful definition: "Framing, then, is the process whereby communicators act—consciously or unconsciously—to construct a particular point of view that encourages the facts of a given situation to be viewed in a particular manner, with some facts made more or less noticeable (even ignored) than others" (p. 182). Hall (1980) and Lippman (1922) noted that complex political issues must be translated—or "encoded"—by journalists into an understandable format. As Lippman (1922) noted, "Reducing a complex political issue into a news report entails a series of selections, setting forth a limited number of facts, sources, and perspectives." Although neither Entman nor others—myself included—make claims about the ability of framing to directly or consistently influence the audience's perception of events, Entman (1991) does write that framing makes "opposing information more difficult for the typical, inexpert audience member to discern and employ in developing an independent interpretation" (p. 8). Using the idea of framing as the central organizing idea or structure found within a narrative account of an issue or event, Reese (2003) defined frames as "*organizing*

principles that are socially *shared* and *persistent* over time, that work *symbolically* to meaningfully *structure* the social world" (emphasis in original).

Tankard (2003) identified three distinct ways the framing metaphor has been used in looking at media content: the 'picture frame' metaphor, in which certain information is included and other is excluded; the tone; and the frame as organizing structure around which a story is built. Illustrating the 'picture frame' metaphor, Entman (2003) described framing as "selecting and highlighting some facets of events or issues, and making connections among them so as to promote a particular interpretation, evaluation, and/or solution." Ghanem (1997) offered a multi-dimensional depiction of media frames, using the picture frame metaphor in her description of framing attributes. She used the following four dimensions in her analysis: (1) subtopics of a news item (what is included in the picture frame); (2) presentation or framing mechanisms (size and placement of the frame); (3) cognitive attributes (details of what is included in the frame); and (4) affective attributes (tone of the picture).

Regarding the affective attributes, the tone of a frame can be analyzed through "tonality analysis," described by Michaelson and Griffin (2005) as "an analysis that uses a subjective assessment to determine if content is either favorable or unfavorable to the person, company, organization or product discussed in the text" (p. 4). Examples of research on tonality can be found in the analysis of frames in consumer product advertising (Smith, 1996) and the news coverage of company mergers (Kweon, 2000). DiStaso et al. (2007) and DiStaso and Messner (2010) applied tonality analysis when they examined the positive, negative and neutral frames in Wikipedia articles on Fortune 500 corporations.

Valkenburg et al. (1999) claim that the literature points to "at least four ways in which news is commonly framed: (a) by emphasizing conflict between parties or individuals (conflict frame); (b) by focusing on an individual as an example or by emphasizing emotions (human interest frame); (c) by attributing responsibility, crediting or blaming certain political institutions or individuals (responsibility frame); and (d) by focusing on the economic consequences for the audience (economic consequences frame)." A conflict frame emphasizes conflict between individuals, groups, or institutions as a way to capture audience interest, and is commonly seen in political news coverage, particularly during election campaigns, reducing "complex substantive political debate to overly simplistic conflict (Patterson, 1993)" (Valkenburg et al., 1999). The human interest frame presents an event, issue or problem through the lens of an individual's story or an emotional angle. The responsibility frame presents an issue or problem in such a way as to attribute responsibility for causing or solving a problem to the government or to an individual or to a group. The economic consequences frame presents an event, problem, or issue in terms of the economic consequences it will have on an individual, group, institution, region, or country. The conflict frame appears repeatedly in the literature as a common frame in news. Neuman, Just and Crigler (1992) noted that journalistic tradition, "which emphasizes telling 'both sides of the story' and the impulse to put together an interesting narrative, if possible with good guys and bad guys, leads to a heavy media emphasis on forces in conflict" (p. 66). Besides the conflict frame, frames that were common in commentary about WikiLeaks were similar to the economic consequences frame, in the sense that they presented an event, problem or issue in terms of the consequences it would have for an individual, group, institution or country, but in the case of WikiLeaks, the commentary more often focused on the political

consequences that the event, problem or issue might have, or the consequences for freedom of expression, journalism and information-sharing.

Shanto Iyengar (1991) suggested that frames fall into two categories: episodic and thematic. Episodic frames isolate a particular event from the surrounding context or background information, which tends to emphasize the role and responsibility of the individual in causing an event. Thematic frames result when more emphasis is placed on the surrounding context and background information, and its responsibility for a given situation. Thus a news item can be framed in a particular way in terms of the topic, and also based on the amount of context information provided.

In the commentary about WikiLeaks analyzed here, both episodic and thematic frames were found. Of the 187 commentaries analyzed, 125 used episodic framing. When journalists used episodic framing in commenting about WikiLeaks, the focus of the commentary was completely on the most recent information that had been published on the WikiLeaks site and what the immediate impact of that information might be or what action was required in response to that event, and judgments were offered about WikiLeaks based on that most recent publication, rather than the broader context—for example, the broader goals and principles of WikiLeaks, the importance of previous publications, or the culpability the government or others might have had in the information released. In the 62 commentaries using thematic framing, more background and context information was offered in judging WikiLeaks and its importance.

Editorials and op-eds

Van Dijk (1995) offers the following useful definition: "editorials are public, mass communicated types of opinion discourse par excellence. After opinion programs on TV like talk shows, and together with the Op-Ed articles (i.e. opinion articles that are placed at the Opposite page of the Editorial page in much of the U.S. press) of columnists and other writers, they are probably the widest circulated opinion discourses of society, whether or not all readers of the newspaper read them daily." Editorials have evolved along with legacy news media and the profession of journalism. Rystrom (1983) identified several phases in the history of the editorial, beginning with early American press, when opinion was often incorporated in the news with little distinction, eventually becoming a forum for powerful individuals, such as newspaper owners and editors, or political figures to voice opinions, until the modern era, when they are largely published as unsigned columns representing the views of the editorial board.

Editorials, opinion columns and op-eds are generally located in a particular section of a newspaper (or website). In magazines they may be less clearly separated from other news or informational content. Although van Dijk (1996) found no conventions dictating the format for editorials, he pointed out the following schematic structures that they generally follow: summary, evaluation and pragmatic conclusion (recommendation, advice, or warning). Bolivar (1994) described these three elements as the lead (introducing the topic), follow (evaluating the topic) and valuate (evaluating the other two elements). The evaluation or follow and valuate or pragmatic conclusion are the elements of most interest in this research, because they reflect the opinion of the writer.

Procedure

The unit of analysis for the study was the individual commentary or critique. Each text was coded for publication, author, date of publication (year/month/day), whether a photo accompanied the story and what was in the photograph. The source of the commentary, whether a legacy media organization (the editorial staff), a new media organization, an individual journalist, or other party, was noted in the coding of articles. Finally, each text was coded for the following elements or dimensions of framing:

1. The problem or issue identified
2. Solutions implied or offered
3. Terms used to refer to or describe WikiLeaks
4. Whether free speech is invoked, and on whose behalf
5. Whether legal issues are invoked, and on whose behalf
6. Whether professionalism in journalism is invoked, and to what end
7. Whether emphasis is on the means of acquiring information (illegal leaks) or on the content of the information published (newsworthiness, the public's right to know)

For each reference to WikiLeaks, its activities, or Julian Assange and his activities, any descriptive words or phrases that were used were noted in the coding sheet. As the analysis progressed, additional elements were added, including what types of sources were quoted in the commentary, and as dominant frames emerged, articles were placed in those categories, as appropriate. Coding for episodic versus thematic the framing was added to the analysis. The coding of free speech, legal issues and professionalism all fell within the broader framing categories and were not central to the coding process. The emphasis on the means of acquiring information or the informational content also fell neatly into news topic framing categories. Finally, the consideration of photographs was ultimately left out, given that fewer than one in 10

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units included a photograph and almost all of them featured a headshot of Julian Assange—while this underscored the emphasis on the individual, it did not add any new information to the analysis. The terms used to describe Assange in commentary were coded separately from the terms used to describe the WikiLeaks organization and the information it released.

Once articles were coded, the notes were grouped by date, news organization, news topic frame, problem or issue defined, and trends or recurring topics were identified and analyzed. Some broad news topic frame categories emerged as most common: political consequences, information consequences and conflict. In some cases a particular commentary might have been categorized as using both a conflict frame and political consequences frame, or a conflict frame and an information consequences frame (for example, those about "cyberwarfare"), the commentary was coded according to the frame that was primary or dominant. For example, if a commentary featured in-depth discussion of the impact of WikiLeaks' actions on various political players, and the role of WikiLeaks in world affairs, it was coded as using a political consequences frame, whereas if it charged WikiLeaks with damaging U.S. political affairs, but offered little analysis of how it did so, and included much discussion of how to "get" WikiLeaks, or criticism of its supporters, it was included under the category of conflict frames. The problems and solutions that were defined, as well as the terms used to refer to WikiLeaks, were also organized, and trends identified.

Semetko and Valkenburg (2000) distinguish between the inductive and deductive approaches to content-analyzing frames in news. "The inductive approach involves analyzing a news story with an open view to attempt to reveal the array of possible frames, beginning with very loosely defined preconceptions of these frames," while the deductive approach involves predefining frames and verifying the extent to which the frames appear in the news (p. 94). I

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used an inductive approach, which allowed for closer reading of the text and consideration of the tone and implied meaning of words and phrases. In identifying conflict frames, for example, Semetko and Valkenburg (2000) asked the following questions: Does the story reflect disagreement between parties-individuals-groups-countries? Does one party-individual-group-country reproach another? Does the story refer to two sides or two more than two sides of the problem or issue? Does the story refer to winners and losers? I used the questions suggested by Semetko and Valkenburg as a guide in identifying conflict frames.

The largest number of commentaries—94—fell under the category of political consequences, meaning that the problem or issue regarding WikiLeaks was framed in terms of the political consequences it would have for an individual, group, institution, region, or country. The second-most common category was consequences for journalism and information, which was used in 48 commentaries. The third-most common category of frames was conflict, which appeared in 36 commentaries. Some journalists used a frame that could fall under multiple categories, particularly when the commentary was framed in terms of political consequences, but also conflict; in these cases the commentary was categorized according to the dominant frame.

The fifth chapter discusses the findings of the analysis of terms used in reference to or in describing WikiLeaks or Julian Assange. The sixth chapter discusses the findings of the framing analysis, providing more detail about the specific frames used and examples of the various frames found in commentary.

CHAPTER 4. A Brief History of WikiLeaks

This chapter describes the information-sharing activities and processes of WikiLeaks in

to show where it fits in the current environment of media and information-sharing. The chapter

first explains the origin and establishment of WikiLeaks, the make-up of the organization, and its

goals and functional processes. Following this is a brief summary of the history of the

organization's activities, noting in particular how WikiLeaks has interacted with the press, the

government and banks, which were simultaneously the target of some of the information

published by the organization and the vehicle for its funding.

Origin and organizational structure

WikiLeaks describes itself on its website as a not-for-profit media organization working

to report on and publish important information, and to develop and adapt technologies to support

the publication of this information, primarily the creation of "an uncensorable system for

untraceable mass document leaking." The domain name wikileaks.org was registered in 2006 by

the Sunshine Press, described by Julian Assange as "an international non-profit organization

funded by human rights campaigners, investigative journalists," although it is unclear how the

Sunshine Press is separate from or synonymous with WikiLeaks. The WikiLeaks site officially

launched with the publishing of the first document—a "secret decision" to execute government

officials, signed by a Somali rebel leader—in December 2006, although the WikiLeaks "About"

page lists its launch year as 2007. Journalists and other observers sometimes discussed The

Sunshine Press and WikiLeaks as if they were interchangeable, but other times they made an

effort to distinguish between the two organizations. Julian Assange, who has been the public

representative of WikiLeaks and is generally described as its founder, described what the site

does as "scientific journalism," which he defined as reporting that provides source documents so readers do not rely on journalists' interpretations. Assange (2010, December 8) has said it "allows you to read a news story, then to click online to see the original document it is based on. That way you can judge for yourself" (para. 6). The WikiLeaks site describes its purpose as bringing "important news and information to the public" and states that one of its most important activities is "to publish original source material alongside our news stories so readers and historians alike can see evidence of the truth." The nature of the source material and news stories published by the organization will be described later in this chapter.

Assange has described the site as largely his idea, growing out of his involvement in cryptography and human rights. He told PBS' Martin Smith in an interview, whose transcript appears on the WikiLeaks Press page, that "protecting human rights workers using cryptography...also showed that privacy is an important part of spreading knowledge. [The] ability to be able to communicate privately helps people spread knowledge out to the public for these human rights workers in South America" (WikiLeaks, 2011, May 24). Assange grounded the ethical justification for WikiLeaks in the need for information in a democracy, claiming that the press lacks full access to information and editorial freedom: "We also needed to protect the publishing side, because there was a lot of press self-censorship and a lot of assertive, direct censorship in different countries" (WikiLeaks, 2011, May 24).

Initially WikiLeaks was to be a "wiki" site, allowing edits by users. The "About" page read:

> To the user, WikiLeaks will look very much like Wikipedia. Anybody can post to it, anybody can edit it. No technical knowledge is required. Leakers can post documents anonymously and untraceably. Users can publicly discuss documents and analyze their credibility and veracity. Users can discuss interpretations and context and collaboratively formulate collective publications. Users can read and write explanatory articles on leaks

along with background material and context. The political relevance of documents and their verisimilitude will be revealed by a cast of thousands.

However, within months, the site changed its model, limiting the input of users such that they were able to upload documents to the site's servers, but not to post information directly on the site. Users were no longer able to post content directly to the site or edit it. Until 2010 users were still able to engage in discussion about leaks, as the site's FAQ explained: "Users can publicly discuss documents and analyse their credibility and veracity." The site moved to new servers and was relaunched in 2010, and posting comments was no longer permitted. Along with the change to a more tightly controlled publishing model, WikiLeaks announced an editorial policy that was described by Assange as follows: "we accept information of diplomatic, political, ethical or historical significance that is under active suppression, that has not been published before." He claimed that this "concise and clear editorial policy" was unique among media organizations.

The fundamental structure necessary for the operation of WikiLeaks is a secure server where users can anonymously submit documents, and the site has retained this key feature. WikiLeaks uses several software packages that are designed to allow users to anonymously upload documents to an encrypted server in such a way that the identity of the user and originating internet address of the upload could not be traced. As noted in the literature review, WikiLeaks was not the first site to do this: As discussed in the literature review, cryptome.org had published documents, including a list of agents working for MI6, the British secret service, as early as 1999. WikiLeaks was exceptional in the quantity of leaks it received and the publicity its leaks generated.

WikiLeaks uses encrypted servers to receive the information submitted online and also servers to host the site's information and make it available on the Internet. The submission servers use encryption to protect the data, and then direct traffic through very private virtual

tunnels that make it difficult to determine where it originated. These tunnels are also flooded with hundreds of thousands of fake submissions to obscure the real ones. Nonetheless, the security of the site's data and its online submission system became a point of contention. Domscheit-Berg (2011), who worked for WikiLeaks for nearly three years before being suspended by Assange due to disagreements over the handling of documents, and left to start his own document-leaking site, OpenLeaks.org, claimed in his personal account of the WikiLeaks story that the site had serious security breaches: "there was a chink in our security we had overlooked" (p. 45). But he also claims that Assange encouraged him to obfuscate the situation when speaking to journalists. "To create the impression of unassailability to the outside world, you only had to make the context as complicated and confusing as possible… I would make my explanations of technical issues to journalists as complex as I could. They in turn often did not want to admit their lack of knowledge and, exhausted, gave up" (p. 45). Assange has not responded publicly to those allegations.

The WikiLeaks site was first hosted by PRQ, a company based in Sweden that provides "highly secure, no-questions-asked hosting services to its customers," yet has "almost no information about its clientele and maintains few if any of its own logs" (Goodin, 2008). Starting in August 2010, the Swedish Pirate Party, a political party dedicated to copyright reform and privacy rights, agreed to host several new WikiLeaks servers free of charge (CNN Wire staff, 2010, August 18). A few weeks later WikiLeaks moved some portion of its servers to a data center owned by Swedish broadband provider Bahnhof that were located 30 meters below ground inside a Cold War-era nuclear bunker carved out of a large rock hill in downtown Stockholm (Greenberg, 2010, August 30). The rest of the data was in servers around the world. Swedish law is particularly strong in protecting the press—it is prohibited for any administrative

authority to make inquiries about the sources used by any type of newspaper. In order to further protect itself from attacks online or in court, Wikileaks "maintains its own servers at undisclosed locations, keeps no logs and uses military-grade encryption to protect sources and other confidential information" (Goodin, 2008).

In late 2010, the site was the target of denial-of-service attacks—a variety of methods used by hackers to overwhelm a network and make content unavailable to users—so the site was moved to Amazon's servers. Shortly thereafter, however, the website was "ousted" from the Amazon servers (Gross, 2010, December 2). To justify its decision, Amazon released a public statement that WikiLeaks was not following its terms of service, in part because "WikiLeaks doesn't own or otherwise control all the rights to this classified content" (Amazon Web Services, 2010). WikiLeaks then moved its site to the servers of OVH, a privately-owned web hosting company in France, where it presumably remains. No further information has been released regarding the location of its servers.

Operations

A few details about the operation of the organization have been made public through interviews with journalists and information published on the WikiLeaks site. The WikiLeaks About (2011) site states, "When information comes in, our journalists analyse the material, verify it and write a news piece about it describing its significance to society. We then publish both the news story and the original material in order to enable readers to analyse the story in the context of the original source material themselves" (section 1.2). Now that the public is no longer part of the verification process, submissions are vetted by a group of five "journalists," the site asserts, with expertise in different fields such programming or language skills, according

to Assange (Khatchadourian, 2010, June 7), in an effort to ensure that no fake documents are published. WikiLeaks' team of journalists also investigates the background of the leaker if his or her identity is known, although how the organization would know the identity of a leaker or what they would do with that information if they had it is not explained. Domscheit-Berg (2011) wrote that the policy of transparency (i.e. determining what information should be made available to the public) at WikiLeaks was applied evenly, regardless of political leaning or impact. As he put it, "We only filtered out what was irrelevant" (p. 27). Nonetheless, the process for or authority to determine what counted as relevant was not explained by Domscheit-Berg. Relevance seems to be a subjective judgment likely made by the WikiLeaks staff—whoever they may be, as that information was also mostly kept secret. The personnel who have been publicly identified are discussed later in this chapter. Assange has said he makes the final decision about the assessment and publication of a document, and has also claimed that WikiLeaks has never released a misattributed document (Kushner, 2010). No other details about the process are public. The contradiction in the self-promoted mythology of WikiLeaks regarding transparency appears frequently in the rhetoric from the primary spokespersons, Assange and Domscheit-Berg, and from other advocates and supporters of the organization. Assange and others often assert the failings of legacy media organizations and the need for more openness in information, while simultaneously maintaining a great deal of secrecy in their own operations.

In many ways WikiLeaks functioned largely in a way not dissimilar to the legacy media organizations they criticize: a team of individuals with an editor-in-chief who has final say over what gets published. With regard to concerns about the possibility of misleading or fraudulent leaks, WikiLeaks has charged that misleading leaks—presumably intentionally misleading information leaked by government insiders and others—"are already well-placed in the

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mainstream media. WikiLeaks is of no additional assistance" (WikiLeaks, 2011). The site's FAQ

states, "The simplest and most effective countermeasure is a worldwide community of informed

users and editors who can scrutinise and discuss leaked documents" (WikiLeaks FAQ, 2011).

WikiLeaks' current publishing model, however, only allows for scrutiny from the worldwide

community after documents have been published by the organization.

The organization was reportedly receiving about 30 submissions a day in 2010, and

posting those it found credible, accompanied by commentary and titles. Notwithstanding claims

by some journalists, as will be seen in the chapter on framing, that WikiLeaks simply placed

information online without context or explanation, WikiLeaks actually offered a substantial

amount of analysis along with documents. A journalist wrote of Assange in 2010, that "Because

[he] publishes his source material, he believes that WikiLeaks is free to offer its analysis, no

matter how speculative" (Khatchadourian, 2010). Domscheit-Berg (2011) justified it another

way: "we were concerned about being able to supplement documents with vital additional

information or to prevent media sources from linking to documents that create false impressions

if read without commentary. That was why we wrote summaries and occasionally offered

judgments about the quality of our material" (p. 54). When it came time to make public the

largest collection of leaked documents the organization had received, however, WikiLeaks chose

to work with legacy media to analyze and report the information.

WikiLeaks pays its operating costs through donations. The Wau Holland Foundation, a

German-based nonprofit foundation, provides "key back-office services" for WikiLeaks'

operations and accepts donations on behalf of WikiLeaks and holds the funds in escrow.

WikiLeaks is required submit to the foundation an application with proof of payment each time it

seeks reimbursement for an expenditure (Daly, 2010). Donations to the foundation can be made

using online money site PayPal or credit cards. This enabled PayPal and banks to prevent

customers' funds from reaching the organization in 2010 when WikiLeaks released information

of which they disapproved. The blocking by various major banks of donations to WikiLeaks put

the organization in financial trouble, according to various posts on the homepage. For most of

2011 and 2012, the homepage stated that the organization was in peril and listed the

organization's expenses and days since the banking blockage began. The homepage was a plea

for donations with a video titled "WikiLeaks Needs You," featuring Julian Assange explaining

the information made public by the organization and the attacks it has faced from governments,

institutions and banks. The publicity and appearance of financial ruin also may have elicited

more contributions from supporters.

Goals and principles

Many of WikiLeaks' stated goals and principles are nearly identical to those of the

ideology of professional journalists as discussed in this dissertation. WikiLeaks' About (2011)

page states that "the principles on which our work is based are the defence of freedom of speech

and media publishing, the improvement of our common historical record and the support of the

rights of all people to create new history," specifically pointing to Article 19 in the Universal

Declaration of Human Rights, relating to the right to freedom of opinion and expression. In

explaining why "the media (and particularly WikiLeaks) is important," the site states:

> Publishing improves transparency, and this transparency creates a better society for all
> people. Better scrutiny leads to reduced corruption and stronger democracies in all
> society's institutions, including government, corporations and other organisations. A
> healthy, vibrant and inquisitive journalistic media plays a vital role in achieving these
> goals. We are part of that media.
> Scrutiny requires information. Historically, information has been costly in terms of
> human life, human rights and economics. As a result of technical advances particularly
> the internet and cryptography - the risks of conveying important information can be

lowered. In its landmark ruling on the Pentagon Papers, the US Supreme Court ruled that "only a free and unrestrained press can effectively expose deception in government." We agree. (WikiLeaks About, 2011, section 1.3)

The "About" page further describes how the organization's goals relate to democratic government, noting "Open government answers injustice rather than causing it. Open government exposes and undoes corruption. Open governance is the most effective method of promoting good governance... the need for openness and transparency is greater than ever. WikiLeaks interest is the revelation of the truth. Unlike the covert activities of state intelligence agencies, as a media publisher WikiLeaks relies upon the power of overt fact to enable and empower citizens to bring feared and corrupt governments and corporations to justice" (WikiLeaks About, 2011, section 3.2).

The "About" page also explains how WikiLeaks sees its role relative to other media: "WikiLeaks has provided a new model of journalism. Because we are not motivated by making a profit, we work cooperatively with other publishing and media organisations around the globe, instead of following the traditional model of competing with other media. We don't hoard our information; we make the original documents available with our news stories. Readers can verify the truth of what we have reported themselves. Like a wire service, WikiLeaks reports stories that are often picked up by other media outlets. We encourage this. We believe the world's media should work together as much as possible to bring stories to a broad international readership." The ''About'' section of the WikiLeaks site asserts that its authentication process, which combines forensic analysis of leaked documents with the public assessment allowed by a wiki interface, is more reliable than the authentication methods of legacy journalists: ''Peddlars (sic) of misinformation will find themselves undone by Wikileaks, equipped as it is to scrutinize leaked documents in a way that no mainstream media outlet is capable of'' (Wikileaks About,

2011). Thus WikiLeaks claims to provide a superior alternative to the mainstream media process, and yet is not fully committed to the collaborative journalism model, existing somewhere between these two alternatives.

Personnel

The site describes its collaborators as a "network of volunteers" that includes accredited journalists, software programmers, network engineers, mathematicians and others. Most of the individuals who have worked for WikiLeaks have done so on a volunteer basis, although the site began paying salaries in 2010. In a January 2010 interview, Assange stated that WikiLeaks had five people working full-time and that 800 others had occasionally contributed to the site over its few years of operation. Most contributors to WikiLeaks have remained anonymous, as contributors within the organization knew each other only by initials or code names. An early version of the WikiLeaks "About" page described its founders as a mix of Chinese dissidents, journalists, mathematicians, and start-up company technologists from the United States, Taiwan, Europe, Australia, and South Africa. At first Assange was described only as "an official" and "member of the advisory board" (AFP, 2007), but he quickly became the organization's most prominent member and its spokesperson. He is the most well-known and vocal representative of the organization. He is generally called the founder of WikiLeaks, but once described himself as "the heart and soul of this organisation, its founder, philosopher, spokesperson, original coder, organizer, financier, and all the rest" (Burns & Somaiya, 2010).

Several people have been publicly associated with WikiLeaks, but left the organization, while some others became publicly known only after they left. Former members who have been identified or who have identified themselves include Herbert Snorrason, a 25-year-old political

activist in Iceland, who is said to have questioned Assange's judgment over a number of issues; Smari McCarthy, an Icelandic volunteer who has distanced himself in the turmoil of 2010; Sarah Harrison, Assange's aide; James Ball, a data expert; Jacob Appelbaum, WikiLeaks' representative in the United States; Israel Shamir, described by Domscheit-Berg only as an associate of WikiLeaks; Ben Laurie, a British encryption expert who advised Assange; Rop Gonggrijp, a Dutch activist, hacker and businessman who helped with the "Collateral Murder" video; Birgitta Jonsdottir, an Icelandic parliamentarian and supporter; Daniel Domscheit-Berg, a German who had been the WikiLeaks spokesman under the pseudonym Daniel Schmitt and was suspended from the organization by Assange in 2010; and Kristinn Hrafnsson, an investigative journalist in Iceland and member of the Sunshine Press Productions company. No other members are publicly known, and it is unknown to what degree some of these former members may still be involved. Whether due to the legal, political and financial challenges the site faced, or to personal conflicts with Assange, the staff of the organization appears to be in flux. At the very least, the secrecy WikiLeaks eschews in public institutions is maintained when it comes to the organization's own staff, which may have made the organization vulnerable to criticism. Many critics, journalists and others, made reference to the secrecy of WikiLeaks and the resulting lack of accountability in suggesting it was an illegitimate journalism organization, as will be discussed in chapter 6 on framing.

Published leaks

In January 2007, just months after its launch, WikiLeaks announced it had already received 1.2 million documents waiting to be published, a process that was limited by the site's policy of screening documents before publication. Some reports suggested that many of those

documents were acquired simply through the process of testing the site's ability to protect data, and gathering data from Chinese hackers' channels. Regardless, as previously mentioned, the first document posted to the newly-launched WikiLeaks site was a decision signed by Sheikh Hassan Dahir Aweys, head of the council of the Islamic Courts Union of Somalia, to assassinate government officials. Later in 2007 WikiLeaks gave information to *The Guardian* that led to the publication of a story alleging that Kenyan President Daniel arap Moi and his associates had stolen two billion dollars of state funds. Moi threatened to sue WikiLeaks, but never followed through. The leak was published on the WikiLeaks site under the title, "The looting of Kenya under President Moi," along with some analysis of the importance of the document. This is an example of WikiLeaks framing the information it posted, rather than simply putting it out to the public in unaltered form, as was often suggested by critics. The site received an award from Amnesty International for the report, which Assange also claimed influenced the following election in Kenya, when polls shifted away from the candidate backed by Moi.

In publishing many of the leaked materials it received, WikiLeaks handled the documents or videos internally, posting them online and providing some analysis or context, and also sharing with newspapers or reporters from the relevant region. However, when it came to the three major leaks of 2010, WikiLeaks essentially outsourced the work of analyzing and contextualizing, working with legacy media organizations that had the expertise in international affairs—as well as the means to reach a larger audience—before posting on its own site. Below is a table listing the date and informational content published by WikiLeaks, where else it was published, and the response from governments, legacy media organizations and other institutions.
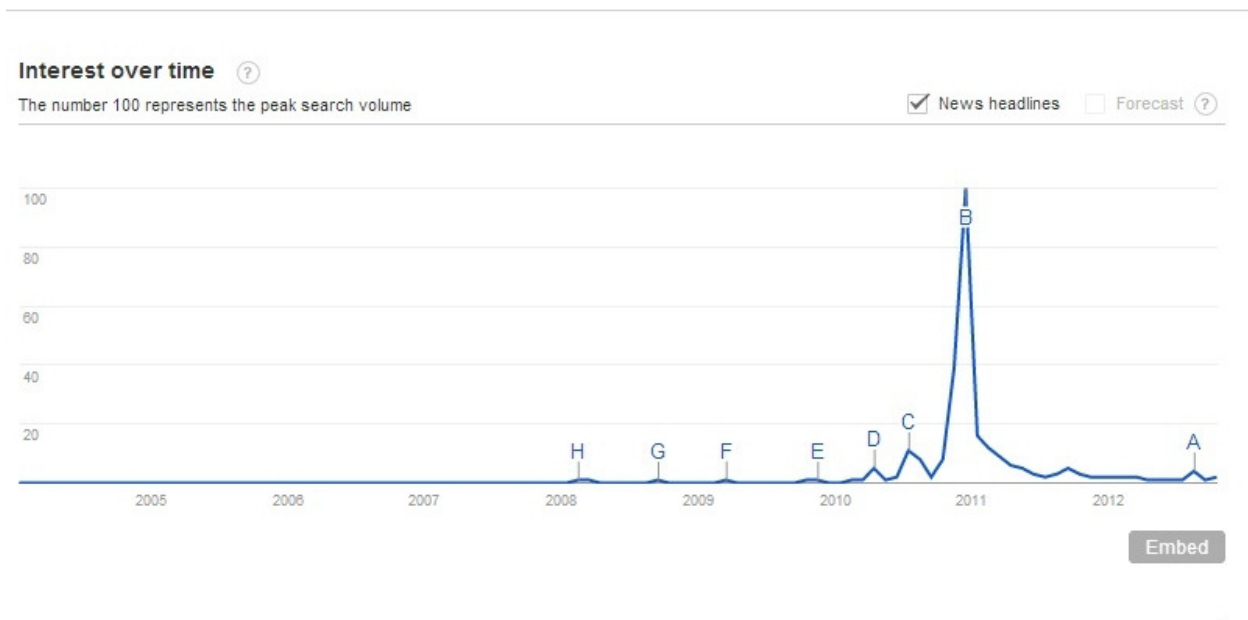
History of Leaks

Month/Year	What was leaked	What was published	Response
November 2007	March 2003 copy of Standard Operating Procedures for Camp Delta, a guide to U.S. Army protocol at the Guantanamo Bay detention camp, revealing deceptive practices used by the Army to hide some prisoners from members of the International Committee of the Red Cross, behavior that the U.S. military had repeatedly denied	Stories were published in *USA Today*, *Wired* and Wikinews (unaffiliated with WikiLeaks, but part of the WikiMedia Foundation group of sites that includes Wikipedia)	None reported
February 2008	Documents pertaining to anonymized trusts in the Cayman Islands for clients of the Swiss bank Julius Baer from 1997 to 2002, including ten names of clients, from the United States, Spain, Peru, Germany, Greece, Hong Kong, and Switzerland	WikiLeaks titled the documents "Bank Julius Baer: Grand Larceny via Grand Cayman" and claimed they provided evidence of hidden assets, money laundering and tax evasion.	Julius Baer sued WikiLeaks, seeking an injunction from a California judge to remove the documents from the site, but since WikiLeaks had failed to name a contact, the judge had the service provider block the domain. Mirror sites went up to ensure the content would be available despite the injunction
March 2008	Secret Scientology manuals. WikiLeaks worked in conjunction with the "hacktivist" organization Anonymous, which procured the documents and helped prepare the site and documents for posting	WikiLeaks published what it called the "collected secret 'bibles' of Scientology"	Scientology officials threatened to sue for breach of copyright and demanded the material be removed, but they never filed a suit. In response to the threat, WikiLeaks published more of Scientology's internal material
May 2008	The first American fraternity handbook	On WikiLeaks site, little U.S. legacy media coverage	None reported
June 2008	Documents from the "Memorandum of Understanding in Kenya."	On WikiLeaks site, little U.S. legacy media coverage	None reported
September 2008	Contents of the Yahoo! email account belonging to Sarah Palin (the running mate of Republican presidential nominee John McCain), hacked by members of Anonymous	The gossip and news website Gawker published the Palin emails after they were made public on WikiLeaks. The story was covered by The Guardian (UK) and *Wired*	The FBI and Secret Service opened an investigation into the hacking. Domscheit-Berg (2011) says WikiLeaks learned from this experience that the public's imagination was captivated by leaks that were "easily understood

			and discussed by the masses" (p. 49)
November 2008	Report by a legal aid foundation about political killings carried out by Kenyan police	On WikiLeaks site, little U.S. legacy media coverage	None reported
November 2008	Membership list of the far-right British National Party that had briefly appeared on a blog	On WikiLeaks site, little U.S. legacy media coverage	None reported
December 2008	German secret service documents about corruption in Kosovo	On WikiLeaks site, little U.S. legacy media coverage	None reported
December 2008	The 2008 Human Terrain Team handbook	On WikiLeaks site, little U.S. legacy media coverage	None reported
February 2009	More than 6,700 Congressional Research Service reports, and inadvertently published the email addresses of WikiLeaks donors	On WikiLeaks site, little U.S. legacy media coverage	None reported
March 2009	Database of supporters of U.S. Senator Norm Coleman	On WikiLeaks site, little U.S. legacy media coverage	None reported
July 2009	List of the biggest debtors to the Icelandic Kaupthing Bank	On WikiLeaks site, little U.S. legacy media coverage	None reported
July 2009	Report relating to a nuclear accident at the Natanz facility in Iran.	On WikiLeaks site, little U.S. legacy media coverage	None reported
September 2009	More documents from Kaupthing Bank, showing large sums of money being loaned to owners of the bank and large debts written off shortly before the collapse of the Icelandic banking sector and ensuing financial crisis.	On WikiLeaks site, little U.S. legacy media coverage	None reported
October 2009	Second list of BNP members	On WikiLeaks site, little U.S. legacy media coverage	None reported
November 2009	The 9/11 pager messages	On WikiLeaks site, little U.S. legacy media coverage	None reported
November 2009	An investigators' report about a major German pharmaceutical company	On WikiLeaks site, little U.S. legacy media coverage	None reported
November 2009	The Toll Collect contracts, a complicated collection of 10,000 pages of secret contracts between the German government and Toll Collect—a joint venture of Daimler-Benz, Deutsche Telekom and French highway company Cofiroute—to set up an electronic toll system guaranteeing Toll Collect a 19 percent return that would inevitably be paid by taxpayers.	WikiLeaks worked with two German journalists to get the information out, an experience that Domscheit-Berg described as disappointing because WikiLeaks was not given enough credit as the source of the leaked documents.	None reported

| November 2009 | The email correspondence of David Irving | On WikiLeaks site, little U.S. media coverage | None reported |
| December 2009 | Field reports concerning the bombing of two tanker trucks in Kunduz | On WikiLeaks site, little U.S. legacy media coverage | None reported |

WikiLeaks received support and recognition from various legacy media organizations and observers a few times during these first years. In 2008 when Julius Baer sued WikiLeaks and an injunction was issued by the judge for the service provider to block access to the entire wikileaks.org site, mirror sites (an exact copy of an Internet site on another server) immediately went up to ensure the site's content would be available despite the injunction. WikiLeaks published this statement on its site: "The Wikileaks injunction is the equivalent of forcing *The Times*'s printers to print blank pages and its power company to turn off press power." Two weeks after granting the injunction, the judge reversed his decision, following a motion from the American Civil Liberties Union and the Electronic Frontier Foundation protesting the censorship of WikiLeaks, and an *amicus* brief filed by a media coalition assembled by The Reporters Committee for Freedom of the Press (RCFP). The media coalition included most major news organizations in the U.S. (Orion, 2008). WikiLeaks received an Amnesty International Media Award in June 2009 and an award from Ars Electronica in the "Digital Communities" category in September 2009. In November 2009 WikiLeaks initiated the idea of a free haven for the media, leading to the Icelandic Modern Media Initiative (IMMI) to create the first "global safe haven for investigative journalism" (International Modern Media Institute, 2012); work on that began a few months later, in January 2010. Figure 1 charts the interest in WikiLeaks as reflected by Google results over the period from 2007 to 2012.

Figure 1. Interest in WikiLeaks over time as measured by number of news headlines

2010

Up until this point, WikiLeaks had received only scattered media attention in the United

States. However, 2010 was the most significant year for WikiLeaks in terms of media coverage

of the organization and of the information it leaked. In February 2010, WikiLeaks published the

first of the classified documents allegedly provided to it by U.S. Army Private Bradley Manning,

who would figure prominently in the subsequent leaks of that year, including the publication of

hundreds of thousands of documents on the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan as well as State

Department cables. This first document was a diplomatic cable from the U.S. Embassy in

Reykjavik on the dispute between the UK and Iceland over the "Icesave" banking offered by

Icelandic bank Landsbanki, which was placed in receivership in 2008. This first document

received little media attention. A month later WikiLeaks released State Department profiles of Icelandic politicians.

In April 2010, WikiLeaks published the "Collateral Murder" video, in both edited and uncut form. The video featured "gun-sight" footage from a 2007 airstrike in Baghdad in which 12-18 Iraqi civilians and journalists were killed by a U.S. Apache helicopter, and was titled "Collateral Murder." Reuters, employer of two of the killed journalists, had unsuccessfully sought access to the footage from the U.S. Army through a Freedom of Information Act Request in 2007. WikiLeaks received the footage from an unnamed source and reported that it took three months to crack its digital encryption, although later revelations from Domscheit-Berg and statements from Bradley Manning suggest that Manning encrypted the file to send it to WikiLeaks, and separately sent the password. Assange first presented the footage to a group of about 40 journalists at an event at the National Press Club in Washington, D.C. The video was then posted on the WikiLeaks site under the title "Collateral Murder," along with a preface including a note from Assange to the effect that the order to fire had been given before it was clear whether the group of civilians had any firearms, and on YouTube and other sites.

Coverage of the video by other media often explored different interpretations of the events, including the military's claims that the camera held by one journalist looked like a weapon. Assange was reportedly increasingly frustrated by the discussion of these interpretations that gave credence to the army's version of events. However, with the release of the video came donations—more than $200,000.

On July 25, 2010 WikiLeaks published "The Afghan Diaries," a log of 77,000 reports relating to the U.S. Government's operations in Afghanistan. The documents had been provided to *The Guardian* (UK), *The New York Times*, and *Der Spiegel* (Germany) several weeks prior,

and these newspapers published reports the same day the documents were published on WikiLeaks. The three newspapers had worked separately on their reports, but agreed to publish simultaneously, and wait for the date WikiLeaks would also post on its site. The leaked documents contained information on the deaths of civilians, the involvement of Pakistan and Iran in supporting the Taliban in Afghanistan, detainment facilities and procedures, and the names of informants. Assange compared the release of "The Afghan Diaries" to the publication of the Pentagon Papers. Bradley Manning, the alleged source of the leaked material, was arrested on May 26, 2010, two months before the majority of the documents was made public.

This release received the most media attention of any leak yet, whether because of the content or the cooperation with professional media organizations is difficult to determine. Besides reports about the content of the leaks, many news organizations raised questions about WikiLeaks' responsibility in releasing the names of anti-Taliban informants, among others. The *Guardian*'s reporters recounted the following exchange in a book about WikiLeaks published in 2011: "At an early meeting with international reporters in a restaurant he told them: 'Well, they're informants,' he said. 'So, if they get killed, they've got it coming to them. They deserve it.' There was, for a moment, silence around the table" (Leigh & Harding, 2011, n.p.). Ultimately the news organizations redacted the documents and WikiLeaks posted the redacted versions on its site as well. The decision to post some documents without removing the names of informants, attributed largely to Assange, is blamed for causing the internal discord at WikiLeaks that later resulted in the departure of Domscheit-Berg and several others. Leigh and Harding (2011) pointed out that "six months after the first publication of the war logs, no one has been able to demonstrate any damage to life or limb" (n.p.).

The U.S. Justice Department reportedly began exploring ways to take legal action against Assange. In December 2010, the Department of Justice issued a subpoena ordering Twitter to release information about Assange's account, but Twitter resisted. The site's continuing viability was also brought into question by challenges to its funding and hosting. Banks and the online payment system PayPal blocked donations to WikiLeaks. Following threats of legal action, including arrests, and increased denial-of-service attacks, on July 29 WikiLeaks posted an AES-encrypted file of 1.4 GB ostensibly containing various secret information to act as "insurance" against any attack on the individuals involved in the organization.

In August 2010, WikiLeaks published documents concerning the planning of the Love Parade electronic dance music festival in Duisburg, Germany during which 21 people died due to a crowd rush. Also in August a warrant was issued for Assange's arrest in Sweden, but later withdrawn. The charges are said to concern sexual misconduct. Assange has acknowledged that he had sexual encounters with the accusers, but that the encounters were consensual.

On August 26, Assange suspended Domscheit-Berg, and a few weeks later Domscheit-Berg and others left the organization, and registered OpenLeaks.org as a domain name. Domscheit-Berg copied and then deleted several files from the WikiLeaks servers prior to leaving, saying he would return them when WikiLeaks restored security (Zetter, 2011). On December 30, 2010 Domscheit-Berg presented OpenLeaks at the Chaos Communication Congress, a conference for hackers and other counter-cultural individuals. As noted in the literature review, OpenLeaks.org claimed to be different from WikiLeaks in that it does not deal with documents, but enables others to publish them. However, as stated in the literature review, the site has not been operational and has not generated major news coverage.

After Domscheit-Berg's departure, WikiLeaks continued with its major activities, publishing the Iraq War Logs in late October, in conjunction with the publication of several stories in major newspapers—again, *The New York Times*, *The Guardian* (UK), *Le Monde* (France), and *Der Spiegel* (Germany). The documents numbered 391,832 and illuminated the effect of the Iraq War on increasing the government's reliance on private contractors, as well as revealing a greater number of Iraqi citizen fatalities than had been made public, and details about the abuse of Iraqi prisoners by Iraqi allies of the U.S. The day after publishing the Iraq War Logs, the *New York Times* published on the front page a profile of Assange that reflected negatively on Assange and featured several quotations from disgruntled associates or former associates who criticized Assange and how he was running the organization. For example, it included the following: "*The New York Times* spoke with dozens of people who have worked with and supported him in Iceland, Sweden, Germany, Britain and the United States. What emerged was a picture of the founder of WikiLeaks as its prime innovator and charismatic force but as someone whose growing celebrity has been matched by an increasingly dictatorial, eccentric and capricious style" (Burns & Somaiya, 2010). Already reportedly frustrated with the newspaper's failure to link directly to WikiLeaks, Assange black-listed the *Times* from any future advance access to leaks. Denial-of-service attacks from hackers then forced WikiLeaks to move its servers to Amazon, but soon after, Amazon removed WikiLeaks from its servers citing failure to comply with the terms of service, and WikiLeaks installed itself on the servers of OVH.

On November 28, 2010 WikiLeaks published a selection of the huge cache of U.S. State Department diplomatic cables they had received, simultaneous with the publication of stories based on the cables in the five cooperating newspapers: *The New York Times*, *The Guardian*, *Der Spiegel*, *Le Monde* and *El País*. The Times received access to the documents from *The Guardian*,

rather than directly from WikiLeaks due to Assange's dissatisfaction with the *Times*. Several other newspapers from various countries began reporting on the leaks after the initial stories were published, also publishing some of the original cables.

On December 1, 2010 Interpol issued an international warrant for the arrest and extradition to Sweden of Assange on charges, which apparently had resurfaced, of sexual misconduct. Assange turned himself in to police in London on December 7 and was released on bail a week later. An extradition hearing was held in February 2011 and the warrant was upheld, but the next month Assange's lawyers filed papers to challenge the extradition ruling. In November 2011 the appeal was denied; then in December Assange's lawyers received permission to appeal to the Supreme Court, arguing that warrants are not valid when a suspect is only wanted for questioning. Assange remained under house arrest in the UK until June 2012, when he applied for political asylum at the Ecuadorian embassy. In August 2012 he was granted asylum by Ecuador and entered the embassy in London, where he remained as of publication.

By 2011, Assange—who remained under house arrest, or "conditional bail," for the entire year—had become a symbol of WikiLeaks, and as a result, the subject of both public adoration and criticism. Supporters of the site made him a hero, and he apparently made efforts to encourage that image. He appeared in a video that parodied the familiar formula of MasterCard commercials that list the price of several items, before naming a particular experience enabled by the purchase that is "priceless." In the WikiLeaks video, the costs of maintaining the organization's computer systems and fighting its legal battles are listed, followed by video of Assange watching the uprisings in the Middle East that took place throughout 2011 and the message that "changing the world" is priceless. The suggestion is clear: WikiLeaks' (or, more specifically, Assange's) exposure of secrets held by the governments, banks and other

organizations around the world has led to political revolution and change. In February 2011, WikiLeaks began selling t-shirts, mugs, and other merchandise with the organization's logo and various supportive slogans, such as "Free Assange" and "Support Whistleblowers/Support Transparency in Government," online to raise money (Greenberg, 2011).

In September 2011, an encrypted version of the entire unredacted archive of 251, 287 U.S. State Department cables became available through Bittorrent. The decryption key for that file was available due to a breach on the part of David Leigh, a journalist at *The Guardian* newspaper, who published the key in a book about WikiLeaks. The encrypted file had been shared in part to protect WikiLeaks from further denial-of-service attacks. In an effort to keep the information from the site out in the open, supporters passed around a file containing every leak, as well as the encrypted file. The *Guardian* claimed that WikiLeaks was responsible for the leak as they had led the paper's reporters to believe that the decryption key was temporary and would be changed, although this is technically impossible. Later in September WikiLeaks released the entire 250,000-cable document on its site—called the "largest document dump in history" (Martel, 2011, September 3)—but received very little media attention. WikiLeaks said it wanted to ensure that the documents reached the public, rather than intelligence contractors and governments, who may have been savvy enough to find the documents and the decryption key.

In October 2011 Assange gave a press conference in which he said WikiLeaks was struggling financially and would be forced to fold before the end of the year if it didn't raise money to cover the various legal fees (Helyer-Donaldson, 2011). While under house arrest in London, Assange appeared at the Occupy London protest, where he spoke to the crowd: "I ask that all of you demand that foreign bank accounts be opened up and made transparent, the same way that I today have been forced to be made transparent" (Martel, 2011, October 15).

The Wau Holland Foundation reported that in 2010 it paid $500,000 in expenses, of the $1.3 million raised. The organization's expenses include hardware, Internet access, travel, legal fees, and salaries for employees, including, for the first time, Julian Assange. Key personnel were to be paid on a salary structure developed by Greenpeace (Crawford & Whalen, 2010). For much of 2011, WikiLeaks' home page was dominated by a request for financial help, "WikiLeaks Needs You," and the following explanation: "We are forced to temporarily suspend publishing whilst we secure our economic survival. For almost a year we have been fighting an unlawful financial blockade. We cannot allow giant US finance companies to decide how the whole world votes with its pocket. Our battles are costly. We need your support to fight back. Please donate now." As of September 2012, the site listed the following numbers: "WikiLeaks: 659 days of banking blockade - no process, Assange: 656 days detainment - no charge, Manning: 853 days in jail - no trial, Grand Jury: 739 days US secret Grand Jury into WikiLeaks - no transparency" (WikiLeaks Home, 2012).

Relationship with professional journalists

As is evident from the account of the leak-sharing, WikiLeaks has had an up-and-down relationship with the professional media. For several months in 2011, across the top of the front page of the WikiLeaks site was the following accolade from *Time* magazine: "Could become as important a journalistic tool as the Freedom of Information Act," citing praise from a legacy media organization and referring to itself as a tool of journalism. Yet often Assange has derided the professional press for its failure to act as a watchdog on government institutions, and for its acquiescence in the maintenance of the status quo and existing power structures—"a craven sucking up to official sources to imbue the eventual story with some kind of official basis"

(Khatchadourian, 2010). Assange expressed hostility toward the *New York Times* following what he perceived to be an unflattering profile by the paper. His hostility resulted in WikiLeaks excluding the *Times* from the list of news organizations that received prior access to the next set of leaked documents.

This conflicted relationship with professional journalists is also evident in the site's own language about journalism and its own work. The site explains that its online dropbox provides "an innovative, secure and anonymous way for sources to leak information to our journalists." It is common for the site to refer to the people working there as journalists, and the work they do as journalism, and yet the site also includes many references to the inadequacies of legacy journalism, and Assange has publicly criticized professional journalists for their failings in his eyes. However, it was often necessary for WikiLeaks to work with professional journalists in order to attract the kind of attention they wanted for their leaks. The "Collateral Murder" video was shown first to a room full of journalists at the National Press Club. The Afghan War Diary, Iraq War Logs and U.S. State Department cables were all released in cooperation with legacy media journalists. Domscheit-Berg (2011) wrote about the issue in his book: "In our experience, complicated leaks…had to be published by the traditional media in digestible chunks. No matter how explosive our revelations were, if no one presented them to the general public, they would languish, neglected, on our website" (p. 47).

Significantly, in May 2011, *The Wall Street Journal* launched "SafeHouse," a site where users can "securely share information with *The Wall Street Journal*" (SafeHouse, 2011) and the *New York Times* was reportedly developing its own version of a document-leaking site, although neither newspaper has published any stories resulting from these sites.

Both Assange and Domscheit-Berg talked about the power of WikiLeaks in glowing terms, claiming world-changing potential in the organization's actions, and unique freedom of information through its structure. However, much of the organization's functioning does not reflect a great departure from the institutional journalism it so often criticized. By the fourth year of operation, WikiLeaks accepted documents, vetted them for accuracy, and then either shared them with professional media organizations, or published them on the WikiLeaks site with title, explanatory background information. Not even open participation in the form of reader comments was permitted. In his personal account of the history of WikiLeaks, Domscheit-Berg (2011) explained, "In the world we dreamed of, there would be no more bosses or hierarchies, and no one could achieve power by withholding from the others the knowledge needed to act as an equal player" (p. 4). Yet WikiLeaks as an organization was frequently compelled to withhold information, sometimes as a means of self-protection and other times to protect the interests of the innocent. This contradiction was pointed out by both David Kushner (2010) in *Mother Jones*, and Raffi Khatchadourian (2010) in *The New Yorker*: "the thing that he seems to detest most— power without accountability—is encoded in the site's DNA, and will only become more pronounced as WikiLeaks evolves into a real institution." As will be discussed later, the need for secrecy while also revealing secret information is a contradiction with which journalists are very familiar.

Conclusion

WikiLeaks shares many of the basic principles of the ideology of professional journalists, and yet challenges that ideology in a few ways. The fundamental challenge WikiLeaks poses to legacy journalism is its suggestion that transparency and greater access to information is better

than an institution of journalists as gatekeepers who decide which information is important and in what context it is to be viewed, and its ambition to serve the public on a global scale. Unfortunately, WikiLeaks' activities do not provide a clear opportunity to determine the answer—its own policies and structure have largely mimicked those of the legacy journalists it so strongly criticized, and it often worked with legacy journalists to better publicize information. The information it published also faced many of the same questions that concern professional journalists: the credibility or veracity of leaked documents remains at issue (although the vehement reactions from some organizations often served to give credence to documents made public), and the motivation of those who leak information, as well as the incompleteness of any leaked information. It has been most effective in getting information to the wider public when professional, legacy media journalists have acted to distribute the information widely. WikiLeaks is not a primary news source for a great many citizens, and most people likely read about the content leaked on their site through published accounts by legacy journalists. However, journalists' response to WikiLeaks reveals how they failed to take up this challenge.

WikiLeaks may ultimately motivate not a revolutionizing of journalism, but perhaps a shift towards more transparency in source information—essentially the publication of reports enhanced by including original source material (Assange's "scientific journalism") for readers to ostensibly make their own judgment about the material and thus the information. WikiLeaks may most accurately be described as an advocacy journalism organization—one that advocates the exposure of secret information, something akin to hacktivism in its goals and partly in its operations. Assange and Domscheit-Berg's own descriptions of the organization suggest this characterization is apt, that what is privileged above all is transparency through revealing information that has been kept secret.

In any case, the question of whether legacy journalism would be better served by bringing more transparency to information is in many ways already answered. Citizen journalism, and all the various activities that are generally included under its umbrella, has already reduced the degree of control professional journalists have over information, both in terms of its dissemination and contextualization. Technologies for sharing information and the "logic of the internet" have also substantially enhanced the ability of individuals to connect with legacy news organizations, with each other, and with the wider public, further contributing to taking control over information away from institutions, government, and mass media organizations. The more revealing question to which WikiLeaks can help provide an answer is how journalists have responded to this challenge to reconsider their roles in relation to government and other institutions of power in this new world of information-sharing. One answer lies in an analysis of professional journalists' commentary about WikiLeaks.

CHAPTER 5. Analysis of Terms: The language journalists used in discussing WikiLeaks

In this chapter I will analyze the terms and adjectives used to describe WikiLeaks and its activities. The work of professional journalists can be described using several different terms, including, of course, "journalism," but also words such as "report," "publish," and so on. This analysis considers what terms professional journalists used in commentary to describe the work of WikiLeaks. In addition, this analysis will consider the descriptive terms journalists used to describe WikiLeaks and Julian Assange, its most public representative. As discussed in the methods section, tonality analysis considers content about a person or organization subjectively to determine whether the depiction is positive or negative. This analysis considers the adjectives and adverbs used to describe WikiLeaks, its activities, and Julian Assange, as well as those used to modify the terms used to describe WikiLeaks and Assange. The research questions asked in conducting this analysis were: How were the organization and Julian Assange described? What terms to describe the organization's activities? What descriptive terms were used to describe WikiLeaks and Assange, and were they positive or negative? I have attempted to offer not only a consideration of whether descriptions were favorable or unfavorable, but a sense of what terms were used most commonly to describe the WikiLeaks organization and its activities, as well as Julian Assange individually.

Of particular interest in this analysis is the question of how professional journalists' descriptions of WikiLeaks' work compared to how WikiLeaks described its work. This chapter will discuss the terms used to describe the organization, then the verbs and adjectives used to describe its activities, and finally the terms used to describe Julian Assange, as the most public representative of WikiLeaks. Generally the descriptions were not set apart from the organization as in "WikiLeaks is a _____," but were incorporated as modifiers in sentences about what the

organization did, such as "the anti-secrecy Web site WikiLeaks" (Pfanner, 2011, January 25). Of the 187 commentaries analyzed, 26 used no descriptive terms in writing about the organization. Almost all of these were published in December 2010 or later; one was published in November 2010, and two others in July 2010. Presumably the authors considered WikiLeaks to be sufficiently well-known by the end of 2010, or other sections of the newspaper or magazine covered WikiLeaks adequately, so that they did not have to offer a definition of the organization. July, November and December 2010 were also the months during which WikiLeaks was most prominent in the news, as revealed by the number of commentaries published during those months, noted in the methods chapter. In the remaining 161 commentaries, although the terms used were not consistent, some terms were more prominent than others, and the terms together offer a sense of the tone of the commentary. When terms were counted, they were only counted once per unit of analysis (the column, editorial, op-ed, etc.), so if a journalist repeatedly described WikiLeaks as an "internet publisher," that was counted as one instance of a journalist using that term to describe WikiLeaks, regardless of how many times the term was repeated in the same commentary.

Before discussing how WikiLeaks was described by others, it may be helpful to consider how WikiLeaks describes itself. As discussed in chapter 4, WikiLeaks is described on its website as a "not-for-profit media organization" working to "bring important news and information to the public," and to develop and adapt technologies to support that work, particularly the creation of "an uncensorable system for untraceable mass document leaking." Assange described WikiLeaks' work as "scientific journalism," journalism in which readers are able to see the primary documents that are the basis of news reports and analysis by journalists. The organization's "About" page repeatedly refers to the individuals working for the organization as

"journalists" and asserts that it is part of the media: "Publishing improves transparency, and this transparency creates a better society for all people. Better scrutiny leads to reduced corruption and stronger democracies in all society's institutions, including government, corporations and other organisations. A healthy, vibrant and inquisitive journalistic media plays a vital role in achieving these goals. We are part of that media" (WikiLeaks About, 2011, section 1.3).

Describing WikiLeaks

In describing WikiLeaks in commentary, journalists tended to highlight that it is online, a website, or an internet-based organization, and these descriptions were used across the board in the legacy media analyzed. The most common term used to label WikiLeaks was "site," which appeared in 28 commentaries, whether "web site," "internet site," or some term related to the activities or goals of the organization, such as "information-sharing site" or "anti-secrecy site." Others used neutral terms, such as "internet publisher" (Wu, 2011, February 4) and "internet platform" (Boughton, 2010, December 3) or "technology platform" (Dumenco, 2011, February 28). The organization's online presence is certainly an accurate description of its publishing model, but the frequent emphasis of this quality may tend to make more salient its distinction from legacy media, which are not generally described in terms of their publishing format or location.

Other characteristics of the site that were emphasized in descriptions were its separation from traditional state structures, and its goals related to transparency. Some journalists noted the site's lack of traditional location and thus lack of governance by a particular state. These descriptions were used in national and city papers and magazines. Chuck Raasch (2010, July 29)

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in *USA Today* described WikiLeaks as follows: "In essence, it has opened its doors as an electronic clearinghouse with no allegiance to government, nationality, or institution, and no pretense about trying to influence public opinion." Commentary in *The Washington Post* included the terms "stateless anti-secrecy organization" and "amorphous international organization." In two other instances it was described as "stateless." Simon Dumenco in *Advertising Age* (2011, February 28) called it both "border-crossing" and "legal-jurisdiction-defying." *Washington Post* columnist Anne Applebaum (2010, December 7) noted that it acted "outside the context of national media." A *Houston Chronicle* editorial (WikiLeaks irony: Group dedicated to revealing secrets may be its own worst enemy, 2010, December 4) referred to "unaccountable underground Web sites." The emphasis on WikiLeaks' status relative to a state institution could suggest that it is somehow more unreliable or even threatening because it lacks a physical location. It could also make evident yet another distinction between legacy media and WikiLeaks, implying in so doing that a physical location subject to state governance makes an organization more accountable to authorities, and therefore trustworthy.

WikiLeaks' role in revealing classified information and its transparency-related goals were noted by many journalists, again including various city and national newspapers. WikiLeaks was referred to as a "whistle-blower" site by three different journalists in *The New York Times*, by the editorial board of the *Philadelphia Inquirer*, and by an op-ed contributor to the *San Jose Mercury News*. In three notes from the editor published by *The New York Times* to accompany news articles using the information from the three major leaks, it was called "an organization devoted to exposing secrets." Other journalists described WikiLeaks with the phrase "muck-raking," a label that harkens back to romanticized ideas about journalists as crusaders against the abuses of the government and other powerful institutions of society, but also implies

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a sensationalistic approach and a clear agenda. The general tone of these descriptions is not necessarily negative or positive, but could suggest an alignment with the goals of journalists in that, at least occasionally, journalists aim to expose secrets or publicize information from whistle-blowers.

On the other hand, journalists sometimes used overtly negative terms to describe the organization, such as "shadowy confederates," "nihilists," "cyber weasels," and "cyberanarchists." Twice it was called a "criminal enterprise." This kind of derisive language was used in approximately 10 percent of the commentary analyzed, and contributed to a portrayal of WikiLeaks as a problem and party to a conflict. Certainly WikiLeaks was not included in the journalistic profession, and its operations, goals and achievements were suggested to be illegitimate, illegal or wrong. More than that, even, it was described in a way that portrays it as threatening, or childish.

The adjectives used to describe WikiLeaks in these descriptions were no less negative. Journalists used terms such as "renegade," "criminal," "devious," "shadowy," and "irresponsible." While none of the same terms were used to describe WikiLeaks by more than a handful of journalists, the various critical terms were used in about 20 percent of commentary. Another 10 percent of the commentary included modifiers that emphasized conflict or the controversial nature of the organization, in some cases directly referring to it as a "controversial web site," describing it in terms of its opposition to something, for example, "anti-secrecy organization" and "anti-war activists," or using a term such as "debacle," "fiasco," or "maelstrom" to refer to a situation involving WikiLeaks. The remaining commentary added no overtly positive or negative descriptive words to the description of the organization or its activities. Again, these terms were used by journalists writing for various daily newspapers (*The*

Houston Chronicle, *Philadelphia Inquirer*, *New York Daily News*, *New York Sun, The*

Washington Post, etc.), although journalists' commentary in *The New York Times*—one of the

papers that received access to the Iraq and Afghanistan War Logs and State Department cables in

advance of their publication on the WikiLeaks site—was notably more restrained when it came

to using the overtly critical and negative adjectives to describe WikiLeaks. Commentary

published in magazines, which have a longer publication cycle, also were not as vitriolic in their

descriptions of WikiLeaks.

Contrast with journalists

Some journalists directly addressed how WikiLeaks compared with professional

journalism, explaining the various ways WikiLeaks is distinct from, or similar to legacy media

organizations. While several journalists argued against censoring WikiLeaks, or pursuing legal

action against it, few argued that it should be considered journalism. One example of a journalist

arguing not only in support of WikiLeaks' right to publish, but also it ought to be labeled

"journalism," was Adam Penenberg's (2011, January 30) op-ed in *The Washington Post* that

discussed the importance of applying the journalist label to WikiLeaks. Penenberg noted the

various labels applied to WikiLeaks and Assange by politicians and journalists, pointing out, for

example, that *New York Times* Executive Editor Bill Keller wrote that he never considered

Assange a "collaborator" nor a journalist. As Penenberg (2011, January 30) wrote, "His critics

may not agree on what Assange is, but no matter where they fall on the political spectrum, they

agree on what he is not: a journalist" (para. 2). Penenberg argued that if they were not labeled

journalists, Assange and WikiLeaks would have a more difficult time seeking protection under laws designed to protect freedom of speech and the press. However, he pointed out,

> there is no clear definition of the terms 'journalist' or 'journalism.' The best we have comes from laws and proposed legislation which protect reporters from being forced to divulge confidential sources in court. In crafting those shield laws, legislators have had to grapple with the nebulousness of the profession to determine who and what must be protected, and why. Based on the wording of many of these statutes, Assange fits the definition of a journalist, and what WikiLeaks does qualifies as journalism. (para. 4-5)

This is one of a few cases in which journalists overtly argued the importance of the label of WikiLeaks and Assange, and was unequivocally supportive of conferring on WikiLeaks the journalist label, along with the corresponding First Amendment protections.

Only one other journalist used the word "journalism" in reference to WikiLeaks. *Wall Street Journal* columnist Bret Stephens (2011, July 19) described WikiLeaks' work as "despicable instances of journalism malpractice." Likewise, "journalist" was used by others to describe how WikiLeaks did not fit within the category, as in Keller's (2011, January 26) denial, noted above, that Assange was a colleague: "We regarded Assange throughout as a source, not as a partner or collaborator" (para. 5). Only three professional journalists besides Penenberg used the word "journalist" in reference to WikiLeaks, including Keller; in one case the word was in quotation marks, suggesting it was not a genuine use of "journalist" to describe WikiLeaks, and in another the journalist used the term "citizen journalists," distinguishing WikiLeaks from the category of professional journalism. A *Los Angeles Times* editorial (WikiLeaks wasn't wrong, 2010, July 26) was the only other commentary in which the word journalist was used positively in association with WikiLeaks; that editorial claimed that what WikiLeaks' did was "the actions of responsible journalists." In another show of solidarity, *Washington Post* columnist Howard

Kurtz (2010, July 28) referred to the legacy media organizations working with WikiLeaks as its "media partners."

Others used a variety of terms or descriptions that sound very similar to the work of journalists, without using the words journalist or journalism. *New York Times* columnist Noam Cohen (2010, August 1) in defining WikiLeaks, described what he saw as a shift in the organization's strategy, from "information explainer" to "information procurer." However, he did not make clear how these two terms, both of which seem to describe the work of journalists, are distinct from journalism. Mark Feldstein, former journalist and now journalism scholar, (2010, December 14) in *American Journalism Review* called WikiLeaks "a repository and clearinghouse for documents leaked by whistleblowers." Others called it a "conduit," "an organization devoted to exposing official secrets," (A Note to Readers, 2010, November 28) a "means to expose evidence of wrongdoing" and "means to transmit evidence to journalists" (Scheer, 2008, February 21), and "an emerging movement of self-styled justice seekers who are harnessing the Internet to douse sensitive information in sunlight" (Sarno, 2008, April 16). Whatever the description, it appears that professional journalists made an effort to use precise terms to describe the work that WikiLeaks did, to avoid applying the journalistic label to WikiLeaks. It is noteworthy at least in part because what WikiLeaks had mostly done was accept and make public information of public importance—precisely what journalists do, as Penenberg pointed out—even if the manner in which they did so did not conform to professional journalism practices. Whether or not the professional journalists commenting on WikiLeaks made a conscious effort to exclude it from the journalism label and the status that goes with it, they did effectively other WikiLeaks.

Also revelatory were the terms used to describe journalists, newspapers or media organizations in contrast to WikiLeaks. A *New York Sun* editorial (Julian Assange and Jonathan Pollard, 2010, December 6) discussed the actions of "responsible, mainstream newspapers" and "patriotic papers." R. John Hughes (2010, December 14), columnist for *The Christian Science Monitor*, wrote "The WikiLeaks dump of US embassy cables last month was a reckless act…a far cry from the responsible reporting on foreign affairs with which I am familiar" (para. 2). The contrast of WikiLeaks with "responsible" reporting suggested something is lacking in the practices of the organization compared with what legacy journalists do. Jeffrey Rosen (2011, February 17) in *The New Republic* wrote, "Indeed, unlike responsible publishers, Wikileaks lacks not only editorial judgment; it has often abdicated any editorial function at all" (para. 10). Several journalists made reference to this responsibility that professional—and by implication presumably legitimate—journalists demonstrate, a responsibility to protect the security interests of the U.S. government, or individuals who have helped the government (informants in foreign countries, for example), or a responsibility to decide what information that public needs to know. These suggestions counter Assange's assertions that WikiLeaks is serving the public interest by providing greater transparency regarding institutions of power, particularly governments.

The Pentagon Papers

Of course, the tension between the government's desire to keep classified information from the public and the work of the press to publicize information about the government has been the subject of public and even legal dispute. The Pentagon Papers were often mentioned as a comparable case—a not unreasonable comparison, as the Pentagon Papers were a classified

government report relating to an ongoing war leaked by an individual to a news organization, much like the Iraq and Afghanistan War Logs. In addition, the WikiLeaks "About" page mentions the Pentagon Papers a few times in explaining its ethical principles and "The importance of principled leaking to journalism, good government and a healthy society" (WikiLeaks About, 2011). The Pentagon Papers were a report commissioned by the U.S. Department of Defense on the history of the United States' involvement in Vietnam from 1945 to 1967, demonstrating, as claimed by R.W. Apple (1996, June 23) in *The New York Times*, "that the Johnson Administration had systematically lied, not only to the public but also to Congress, about a subject of transcendent national interest and significance." Most of the 47-volume report was leaked to the *Times* in 1971 by Daniel Ellsberg, an analyst for the RAND Corporation. The Nixon administration obtained an injunction to stop the Times from publishing the Pentagon Papers, but the newspaper appealed and the case was eventually considered by the U.S. Supreme Court, which ruled that the government had not met the burden of proof for prior restraint of the papers.

Some journalists used the case of the Pentagon Papers to defend what WikiLeaks did, and point out the precedent set that would protect it from legal action, but the majority compared WikiLeaks unfavorably to the case, arguing that the information published was not of equal value or import as the Pentagon Papers and therefore not worthy of similar legal protection. Journalists were not consistent in their comparisons, however, sometimes drawing a parallel between Daniel Ellsberg (the source who leaked the material) and Bradley Manning (also the presumed source of leaked material), and other times between Ellsberg and Assange or WikiLeaks. This inconsistency indicates a misunderstanding of the role of each in the leaking or sharing of information that had been classified as secret by the U.S. government. While a

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comparison of the content is fair—as Fred Kaplan (2010, July 26) did, concluding that the documents in the WikiLeaks files were not as significant in terms of what is revealed as the Pentagon Papers were—a parallel between Ellsberg and Assange or Ellsberg and WikiLeaks is not as useful given that WikiLeaks was not the source of the leak, but rather a conduit for the classified information. WikiLeaks lacked the kind of access to source material that Ellsberg and Manning had. The more apt comparison, then, would be between Manning and Ellsberg, who both leaked privileged information to organizations that would publish it, and between *The New York Times* and WikiLeaks, the organizations that published the secret information provided to them.

Those who argued that the Pentagon Papers were not an apt comparison generally claimed either that the information WikiLeaks published was more harmful to national security, or that it was not of sufficient public interest. For example, an editorial in the *Grand Rapids Press* (Who should pay for WikiLeaks document dump?, 2010, December 5) claimed that the material published by WikiLeaks did not serve the public interest in the same way publishing the Pentagon Papers did: "It is true, too, that the U.S. government has in the past hidden behind the excuse of 'national security' to withhold information that is important to the public and embarrassing to high-level officials. The 1971 release of the Pentagon Papers uncovered the inner-workings of U.S. military policy and ultimately provided a public service. If there is some over-riding good in this case it is not at all apparent. Most likely it is Mr. Assange poking a stick in the eye of the United States" (para. 9). This was a typical claim for those who denied the WikiLeaks were comparable to the Pentagon Papers. However, this claim was largely undermined by the treatment the Iraq and Afghanistan War Logs received in the various newspapers that wrote about them, and several of the journalists who commented on WikiLeaks.

On the other side, some journalists—rightly—referred to the Pentagon Papers in pointing out the difficulty the U.S. government would have in prosecuting WikiLeaks. For example, *Washington Post* columnist Al Kamen (2010, December 10) made vague reference to the difficulties with charging Assange, "Also, while Assange might be charged, there was this Supreme Court case a long time ago, something about publishing the Pentagon Papers…" (para. 4).

Describing the activities of WikiLeaks

Journalists used a common set of verbs to describe what the organization did. WikiLeaks was most often said to have "released" (in 66 articles) or "dumped" (43) documents online—much less often did they use the term "publish" (22) to describe what WikiLeaks did. A few other terms appeared occasionally: "leak" (19), "post" (15), "expose" (5), and "disseminate" (4). Journalists commonly referred to WikiLeaks' release of classified material as a "document dump" (23) or a "disclosure" (31). Commentary published in major newspapers, such as *The Washington Post* and *New York Times* were more likely to use verbs such as release and dump, while magazines and smaller alternative media organizations, such as *Slate*, more frequently used the term "publish." These terms sound less like what professional journalists do ("publish," "report"), and more like a passive ("release") or even disturbingly casual ("dump") distribution of information. Journalists clearly made and maintained a distinction made between what they did and what WikiLeaks did. They avoided using words that may be associated with journalism, in favor of these various terms or explicit descriptions of activities, in sharp contrast to WikiLeaks' self-description, which consistently includes the word journalist.

Descriptive terms

The descriptors (adverbs and adjectives) used to describe WikiLeaks' activities were often negative, and criticized or diminished what WikiLeaks did, suggested it was controversial, or emphasized the "wild" or the illegitimate or irresponsible nature of the organization or its work. Journalists used descriptors that placed the organization in opposition to other media organizations to qualify the release, posting or publication of material by WikiLeaks—"unauthorized," "illegal," "irresponsible," and even "renegade"—implying that information published by legacy media was authorized, legal, responsible, legitimate in some way that WikiLeaks was not. The modifiers "random," "indiscriminate," "wanton," "raw," "wacky," and "rogue" all contribute to a characterization of the organization as a dangerous, even threatening entity that is unrestrained. Although no term appeared more than a few times, the various terms together contribute to a general sense of the organization as out of control or lacking restraint.

Much like the terms used to describe the organization, in some cases the negative terms used to describe its activities were very strong, and implied intentional harm. *Washington Post* op-ed contributor Jeffrey Smith (2010, November 30) referred to WikiLeaks' activities as "reckless and arrogant publication" and "treachery." *New York Daily News* op-ed contributor Ross Baker (2010, July 28) wrote about the "release of toxic materials," continuing, "'Treason' is certainly a strong word. It is conventionally described as an act that gives aid and comfort to an enemy. What aid and comfort are the Taliban enjoying from the WikiLeaks document dump? More than you might think" (Baker, 2010, July 28, para. 12). Scott Shane (2010, December 11) in *The New York Times* called it a "new counterculture of information vigilantism"; others called it "information terrorism" (Cupp, 2010, September 1). The effect of this is to criticize and other-

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ize WikiLeaks, reinforcing the conflict/enemy frame that was discussed in the previous chapter. Many more spoke disparagingly of Assange, as will be discussed later in this chapter.

Others used language that diminished the importance of WikiLeaks, or demeaned the organization. *Washington Post* columnist Dana Milbank (2010, July 28) asked, "Seven years after authorizing an invasion of Iraq in search of phantom weapons of mass destruction, lawmakers are basing policy on the drip, drip, drip of WikiLeaks?" (para. 6). The use of the words "drip, drip, drip" to describe WikiLeaks' activities suggests it is not a legitimate operation, and obscures the real structure, processes and purpose of the organization. Most of all, it reveals the disapproving attitude of the author towards the information provided by WikiLeaks, and its validity as a basis for policy.

The published content

Descriptions of the information published by WikiLeaks generally emphasized a few characteristics, most often its size (journalists referred to the leaks as "massive" or a "treasure trove"), its secret or classified status, and the "irresponsible," "dangerous," "reckless" or otherwise unprofessional or illegitimate nature of its procurement and publication. Descriptions of the size of the information caches published by WikiLeaks indicated a sense of unusualness in the information. The "irresponsible" and "dangerous" adjectives served to emphasize WikiLeaks' responsibility in the publication of the documents and whatever negative consequences are attributed to the publication. Marc Thiessen (2010, August 9) in the *Post* called them "illegal disclosures," echoing official statements from Donald Rumsfeld and others. It is significant that according to current U.S. law, as discussed in the literature review, publishing

secret or classified information that was provided to an organization by an outside source is not illegal, regardless of whether the information was acquired illegally by the source. Despite this, several journalists described the information published by WikiLeaks as "secret" or "classified" or even "stolen." While "secret" or "classified" might fairly be considered to inform readers of a characteristic of the documents that is fundamental to understanding their importance, the term stolen added a criminal intimation to the content.

Professional journalists also used phrases such as "the age of WikiLeaks," the "time of WikiLeaks" or a "post-WikiLeaks" era in commentary about WikiLeaks, suggesting that something fundamental had changed with WikiLeaks' operations and that governments, journalists and other presumably interested parties would have to adapt to the changes wrought by WikiLeaks. These phrases were sometimes used without further explanation of how the author defined them, but were accompanied by warnings that preparation and adjustment would be needed to handle the new era. The use of such phrases implied that what WikiLeaks did is fundamentally different from the work of journalists that revealed secret information, and served to further differentiate what WikiLeaks did from what legacy journalists have been doing, and distance professional journalists from WikiLeaks.

Julian Assange

Journalists often used Assange as a proxy for WikiLeaks, attributing all the actions of the site to him, or describing them as his work. Many emphasized the activist nature of Assange's goals and pursuits, as well as his involvement in a conflict or controversy. However, their use of disparaging or dismissive language to describe or refer to Assange often painted him as juvenile,

or aggressive. His personal characteristics and idiosyncrasies were often described, painting him as a strange, elusive, or even perverse figure.

In terms of his role with WikiLeaks, Assange was most often described as the "founder" (in 39 of the 77 articles that described Assange) although often that neutral term was accompanied by modifiers suggesting the level of conflict around the organization and Assange as an individual, for example, "irresponsible founder," "contemptible founder," "obsessive founder," "fugitive founder," and even "WikiLeaks founder who has declared himself an enemy of the U.S." (Goldberg, 2010, December 1). These modifiers were consistently negative, criticizing the work, activities, motives or personal qualities of Assange. He was called an "editor" by three journalists, but a "hacker" by six, and in one case, a "curator of purloined secrets" (Brisbane, 2010, December 4).

He was described in terms that were equally, or even more contentious than those used to describe his organization: while some described him in almost positive terms as a "politically motivated activist" (Hughes, 2010, December 14), others called him a "cyberkind," "king brat" (Parker, 2010, December 12) and "provocateur-in-chief" (Shane, 2010, December 11). These terms emphasized the enemy frame, while also contributing to the characterization of Assange as juvenile and petty. *Washington Post* columnist Mark Thiessen, consistently a strong critic of WikiLeaks as will be noted in the next chapter, called Assange "a nomadic cyber-hacker" (2010, November 29) and referred to him as "one guy with a laptop" (2010, December 1). Kathleen Parker (2010, December 12) in *The Washington Post* called him a "martyr to the brat brigades who occupy basements and attics" (para. 3), associating him with young, unprofessional hackers who are not only outside the institution of journalism, but actively opposed to and hostile to institutions of power in society. *The Grand Rapids Press* editorial board (Who should pay for

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WikiLeaks document dump?, 2010, December 5) contributed to this juvenile characterization in concluding that releasing the documents served no over-riding good: "Most likely it is Mr. Assange poking a stick in the eye of the United States." These descriptions diminish, dismiss, or even ignore the goals of the organization and preempt any discussion of the possible legitimacy of the problems or concerns that Assange identified as his motivation for starting WikiLeaks, as described in chapter 4. They also tend to over-simplify and reduce the work of a whole network of individuals to the whims of one man.

Besides diminishing his professional legitimacy, journalists also criticized Assange personally. Assange's personal qualities and issues were also described by journalists, in terms no more favorable. He was described as "mercurial," "eccentric," "slippery," "irresponsible," "obsessive," "zealous," "arrogant," "smarmy" and "hypocritical." Dana Milbank (2010, December 18) in *The Washington Post* called Assange "insufferable" and wrote, "I can understand why Obama administration figures want to prosecute Assange for espionage or other crimes. I confess I'd like to throw a cream pie in his face myself" (para. 5). The only descriptive term used in reference to Assange that was even slightly positive was *New York Times* editor Bill Keller's (2012, February 20) labeling of Assange as a "rock-star leaker," which may be interpreted as somewhat snarky.

Some of the more sensational papers used even more vitriolic language. In one commentary, Andrew McCarthy (2010, December 12), staff writer for the *New York Daily News*, asked, "And jurisdiction aside, is Assange actually a criminal or just a muckraker whose vexations must be tolerated lest free press rights be imperiled?" (para. 7). The *New York Daily News* editorial board (Julian Assange is showing his true vicious colors as pressure on him grows, 2010, December 7) called Assange "an ax-grinding, anti-American criminal whose

weapon happens to be information" and compared his response to legal threats to the reaction of

a "cornered dog," finally accusing him of engaging in blackmail and making the following

distinction: "Whistleblower seeking to halt or reveal an injustice? No. Flamethrower looking to

burn the house down? Yes" (para. 7). The general tone of these journalists was overtly

disapproving, and even disparaging.

The sexual assault charges raised against Assange by two women in Sweden were also

mentioned by several journalists. A reference to the charges appeared in 33 of the 189

commentaries. In two of those cases the charges were described as "rape charges," and in two

others the charges were mentioned in a manner that suggested the writer questioned the motives

behind them. In almost every case, the charges were mentioned off-hand, and no further

explanation of the situation was offered, indicative of an attempt to discredit Assange by

embarrassing him rather than offer real analysis of the importance of the charges or their

relevance to the examination of WikiLeaks.

Editorial/Political Stance

Regarding Assange's motivation or political stance, many journalists wrote about

Assange's political orientation and goals in publishing information—not the transparency-related

goals Assange espouses, but other, more devious goals they attribute to Assange. L. Gordon

Crovitz (2010, December 6) wrote in his regular column, "Information Age," in the *Wall Street*

Journal,

> Mr. Assange is misunderstood in the media and among digirati as an advocate of
> transparency. Instead, this battening down of the information hatches by the U.S. is
> precisely his goal. The reason he launched WikiLeaks is not that he's a whistleblower –

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there's no wrongdoing inherent in diplomatic cables -- but because he hopes to hobble the U.S., which according to his underreported philosophy can best be done if officials lose access to a free flow of information. (para. 5)

He went on to compare Assange's worldview to that of anarchist and terrorist Ted Kaczynski:

> This worldview has precedent. Ted Kaczynski, another math-obsessed anarchist, sent bombs through the mail for almost 20 years, killing three people and injuring 23. He offered to stop in 1995 if media outlets published his Unabomber Manifesto. The 35,000-word essay, 'Industrial Society and Its Future,' objected to the 'industrial-technological system' that causes people 'to behave in ways that are increasingly remote from the natural pattern of human behavior.' He's serving a life sentence for murder. Mr. Assange doesn't mail bombs, but his actions have life-threatening consequences." (Crovitz, 2010, December 6, para. 10-11)

These comparisons, besides painting Assange in an extremely negative light, contributed to the exclusion of Assange and WikiLeaks from journalism through the general sense of disapproval from journalists.

Crovitz was not the only journalist to compare Assange to political protestors or radicals and terrorists. Chas Freeman (2010, December 5) in *The New York Times* wrote, "The editor of WikiLeaks, Julian Assange, has much in common with the anarchists of the early 20th century: he aims to disrupt the established order by impairing its alliances and violating its proprieties. With the release of a quarter-million documents written by American diplomats at home and abroad, many of them shockingly candid, he has gone some distance toward accomplishing this…Mr. Assange's grand accomplishment will be nothing more than to make it far harder for American diplomats to get candid answers from their Gulf Arab and Israeli counterparts… WikiLeaks has hurt America..." (para. 1, 10-11). It is noteworthy that Freeman was one of the only journalists to call Assange an "editor," but he also claimed that Assange shares qualities with anarchists and that WikiLeaks has hurt America. R. Emmett Tyrrell (2010, August 25), contributing editor of the *New York Sun* wrote an op-ed titled "WikiLeaks and other failed radicals," in which he compared Assange to various political protestors, concluding, "Will

Assange come out of it looking like a Dwight Armstrong or a Bill Ayers? Will he perhaps manage to appear reasonable and go into legitimate politics? It is too early to tell. All we know is that history works in mysterious ways. Some become footnotes, others presidential candidates" (para. 7). This kind of criticism reinforces the framing of WikiLeaks as a problem, party to a conflict, and threat to the U.S. government, without acknowledging the differences in the methods of the parties to whom Assange is compared, or, perhaps more significant, without acknowledging the commonalities between WikiLeaks and journalists in terms of both goals and activities.

The descriptions of Assange and his personal positions, goals and actions as an individual further contributed to the effect of emphasizing the responsibility of the WikiLeaks or Assange in the problematic or controversial events and their consequences. Those commentaries that drew attention to the political agenda of Assange used such consistently negative terms that, as noted by Entman in his explanation of framing, the use of these terms leaves little room for counter-narratives. Certainly the idea that newspapers have in the past had a political agenda, or that newspapers and other legacy media reflect support for a particular agenda was not introduced. While no claims can be made about the impact of this kind of characterization on the audience, at the very least journalists' opinion of Assange was clearly on the whole disapproving, and at times even derogatory.

Discussion

The analysis of the terms used to describe WikiLeaks, its activities, and Julian Assange reveals an overwhelmingly negative and occasionally disparaging characterization of the

organization and its primary representative. Some journalists were neutral in their descriptions, but only rarely did journalists offer supportive or positive descriptions of WikiLeaks and Assange. A few patterns exist in the exceptions to the extremely negative tone in much of the commentary—*The New York Times*, as well as some magazines, was more likely to be the publisher of neutral or positive commentary about WikiLeaks. Journalists' selection of terms and modifiers displayed a clear sense of disapproval, and a distinction between what they consider to be their province, and the activities and goals of WikiLeaks. The general use of modifiers suggested a "right" or "responsible" way of sharing information versus the presumably "wrong" and "irresponsible" conduct of WikiLeaks.

These terms echoed and contributed to the portrayal of WikiLeaks as a source of conflict, a problem or threat for the U.S. government, and an illegitimate organization compared to those of legacy journalism. In general these distinctions seemed to be predicated on an assumption of the superiority of the practices and routines of legacy journalism compared to new methods of information-gathering and publication.

CHAPTER 6. Framing Analysis: The context of journalists' commentary about WikiLeaks

This chapter analyzes how professional journalists framed WikiLeaks in commentary, building on the analysis of terms from the previous chapter to consider the overall frames. This chapter will first describe the framing used with respect to the "picture frame" metaphor—considering which facets of WikiLeaks were included and which were left out of commentary and the resulting frames. Following will be a discussion of the use of episodic and thematic framing in commentary about WikiLeaks, analyzing the extent to which journalists used each type of framing, and the effect of the two types of framing. My research questions in conducting the frame analysis were: How did professional journalists frame the actions of WikiLeaks? How was the central problem or issue defined? What solutions were offered or implied? When I refer to commentary in this chapter, it includes any column, editorial, op-ed or other written commentary by a professional journalist that was published in the U.S. in the opinion section of a publication, or clearly labeled as opinion or commentary. I will first describe these in a very general way, and later give the specific examples that back up my summaries.

Of the 187 articles (commentary, editorial and opinion columns) analyzed, all but a handful were published shortly (i.e. within a month) after the releases of three major publishing actions of WikiLeaks: the Iraq War Logs, Afghanistan War Logs, and the U.S. diplomatic cables. Although only five commentaries were published before June 2010, they were uniformly positive and supportive of WikiLeaks and its right to publish information without punishment or restraint. The tone of commentary clearly shifted in 2010. When the large caches of documents relating the U.S. diplomatic and war efforts were published, most of the commentary by journalists was critical, condemning WikiLeaks or Assange, and emphasizing the negative effect publication would have on the U.S. government.

The subject of most commentary was the effect of publicizing secret information, whether the consequences noted were political or related to information and journalism. Most commentary took as presumptive that publicizing the information had negative consequences. This alone means most journalists by default opposed the fundamental premise of WikiLeaks' existence—that "transparency creates a better society for all people" (WikiLeaks About, 2011)— or at least opposed the premise when it came to transparency with regard to the U.S. government and its secrets. Many journalists argued in support of the right of governments to keep some information secret, as will be discussed later.

Distinctions existed among the group of professional journalists included in this analysis. Some wrote individually, either in a regular column or a guest op-ed, while others wrote anonymously as part of an editorial board. While the trends identified in this analysis were seen in every group, there were outliers. First, commentary published in *The New York Times*, as noted in the previous chapter, was not as overtly critical as that in many of the other newspapers. Whether this was related to the relationship between WikiLeaks and the *Times*, in which WikiLeaks provided the paper access to leaked documents before publishing them on its own site, is not clear. What is clear, however, is that the *Times* was no less explicit in its distinction between its work as journalists and that of WikiLeaks, despite not being as critical. Magazines, including online magazines such as *Salon*, were also more likely to defend WikiLeaks and offer a broader view of the situation, providing context that suggested WikiLeaks was not simply a villain vindictively attacking the United States. On the other hand, the *New York Post*, known as a more sensational and politically conservative paper, was consistently critical of WikiLeaks and in an especially vitriolic manner, comparing Assange to anarchists and terrorists. These examples will be discussed in further detail in the section on conflict frames. The majority of the

commentary, however, fell somewhere between the *Times* and the *Post*, perhaps not always using the extremely derogatory language and comparisons of the latter, but still ultimately criticizing and condemning WikiLeaks.

Framing the issue

While episodic/discrete or thematic frames have to do with the *amount* of context or background information that is included in the commentary, topic frames are determined by what information is included, and what is left out. As discussed in the methods section, several frames are commonly used in news coverage: conflict frame, human interest frame, responsibility frame, and economic consequences frame (see Valkenburg et al., 1999). The commentary analyzed in this study was not in the news section of the newspaper, but the editorials, opinions and commentary published by professional journalists often cover the same topics as the news articles in the publications, so the news frames are largely duplicated. In commentary about WikiLeaks, journalists framed the issues in terms of the consequences they would have for an individual, group, institution, region, or country, either in politics (used in 94 commentaries) or journalism and information (48). The third-most common frame was conflict (36)—although there was overlap in those articles categorized as using a conflict frame, and the other two topic frames. As discussed in the methods section, commentary was categorized based on the primary frame used. For example, a column that discussed the political consequences of the WikiLeaks posts may also frame WikiLeaks as an adversary in a conflict, calling attention to the negative effect on U.S. diplomatic relations of the information released. A few pieces were coded with a unique frame: economic consequences, ironic, human interest, and even language.

WikiLeaks Threatened the War Effort

The Iraq War Logs and Afghan War Diary leaks were the subject of a great deal of commentary that framed the leaks in terms of their effect on the U.S. war effort in Iraq and Afghanistan, either in terms of lives on the ground or political influence of the U.S. and Obama administration. A repeated frame was that, by publishing the two war logs, WikiLeaks had made the U.S. efforts more difficult. On August 9, 2010, *Washington Post* columnist Mark Thiessen suggested that WikiLeaks had aided those the U.S. was fighting: "Assange's illegal disclosures are helping the Taliban to undermine Gen. David Petraeus's counterinsurgency strategy before it has a chance to work" (para. 1), and also posited that the information released by WikiLeaks revealed the identities of individuals helping the U.S., and in so doing, would help the Taliban identify and target those individuals. He placed responsibility for harming the war effort on the information that was revealed in the leaks, and on WikiLeaks (or, rather, Assange) for making that information public. This kind of frame, of course, assumes that the success of the U.S. war effort is desirable, and leaves out questions about the legitimacy of the U.S. wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Others suggested that by exposing the information in the war logs, WikiLeaks had made it more difficult politically for the Obama Administration to enact its chosen policies. An editorial in *The Christian Science Monitor* (Wikileaks report of war logs about Afghanistan show why Obama must be on offensive, 2010, July 26) claimed, "For President Obama, the leak on Sunday about 'war logs' of the Afghanistan war has again thrown him on the defensive on the home front of public opinion.... these leaks of secret documents nonetheless give new, more vivid details about the war. They may further disturb Americans about the messy task of winning

a seemingly intractable conflict." The *Monitor's* editorial board blamed the leaks for causing

difficulty for the government, this time on a public relations front.

WikiLeaks Hurt American Diplomacy

Much like the frame about the impact of publishing information about the war,

commentary after the publication of the U.S. State Department cables suggested that publishing

the leaks had or would damage U.S. diplomacy, by revealing U.S. criticism of allies, hurting

U.S. credibility, or discouraging other nations from cooperating with the U.S. in the future.

Houston Chronicle columnist Heidi Hardt (2010, December 27) wrote, "The WikiLeaks release

of some 250,000 diplomatic cables has fractured the most critical component of U.S. diplomacy:

informal relationships" (para. 1). The emphasis again was on WikiLeaks' role in harming U.S.

interests. David Brooks (2010, November 29) of the *New York Times* wrote:

> The WikiLeaks dump will probably damage the global conversation. Nations will be less likely to share with the United States. Agencies will be tempted to return to the pre-9/11 silos. World leaders will get their back up when they read what is said about them. Cooperation against Iran may be harder to maintain because Arab leaders feel exposed and boxed in. This fragile international conversation is under threat.

He similarly emphasized the harm done by WikiLeaks, framing the problem as one of

WikiLeaks' responsibility in causing damage by making sensitive information public. *New York*

Times columnist Roger Cohen (2010, December 2) also framed the problem as one of making

diplomacy more difficult: "I've not heard much in the torrent of Wiki-chatter about *these*

admirable career diplomats whose diplomacy is now condemned to be unquiet" (para. 3,

emphasis added).

Danielle Pletka (2010, December 1), former journalist for Reuters and the *Los Angeles Times* and now vice president of the conservative think tank American Enterprise Institute and op-ed contributor to *The Christian Science Monitor,* framed the issue as one of negative impact on the U.S. image abroad:

> Overseas, this lack of command and control within the US government is an object of concern for our allies and a source of conspiracy theorizing among our enemies. Friends view the scandal as just the latest sign of American weakness, of a piece with a president whose policies appear less and less consequential in addressing the threats we face. They question the reliability and seriousness of their putative ally in Washington. Perversely, enemies like Iran are persuaded still of American might, and cannot conceive that incompetence is at the root of the largest leak in decades, if not ever (para. 7).

Her arguments, like many that warn of the negative consequences of the WikiLeaks publications, placed utmost importance on the likely or potential impact of the leaks on the U.S. government and its ability to operate as it would like. In using the word 'we,' she also placed herself and the audience in alliance with the U.S. government.

Only one commentary among those analyzed framed the leaks in terms of how they affected world leaders without relating it to U.S. interests. *Washington Post* columnist and former *Economist* editor Anne Applebaum (2010, December 7) framed the leaks in terms of the negative consequences their publication would have for other world leaders:

> But the cables should in theory raise more far serious problems for governments that pursue quite different goals in public than in private. For example, the cables should create trouble for Vladimir Putin, the prime minister of Russia. One of them describes his country as 'a mafia state.' In another, an American official reports that the opaque operations of Russia's fourth-largest oil company are designed to benefit Putin personally… The cables should also create trouble for Silvio Berlusconi, Italy's prime minister, not least because of his relationship with Putin.

However, she concluded by asking, "Can this kind of information, released outside the context of a national media or domestic criminal investigation, actually affect Putin or Berlusconi at home? Can documents published on an (ironically) secretive Internet server in

Switzerland end Russian or Italian government as we know it?" Applebaum referring to the

secrecy maintained by WikiLeaks is an interesting point that will be raised in the conclusion:

when journalists questioned the secrecy of WikiLeaks, they necessarily ignored their own

practice of using anonymous sources to gain access to secret information, and protecting those

sources.

WikiLeaks Put Lives at Risk

The Grand Rapids Press editorial board (Who should pay for WikiLeaks document

dump?, 2010, December 5) wrote about the safety risk to diplomats and informants: "The

revelations jeopardize U.S. relations with other countries — including Saudi Arabia and Pakistan

— put lives in danger and expose serious deficits in the Defense Department's ability to keep

secrets. All of that is troubling, especially in a time of war" (para. 2). The *Press'* editorial board

made an outright accusation that publicizing the leaks had put lives in danger. A *Wall Street*

Journal editorial (Attack by WikiLeaks, 2010, November 30) that discussed the damage done to

diplomatic efforts by the publication of the cables noted the harm done to the lives of U.S. allies

in a previous leak: "This week's cable cache does less immediate harm than the previous leaks

did to the lives of Afghans and Iraqis who have cooperated with us on the battlefield, but it

certainly will damage U.S. foreign policy" (para. 1). A *New York Post* editorial (Close:

WikiLeaker must not reveal any more Afghan war secrets, 2010, August 7) accused Assange of

being "dismissive of claims he was endangering lives," and continued, "After a review, the

Pentagon said there's no way to release the files without jeopardizing more lives. Now,

Wikileaks says it plans to release the documents anyway. Assange's conscience was the first

thing he killed" (para. 5-7). The editorial boards in all three cases implied—or stated outright—

that the leaks had put lives in danger. The *New York Post* editorial blamed Assange personally.

In order to frame the issue as one of WikiLeaks causing harm, all of these editorials left out any

reference to the fact that the leaks or information from the leaks was also published in several

newspapers. The editorial boards placed full responsibility for the consequences on WikiLeaks

by ignoring the role of professional journalists in publicizing the leaks, although some other

editorials, such as Howard Kurtz's July 27, 2010 column in the *Washington Post*, questioned the

wisdom of the *New York Times* in cooperating with WikiLeaks to publicize the leaks.

WikiLeaks is a Terrorist Organization, Threatens National Security

New York Post columnist Ralph Peters (2010, June 8) wrote, "I don't care if leakers of

classified info are Democrats or Republicans, military or civilian. Leaking classified documents

is treason. So is publishing them" (para. 15). This kind of language was typical of this frame—it

established that publishing the documents was treason, and left no room for consideration of

opposing perspectives. Marc Thiessen, columnist for *The Washington Post*, first wrote about

WikiLeaks on August 3, 2010, in a column titled "WikiLeaks must be stopped" that began,

"Let's be clear: WikiLeaks is not a news organization; it is a criminal enterprise" (para. 1). He

continued,

> Its reason for existence is to obtain classified national security information and
> disseminate it as widely as possible -- including to the United States' enemies. These
> actions are likely a violation of the Espionage Act, and they arguably constitute material
> support for terrorism. The Web site must be shut down and prevented from releasing
> more documents -- and its leadership brought to justice.

After accusing the organization of supporting terrorism, he concluded, "WikiLeaks represents a clear and present danger to the national security of the United States. If left unmolested, Assange will become even bolder and inspire others to imitate his example. His group is at this moment preparing to release tens of thousands of documents that will put the lives of our troops and our allies at risk. Will President Obama stop WikiLeaks from doing so -- or sit back and do nothing?" (Thiessen, 2010, August 3, para. 8). His analysis included no discussion of the contextual factors that may have mitigated the perception of WikiLeaks' responsibility, and simply cast WikiLeaks as an aggressive enemy. In fact, he claimed the actions were "likely" a violation of the Espionage Act and "arguably" constitute support for terrorism, but did not provide support for those claims. Typical of this kind of framing, he also challenged the Obama administration to respond. In a December 1, 2010 column, Thiessen wrote, "The very existence of WikiLeaks is a threat to national security." On December 7, 2010, Thiessen wrote another column, "You're either with us, or you're with WikiLeaks," in which he again characterized the actions of WikiLeaks as an attack, and compared it to terrorist acts, concluding, "information technology allows small actors such as Julian Assange to wreak previously unimagined destruction on U.S. national security through cyberspace." Again he made no mention of the publication of these documents, or stories based on them, by various newspapers, including the *New York Times*.

The previously mentioned *Wall Street Journal* editorial (Attack by WikiLeaks, 2010, November 30) concluded by pitting WikiLeaks against the U.S.: "For all of his self-justification as an agent of 'pure' transparency, Mr. Assange is not serving the interest of free societies. His mass, indiscriminate exposure of anything labeled secret that he can lay his hands on is a hostile act against a democracy that is fighting a war against forces bent on killing innocents. Surely, the

U.S. government can do more to stop him than send a stiff letter" (para. 13). The editorial framed WikiLeaks and Assange as a threat and the U.S. as a free democracy with a noble mission, one that is under threat from WikiLeaks.

An opinion piece published in the *New York Daily News*, by Andrew McCarthy (2010, December 12), named Julian Assange the "impresario of the WikiLeaks cyber-war against the United States." McCarthy, a travel writer and former actor, claimed that "By disclosing national defense secrets allegedly purloined by a rogue soldier, [Assange] has damaged American combat operations, intelligence collection and diplomacy. He seeks to render our government dysfunctional, undermining our capacity to pursue national interests and defend national security" (para. 1). The frame clearly established Assange as an attacker who damaged American interests and threatened national security. McCarthy also referred to "our government" and "our capacity," aligning himself with the U.S. government and its interests.

An editorial in the *Houston Chronicle* (Cyber weasels: Hacking incidents raise a troubling question: How safe is your data? (Answer: It's not.), 2010, December 8) suggested that the threat comes not from the negative consequences of the information revealed this time, but from the potential for worse consequences in the future, and that the solution is to improve security: "Next time, instead of our mother-in-law's e-mail contacts, the weasels could grab her credit card number. The State Department could lose nuclear security secrets. Terrorists could seize control of our electric grid. Or our cell-phone satellites. Or our banking system."

Wall Street Journal columnist, media executive and former *Journal* publisher L. Gordon Crovitz (2010, June 14) wrote about the threat posed by WikiLeaks: "Modern technology makes everyone a publisher, including leakers. This means it's impossible to protect secrets, which in

the case of information about national security is bound to make us less safe. WikiLeaks can't be put back into the bottle, so it is a reminder that we must now learn to live with technology tools that we cannot control."

In framing WikiLeaks as a terrorist organization or a threat to national security, these journalists emphasized the danger or damage caused by revealing secret information, and ignored the fact that the secret documents hid negative information in the first place. They implied that the government's need for secrecy was part of national security, and that when that secrecy was compromised, the consequences were negative. Many times they simply accused WikiLeaks of being a terrorist organization or threat to national security, based entirely on the fact that it had published classified government information.

WikiLeaks is Not "Real" Journalism

Professional journalists used a variety of frames in suggesting that WikiLeaks was not legitimate, and distinguished WikiLeaks from what they do in several ways: it lacked responsibility, it did not serve the public interest, it was motivated by political ideals. For example, John Hughes (2010, December 14), columnist for *The Christian Science Monitor*, wrote, "WikiLeaks's indiscriminate dumping of tens of thousands of purloined classified documents into the public domain for friend and foe to read is neither responsible journalism nor does it strike a blow for transparency. It is the work of a politically motivated activist intent on doing America harm" (para. 20). Some journalists excluded WikiLeaks from the profession of journalism—or implied by their language that Assange and WikiLeaks ought to be excluded—by suggesting that WikiLeaks did not conform to the professional standards of journalists. An op-ed

by Conservative *New York Times* columnist David Brooks (2010, November 29)—who also writes for the *Washington Times* and *Weekly Standard*, among others—invoked professionalism: "As journalists, [Times reporters] have a professional obligation to share information that might help people make informed decisions." In contrast, he said, WikiLeaks is not governed by such professional obligations. "WikiLeaks is a problem because its zealous founder, Julian Assange, exercises no judgment. Unlike the news outlets he feeds, he doesn't talk to governments before publishing secrets, and he doesn't redact information that threatens lives. In his eagerness to tell the public what their governments are doing — usually a good thing— he is reckless" (para. 8).

WikiLeaks Didn't Reveal Anything New

While many of the other frames suggested that the leaks were damaging and either stated explicitly or took as presumptive that there must therefore be information revealed in the leaks that had not been revealed before and publicizing that information was harmful, commentary with this frame claimed that the leaks did not contain any new information. They suggested that therefore WikiLeaks was not worthy of consideration as a legitimate journalistic organization, or protection from prosecution or persecution. For example, *Washington Post* columnist Applebaum (2010, July 29) suggested that much of the information revealed by WikiLeaks was not new to anyone who had been following the mainstream media: "By my extremely rough count, the *New York Times* has mentioned the relationship between the Pakistani secret service (the ISI) and the Taliban several dozen times over the past decade.… If you don't know by now that the ISI helped create the Taliban, or that civilian casualties are generally a problem for

NATO, or that special forces units are hunting for al-Qaeda fighters, all that means is that you

don't read the mainstream media" (para. 10-11).

Likewise, Noam Cohen (2010, July 27), another *Post* columnist, wrote,

> The news in that massive data dump provided by the dauntingly mysterious WikiLeaks
> (who? what?) to one American and two European publications is that there is no news at
> all. We already knew that the war in Afghanistan was not going well. We already knew –
> or, in the words of the New York Times, 'harbored strong suspicions' – that Pakistan's
> military spy service was aiding the Taliban (with friends like this…) and we already
> knew that Afghanistan's army and police would be reformed and able to stand up to the
> Taliban some time around when pigs fly or Washington balances the budget. No need to
> wait by the phone (para. 1).

Bacevich (2010, July 25) began his commentary in *The New Republic*, "Based on initial press

reports, the leaking of '90,000 classified documents' related to the Afghanistan war doesn't

really tell us much that we don't already know." After listing the various facts revealed in the

documents, he asked, "Who, if any one, is likely to find any of this news?" A *USA Today*

editorial (Our view on Afghanistan: War leaks confirm what you already know, 2010, July 26)

similarly underlined the political consequences frame in questioning the value of the

information, and asserting the importance of how publicizing the information might have

affected U.S. interests: "Despite the prodigious volume and loud reaction, the documents

exposed so far appear to reveal virtually nothing new, much less pose any risk to U.S. troops or

policy" (para. 1).

L. Gordon Crovitz wrote in the November 1, 2010 edition of his weekly column in the

Wall Street Journal,

> It turns out that traditional on-the-ground reporting over the years by war correspondents
> had made the ups and downs of the Iraq war well-known. The main new information was
> confirmation of Iranian and Hezbollah support of Shiite militias in Iraq, including their
> kidnapping of Americans, as the Bush administration had claimed and its critics

doubted…When journalists tried to add context and understanding to the WikiLeaks data, they found little new to report. (para. 2-3)

These journalists all framed the documents published by WikiLeaks in terms of whether they revealed new information about the war effort—and concluded that the lack of new information made the documents irrelevant. Applebaum and the others at the *Washington Post*, *Wall Street Journal*, *New York Daily News* and *New York Post*, who suggested that the leaks were not worth publishing based on news value—nor WikiLeaks deserving of protection because they did not publish information of value, a question that will be addressed in the following section—were at odds with their colleagues who argued that the information was dangerous, and that WikiLeaks must be stopped. Notably, the *New York Times*, which published several stories on the leaks and presumably, therefore, found the information to be of value, did not argue that WikiLeaks had not revealed any new information.

WikiLeaks Lacks Editorial Process, Judgment

L. Gordon Crovitz (2010, June 14) noted in his *Wall Street Journal* column, "Information Age," the lack of editorial process or journalistic values: "In contrast to the anything-goes posture of WikiLeaks, editors and publishers have often weighed the damage that some kinds of disclosure can bring. Many newspapers and broadcasters have chosen not to use information that would disclose defense secrets." He distinguished WikiLeaks from professional journalists on the basis of editorial judgments. Crovitz (2010, December 13) in a later column argued that WikiLeaks is not journalism due to the lack of an editorial process: "The OpenLeaks approach is a reminder that whatever else it is, WikiLeaks is not a journalistic enterprise. It simply released unfiltered data provided, legally or not, by others" (para. 9). Each time he argued that WikiLeaks

was not considered legitimate journalism due to its lack of editorial structure or process in filtering the information to minimize the damage to government interests.

Applebaum (2010, July 29) argued that WikiLeaks' actions were evidence that professional journalists are needed to filter and frame information: "If you were under the impression that we no longer need news organizations, editors or reporters with more than 10 minutes' experience, think again. The notion that the Internet can replace traditional newsgathering has been revealed as myth" (para. 2). She asserted that even Assange knew he needed the 'mainstream media': "Here the Times and the Guardian can help a little, as they have reviewed the documents, passed them quickly by experts and done a bit of comparing and contrasting. This is because Assange, despite his insistence on the value of raw data, knew perfectly well that the public wouldn't be able to make much of this stuff and gave the documents to three news organizations in advance" (Applebaum, 2010, July 29, para. 6). In another article about another set of leaks four months later, Applebaum (2010, December 7) again suggested the leaks were not meaningful out of context: "Alas for Assange and his revolutionary cohorts, enigmatic lumps of information, without a narrative to connect them and without a political system capable of acting upon them, have no meaning. 'Leaks' out of context have no significance. Despite the hype, there has never actually been a Twitter revolution—activism on the Internet just isn't as effective as activism in real life—and it doesn't look as if the WikiLeaks revolution is going anywhere very fast either."

Bret Stephens (2011, July 19), in his *Wall Street Journal* column, compared the News of the World phone-hacking scandal with WikiLeaks' activities of the previous year:

> In both cases, secret information, initially obtained by illegal means, was disseminated publicly by news organizations that believed the value of the information superseded the

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letter of the law, as well as the personal interests of those whom it would most directly affect. In both cases, fundamental questions about the lengths to which a news organization should go in pursuit of a scoop have been raised. In both cases, a dreadful human toll has been exacted: The British parents of murdered 13-year-old Milly Dowler, led to the false hope that their child might be alive because some of her voice mails were deleted after her abduction; Afghan citizens, fearful of Taliban reprisals after being exposed by WikiLeaks as U.S. informants. Both, in short, are despicable instances of journalistic malpractice, for which some kind of price ought to be paid. So why is one a scandal, replete with arrests, resignations and parliamentary inquests, while the other is merely a controversy, with Mr. Assange's name mooted in some quarters for a Nobel Peace Prize?

USA Today columnist Chuck Raasch (2010, December 16) compared WikiLeaks'

activities to journalism as he defined it—not just "gathering and posting," but pushing for truth

and transparency and having an overarching public interest:

> There is now a debate over whether Assange is a journalist, and whether journalists should defend him. The journalism of today should continuously push for truth and transparency, especially in an era in which government has the ability to create and collect information and propagate propaganda on a scale we could not have imagined even a generation ago. But journalism is not just gathering and posting. It should also include a recognition of an overarching public interest. Revealing real-time battle plans or counterterrorism strategies whose revelations would potentially cost lives and aid merchants of death and mayhem is a bridge too far, even if it is now possible with a few computer keystrokes.…But exposure of evidence of a government planning one thing in secret and saying and doing different things in public should be an essential bridge to cross. (para. 14-17)

Here a professional journalist complicated the notion of journalism and acknowledged the role

the public interest plays in journalism. Raasch did not argue that Assange and WikiLeaks were or

were not doing journalism. But the title *USA Today* put on the op-ed, "In 2010, an assault on

secrecy, privacy and decency," suggested a negative judgment of their activities.

A *Washington Post* (Charging WikiLeaks; The Justice Department weighs a criminal

case, 2010, August 18) editorial defended WikiLeaks' right to publish information without

prosecution before the release of the second war logs and the State Department cables. Although

the editorial emphasized the view of WikiLeaks' actions as irresponsible and dangerous, it

nonetheless discouraged legal action against the organization, nothing the risk to "legitimate

news-gathering efforts" and writing that Attorney General Eric Holder "should not now make the

mistake of trying to hammer Mr. Assange with the same flawed tool [the Espionage Act]" (para.

3). The editorial shared its view of "responsible" behavior on the part of media organizations:

"The government is entitled to enforce confidentiality agreements that bind many government

employees, especially those who work on sensitive national security matters. And media

organizations and Internet sites such as WikiLeaks should not indiscriminately make public

everything they obtain. They should seek—and responsible media organizations do seek—to

protect sources and methods, the disclosure of which could endanger lives" (para. 4). It

concluded,

> The apparent irresponsibility of Mr. Assange and WikiLeaks should not be used to launch
> a prosecution that could chill legitimate news-gathering efforts. The WikiLeaks episode
> does point to a need for a continued dialogue on creating responsible outlets within the
> executive branch for national security whistleblowers. Shoring up the independence and
> tools of the inspectors general at the intelligence agencies would be a good first step and
> one that might persuade the next would-be whistleblower to turn to a responsive and
> responsible government entity rather than a renegade Web site. (Charging WikiLeaks;
> The Justice Department weighs a criminal case, 2010, August 18, para. 5-6)

It is worth noting that, while this *Washington Post* editorial noted the threat to journalism

constituted by legal action against WikiLeaks, it still characterized the WikiLeaks organization

as renegade. By contrasting it to otherwise "responsible" and "legitimate" media organizations

The Washington Post implied that WikiLeaks is illegitimate.

A *New York Post* (A 'deadly' data dump, 2010, July 27) editorial following the Iraq War

publication, quoted a political leader in noting the danger posed by the leaks and claiming the

organization lacked the authority to decide what information was in the public interest or

appropriate to be released to the public: "As Rep. Ike Skelton (D-Mo.), chairman of the House

Armed Services Committee, rightly noted: 'Our nation's secrets are classified for a reason.' It's

not up to WikiLeaks -- or even The New York Times -- to decide what can be released to the

public without putting the lives of those in combat at risk." Likewise, *The New York Times*

Executive Editor Bill Keller (2011, January 30) wrote a commentary in which he strongly

criticized Assange, saying "I do not regard Assange as a partner, and I would hesitate to describe

what WikiLeaks does as journalism." However, he added,

> [I]t is chilling to contemplate the possible government prosecution of WikiLeaks for
> making secrets public, let alone the passage of new laws to punish the dissemination of
> classified information, as some have advocated. Taking legal recourse against a
> government official who violates his trust by divulging secrets he is sworn to protect is
> one thing. But criminalizing the publication of such secrets by someone who has no
> official obligation seems to me to run up against the First Amendment and the best
> traditions of this country. (Keller, 2011, January 30)

Here he framed the problem as the threat to publishing secrets, rather than the political

consequences of the information published.

WikiLeaks Lacks Accountability

Journal columnist Crovitz (2010, December 13) wrote, "Unlike Mr. Assange, editors

answer to someone, namely readers and viewers" (para. 11). *The New York Times* columnist

David Carr (2010, December 13) distinguished WikiLeaks from legacy media based on support

for, or recognition of, the authority of the state:

> WikiLeaks may be willing to play ball with newspapers for now, but the organization
> does not share the same values or objectives. Mr. Assange and the site's supporters see
> transparency as the ultimate objective, believing that sunshine and openness will deprive
> bad actors of the secrecy they require to be successful. Mainstream media may spend a
> lot of time trying to ferret information out of official hands, but they largely operate in
> the belief that the state is legitimate and entitled to at least some of its secrets. (para. 23)

Crovitz suggested that one of the factors separating journalists from others was the fact that journalists have editors who will respond to angry readers and viewers. Carr claimed that accountability had more to do with the recognition of the legitimacy and authority of the state, something that Assange had questioned.

WikiLeaks Misused Freedom of Speech

Several commentators—for example, *Washington Post* columnist Applebaum—criticized WikiLeaks for making the U.S. the target of its leaks, arguing that WikiLeaks ought to target those repressive regimes where secrecy is more tightly maintained by the government. Applebaum (2010, November 30) wrote, "I am less sure whether this revelation gets us anywhere: On the contrary, it seems that, in the name of 'free speech,' another blow has been struck against frank speech. Yet more ammunition has been given to those who favor greater circumspection, greater political correctness and greater hypocrisy" (para. 5). She concluded,

> In fact, the world's real secrets – the secrets of regimes where there is no free speech and tight control on all information – have yet to be revealed. This stuff is awkward and embarrassing, but it doesn't fundamentally change very much. How about a leak of Chinese diplomatic documents? Or Russian military cables? How about some stuff we don't actually know, such as Iranian discussion of Iranian nuclear weapons or North Korean plans for invasion of the south? If the founder of WikiLeaks, Julian Assange, is serious about his pursuit of 'Internet openness' and if his goal isn't, in fact, embarrassing the United States – that's where he'll look next. Somehow, I won't be surprised if he doesn't. (Applebaum, 2010, November 30, para. 9)

Her critique questioned the choice of WikiLeaks' targets, claiming that it ought to attack more overly oppressive regimes. An op-ed in the *New York Post* (Carafano, 2010, November 29) echoed these concerns:

Originally, the muckraking Web site claimed its 'primary interest is in exposing oppressive regimes in Asia, the former Soviet bloc, sub-Saharan Africa and the Middle East.' But clearly its mission has changed to one of embarrassing and weakening America. Dropping any pretense of trying to 'expose' truly oppressive regimes such as Iran or North Korea, it now casts itself as a champion of 'freedom of speech and expression.' But by publicly 'expressing' a quarter-million confidential documents, WikiLeaks willfully puts at risk the lives of people working to undermine the world's repressive regimes. Thus WikiLeaks tortures the virtue of free speech into a frontal assault on what the Founding Fathers called 'ordered liberty' (para. 2-4).

Journalists who framed their commentary about WikiLeaks in this way suggested that there was a "right" and a "wrong" way to use rights to free expression, and that WikiLeaks had not acted in the right way. That right way apparently included exposing information about governments that the authors judged to be repressive or overly secretive, rather than the U.S. government. They defended the U.S. government as not worthy of the same kind of scrutiny.

WikiLeaks Serves the Same Function as Journalists

Countering all the criticism of WikiLeaks and efforts to criticize, discredit, or point out how it differs from professional journalism, several journalists framed the problem as the efforts to discredit, arguing that WikiLeaks was as legitimate as any journalist, and had published valuable information of public interest. As columnist Glenn Greenwald (2010, December 14) noted in *Salon*, "there is no intellectually coherent way to distinguish what WikiLeaks has done with these diplomatic cables with what newspapers around the world did in this case and what they do constantly: namely, receive and then publish classified information without authorization" (p. 4). He argued further that any attempt to prosecute WikiLeaks would endanger press freedoms for other journalists, claiming, "To criminalize what WikiLeaks is doing is, by definition, to criminalize the defining attribute of investigative journalism" (Greenwald, 2010, December 14, para. 5).

The "public editor" for *The New York Times,* essentially its ethics ombudsperson, Arthur

Brisbane, (2010, December 4) posited that any news organization would have shared the

information as WikiLeaks did:

> *The Times*, like other serious news organizations in democracies, exists to ferret out and
> publish information — most especially information that government, business and other
> power centers prefer to conceal. Arming readers with knowledge is what it's about, and
> journalists are motivated to pursue that end. The impulse to obtain and publish
> inaccessible information is greatly strengthened in an age in which, if anything,
> government secrecy is growing." (para. 9-10)

He concluded with the rhetorical question, "Would you as a reader rather have the

information yourself or trust someone else to hang on to it for you?" (Brisbane, 2010, December

4), implying that the public can better handle and judge secret information and the government is

not always going to act in the best interest of the public. His suggestion that WikiLeaks had goals

in common with journalists offered support for the organization's legitimacy, and implied that

the standards by which WikiLeaks ought to be judged were its activities and impact on the public

interest.

One of the earliest editorials the *New York Times* published regarding WikiLeaks also

took the strongest stance in support of the organization's right to free speech. The editorial

(Stifling Online Speech, 2008, February 21) was framed as an analysis of the internet as a new

front in free speech, and began, "A federal judge last week ordered the disabling of

Wikileaks.org, a muckraking Web site that stifles important speech and violates the First

Amendment" (para. 1). The *Times* compared a judge's order to shut down the WikiLeaks site to

shutting down a newspaper:

> Federal District Court Judge Jeffrey White ordered Wikileaks's domain name registrar to
> disable its Web address. That was akin to shutting down a newspaper because of
> objections to one article. The First Amendment requires the government to act only in the

most dire circumstances when it regulates free expression (Stifling Online Speech, 2008, February 21, para. 3).

The editorial concluded, "The free speech burdens of closing down a journalistic Web site are just as serious as closing down a print publication" (Stifling Online Speech, 2008, February 21, para. 5). The *Times* was supportive of WikiLeaks' right to publish, and, in defending its free speech rights, called the web site "journalistic."

A December 2010 *New York Times* editorial cautioned that banks blocking payments to WikiLeaks had undue influence over the release of information, noting, "The whistle-blowing Web site WikiLeaks has not been convicted of a crime. The Justice Department has not even pressed charges over its disclosure of confidential State Department communications. Nonetheless, the financial industry is trying to shut it down" (Banks and WikiLeaks, 2010, December 25, para. 1). The editorial concluded by asking a slippery slope question, in the process comparing WikiLeaks to other journalists:

> What would happen if a clutch of big banks decided that a particularly irksome blogger or other organization was "too risky"? What if they decided — one by one — to shut down financial access to a newspaper that was about to reveal irksome truths about their operations? This decision should not be left solely up to business-as-usual among the banks." (Banks and WikiLeaks, 2010, December 25, para. 8)

Again the *Times* framed the issue as one of free speech rights and the potential risks posed by shutting down WikiLeaks. These two editorials offered support for WikiLeaks' right to publish, although the *Times* also published several columns in between that criticized WikiLeaks, or blamed it for harming U.S. interests. Nonetheless, the paper was much less vociferous than others, and did not call for actions to stop WikiLeaks.

New York Times columnist Carr (2010, December 13) wrote detailed analyses of WikiLeaks' operations: "Last spring, WikiLeaks adopted a more journalistic approach -- editing

and annotating a 2007 video from Baghdad in which an Apache helicopter fired on men who appeared to be unarmed, including two employees of Reuters. The reviews were mixed, with some suggesting that the video had been edited to political ends, but the disclosure received much more attention in the press" (para. 4). He pointed out that WikiLeaks has changed from a "user-edited site held in common to something more akin to a traditional model of publishing," and that "with each successive release, WikiLeaks has become more strategic and has been rewarded with deeper, more extensive coverage of its revelations…seems to be in keeping with its manifesto to deliver documents with 'maximum possible impact'" (Carr, 2010, December 13, para. 7). He described with rare detail the apparent decision process of Assange,

> WikiLeaks's founder and guiding spirit, apparently began to understand that scarcity, not ubiquity, drives coverage of events. Instead of just pulling back the blankets for all to see, he began to limit the disclosures to those who would add value through presentation, editing and additional reporting. In a sense, Mr. Assange, a former programmer, leveraged the processing power of the news media to build a story and present it in comprehensible ways.

His discussion of the procedures and goals of the site offered a sense of the ways in which WikiLeaks compared to legacy media, and which aspects of legacy media may have aided the publicizing of the information. Most importantly, his analysis suggested that Assange had goals related to transparency and serving the public interest in publishing the documents, and that those goals could be enhanced through cooperation with legacy journalists.

The editor of *Wired Magazine*, Evan Hansen (2010, December 6) argued,

> WikiLeaks' role is not the same as the press', since it does not always endeavor to vet information prior to publication. But it operates within what one might call the media ecosystem, feeding publications with original documents that are found nowhere else and insulating them against pressures from governments seeking to suppress information. Instead of encouraging online service providers to blacklist sites and writing new espionage laws that would further criminalize the publication of government secrets, we should regard WikiLeaks as subject to the same first amendment rights that protect The New York Times. And as a society, we should embrace the site as an expression of the

fundamental freedom that is at the core of our Bill of Rights, not react like Chinese corporations that are happy to censor information on behalf of their government to curry favor. (para. 12-13)

His analysis emphasized WikiLeaks' role within the information system, rather than its political importance, and concluded it deserved support from those who support freedom of information. He advocated for the principles of free expression, but also for the value of the role that WikiLeaks can play in the information system.

William Courtney and Kenneth Yalowitz (2010, December 23) in *The Christian Science Monitor* wrote that the information published by WikiLeaks was valuable, particularly for its contribution to information security: "WikiLeaks has given us more than juicy headlines. It's shed light on some vital lessons for Washington and the global reading public" (para. 14). These journalists described the information as valuable, but emphasized the government's need to keep it secret, and placed the responsibility on the U.S. government to better manage information. Many others, as will be seen below, noted the value of the information in defending the public's right to know it.

Taking Action Against WikiLeaks Would Threaten Journalistic Freedom for Others

This kind of commentary cautioned against prosecuting Assange or WikiLeaks, because of the potential to set a legal precedent that would threaten journalists' right to free press, or the evident contradiction with U.S. support of free expression and free access to information and open internet abroad. In general, commentaries that framed the WikiLeaks issue as a legal question were more supportive of WikiLeaks, or at least its right to publish, according to U.S.

law. For example, Eric Pfanner (2010, December 19) cautioned against action by the U.S.

government against WikiLeaks because of the possible negative impact on journalists. He wrote,

> It is not necessary for America to erect a Chinese-style 'Great Firewall' to filter out
> government criticism; if Assange were prosecuted, would-be whistle-blowers and news
> tipsters would have to think twice before taking action. That would be bad news for
> American journalism, and it might be even worse for U.S. technology giants, whose
> global dominance is underpinned by a sense that American values align with the spirit of
> openness and free expression that has generally prevailed on the Internet (Pfanner, 2010,
> December 19).

Washington Post columnist Eugene Robinson (2010, December 14) wrote about the

dangers of allowing Internet firms with de facto control over commerce and speech online to

determine whose speech will be allowed and whose will be censored. Although his commentary

was critical of WikiLeaks, he noted the risk of limiting it: "I don't particularly enjoy defending

Assange, WikiLeaks or a bunch of irresponsible hackers. But I don't want the companies that

regulate interaction and commerce on the Internet deciding whose views are acceptable and

whose are not. The 'terms of service' agreement that should take precedence is the First

Amendment" (Robinson, 2010, December 14, para. 15). In framing the issue as related to the

consequences for journalism, he implied the problem was giving too much power to Internet

companies, rather than the press or the government. This framing suggested that the primary

concern is not the political impact of the leaks on the U.S. government, but the potential to affect

journalists.

Times columnist Carr (2010, December 13) wrote, "It has come under significant attack

as PayPal, Amazon and Visa have all tried to bar WikiLeaks from their services, a move that

would seem unthinkable had it been made against mainstream newspapers. (Can you imagine the

outcry if a credit card company decided to cut off *The Washington Post* because it didn't like

what was on the front page?)" Comparing the treatment of WikiLeaks with that of other legacy

journalism organizations created the sort of parallel that suggested more protection for the press

may serve the public interest and again suggested the problem is not WikiLeaks, but the threat of

private sector attacks on free speech. In so doing, of course, these journalists suggested that

WikiLeaks merits free speech protection. *CNBC* Senior Editor John Carney (2010, December 7),

who called Assange "an enemy of the American government," in his column titled "War Against

WikiLeaks Worse than WikiLeaks," nonetheless wrote,

> The truth is that right now no charges -- civil or criminal -- have been leveled against WikiLeaks. No new laws have been passed to outlaw WikiLeaks activities. The legal means by which the government may act against WikiLeaks either do not exist or have not been employed. It strikes me that it is very possible WikiLeaks has violated some counter-espionage law or another. But those laws--especially if they involve 'prior restraint' bars against publishing classified materials--are probably unconstitutional. What's more, it's hard to think of a way to charge WikiLeaks without charging, say, the New York Times -- which colluded with WikiLeaks to publish the stolen documents. (para. 11-12)

Carney (2010, December 7) also expressed concern about the potential negative political effect

of taking action against WikiLeaks:

> The war against WikiLeaks will undermine our moral authority in the world -- doing far more damage to our diplomacy than anything revealed in the leaked cables. Countries such as China or Iran will be able to point to the attempt to silence WikiLeaks as evidence that our positions in favor of press freedom are hypocrisy. Anything that undermines our global reputation as a beacon of freedom is objectively anti-American…. But by cracking down on WikiLeaks we risk giving credibility to his charge that America's professions of allegiance to liberty are simply a cover story for a conspiracy to gain global power. If companies such as Visa, Mastercard, Amazon, and Paypal want to act politically on America's behalf -- they should insist that doing business with this enemy of the United States is a small price to pay for our freedom.

Here, too, the author placed utmost importance on the reputation and "moral authority" of

the U.S government abroad. Like many journalists who framed this issue in terms of the risks of

punishing WikiLeaks, his concern was not for the rights of the organization, but rather for the

broader U.S. interests. Just as many of the previous authors framed the issue in terms of how

attempts to punish WikiLeaks might hurt journalistic freedoms, but did not express support for WikiLeaks itself.

Solutions offered

The U.S. Must Take Action To Stop WikiLeaks

Various solutions for the "problem" caused by WikiLeaks were offered: legal prosecution, shutting down its servers, and even vaguely defined violent attacks. One solution often suggested was to attempt to muzzle the organization through legal prosecution. Andrew McCarthy (2010, December 12) in the *New York Daily News* wrote, "Plainly, WikiLeaks is a serious national security problem… That leaves prosecution as the response of choice. This is unsatisfying, too" (para. 5). On November 29, 2010, Thiessen wrote, in a column titled, "Obama administration is weak in the face of WikiLeaks," that the Obama administration "has the ability to bring Assange to justice and to put WikiLeaks out of business" and suggested that U.S. Cyber Command shut down WikiLeaks servers.

Some journalists were not specific in suggesting a solution, implying only that something must be done. *Washington Post* columnist Thiessen (2010, August 9) wrote, "It may be impossible to fully recover from this leak. But to mitigate the damage, the Obama administration must, at a minimum, show that the United States is taking action to ensure that such catastrophic disclosures are not repeated…. Now the ball is in the Obama administration's court" (para. 10-12). In his December 7, 2010 column, Thiessen concluded, "This is a threat that requires a U.S. response." Although Thiessen was vague about what exactly might be done, he was clear about the Obama administration's responsibility in doing it.

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A *Wall Street Journal* editorial (Attack by WikiLeaks, 2010, November 30) accused the president of providing an insufficient response: "Regarding the latest WikiLeaks dump of U.S. secrets, our friends at the *New York Sun* have taken to asking, What would Lincoln do? Their implication is that the President who suspended habeas corpus during the Civil War would not be wringing his hands about Julian Assange the way the Obama Administration has for so many months."

Others who did not offer a specific solution implied that the government should determine how to take action against WikiLeaks. Neoconservative political analyst and *Weekly Standard* editor Bill Kristol (2010, November 30), called for Congress to "defeat WikiLeaks" by holding emergency hearings "to find out if the executive branch has the necessary means to defeat WikiLeaks. If it doesn't, Congress can provide additional means and authorities to those that already exist." He concluded, "Acting together to degrade, defeat, and destroy WikiLeaks should be the first topic discussed at today's White House meeting between the president and the congressional leadership" (Kristol, 2010, November 30). Notwithstanding the possible political potshot aimed at the Democratic administration, Kristol's language also put the weight of responsibility on the government to take action to stop WikiLeaks.

The U.S. Should Defend Itself Against WikiLeaks

Commentary suggesting a defensive solution put more onus on the government to act defensively rather than to prosecute WikiLeaks: suggested solutions were to make changes to internal policies regarding classified information, improve cybersecurity measures, and even improve behavior. Columnist Richard Cohen (2010, December 2) in *The Washington Post*

suggested that the government ought to improve its cybersecurity: "The only thing worse than indiscretion is efforts to punish the miscreants by eroding the core constitutional right to publish all but the most obvious and blatant national security secrets. The government has to get better at keeping secrets. Muzzle the leakers - but not the press" (para. 8). A *New York Daily News* (Cyberwarfare isn't science fiction, it's here, as attacks on perceived enemies of WikiLeaks showed, 2010, December 13) editorial suggested that the U.S. must prepare for cyberwarfare, the threat of which WikiLeaks' actions are just one example—one requiring a major response:

> But America's response has fallen far short of the mark. The government must devote the research and money necessary to exponentially increase cybersecurity. Former White House terrorism adviser Richard Clarke proposed creation of a Cyber Defense Administration. That type of big thinking is what the U.S. needs. So let's get moving, Washington. The only thing we can't do is do nothing. (para. 13-14)

The proposed solution involved shoring up U.S. defenses through research and money to cybersecurity, rather than advocating an attack on WikiLeaks.

William Courtney and Kenneth Yalowitz (2010, December 23) in *The Christian Science Monitor* also wrote about the responsibility of the government to protect its information, rather than attack WikiLeaks: "In this information age, Washington should reduce risks of future leaks and espionage by restoring the need-to-know security principle but applying it intelligently so that warning and threat information still goes to those who need it" (para. 14). The *Houston Chronicle* editorial (Cyber weasels: Hacking incidents raise a troubling question: How safe is your data? (Answer: It's not.), 2010, December 8) likewise advocated improved security: "On every level - mother-in-law up to the highest tiers of government - we need to install better locks on our Internet doors." These commentaries noticeably lacked references to WikiLeaks and the punishment or attacks that ought to be leveled against it.

In one exceptional case, *Wired Magazine* editor Hansen (2010, December 6) suggested that, "A government's best and only defense against damaging spills is to act justly and fairly. By seeking to quell WikiLeaks, its U.S. political opponents are only priming the pump for more embarrassing revelations down the road." This keeps the brunt of responsibility to act in response to the information WikiLeaks published, and the very existence of such a mechanism to expose secrets, on the government, but rather than suggesting it attempt to quash WikiLeaks or pursue legal means to prevent future leaks, he suggests that the responsibility of the government is to behave in such a way that exposed secrets will not be problematic. Hansen's suggestion reveals one of the alternative ways journalists could have offered solutions for the "problem" of WikiLeaks that did not include aggressive legal action against the organization or raising defenses.

The U.S. Should Ignore WikiLeaks

Another solution offered was simply to ignore WikiLeaks. Some journalists considered the risks of trying to prosecute Assange in terms of the potential for political embarrassment to the presidential administration or Pentagon, were the efforts to fail. For example, op-ed contributor Jack Goldsmith (2011, February 11) writing in *The Washington Post*, noted the political embarrassment that could result from a failed attempt to indict Assange:

> The first problem with going after Assange is that the effort is likely to fail. Extraditing Assange from England (where he is now) or Sweden (where he may go to face charges of sexual assault) would not be easy, especially since Assange's actions might be deemed a 'political offense,' for which exceptions are made to extradition obligations….A failed attempt to prosecute Assange would be worse than not prosecuting him. It would make the United States look even more ineffectual than it does as a result of the leaks. (para. 3,5)

Although it approached the problem from a legal angle, the underlying message was the same: of utmost importance is the impact on the U.S. government and its image abroad.

Episodic versus thematic framing

As discussed in the chapter on methods, I use Iyengar's (1991) definitions of episodic or discrete framing and thematic framing. According to Iyengar, episodic or discrete framing involves taking an issue or event out of context and discussing it in isolation from the background information or possible causes. Generally the effect of episodic framing is to emphasize the responsibility of an individual who plays a central role in the event—in this case, usually WikiLeaks or Assange—rather than the circumstances or context, such as the U.S. government's overuse of secret classifications, or U.S. responsibility in the unstable international relationships that are the subject of leaks. As most commentary focused on the presumably negative consequences of making secret information public, the responsibility for those consequences could have been attributed to a culture of over-classification in the military (which was mentioned in a few cases), less stringent inter-department security in the U.S. military since the terrorist attacks of 9/11, misbehavior on the part of

Episodic framing was far more common than thematic framing, which, following Iyengar (1991), as explained in the methods chapter, refers to framing that provides a great deal of background information, emphasizing the general or broad context in which an event takes place, and places more emphasis on the responsibility of the surrounding circumstances in precipitating an event, downplaying the responsibility of the individual. Thematic framing was occasionally used by journalists in commentary about WikiLeaks, and when journalists focused their

discussion of WikiLeaks on the different means used to publish information, rather than on the particular content published most recently, their commentary often reflected a richer analysis of the function and resulting legal status of the organization as compared to professional journalists. For example, Geoffrey Stone (2011, January 4) in *The New York Times* wrote about the balance of competing interests,

> If we grant the government too much power to punish those who disseminate information, then we risk too great a sacrifice of public deliberation; if we grant the government too little power to control confidentiality at the source, then we risk too great a sacrifice of secrecy. The answer is thus to reconcile the irreconcilable values of secrecy and accountability by guaranteeing both a strong authority of the government to prohibit leaks and an expansive right of others to disseminate information to the public.

This approach does not name a single actor or event as responsible for any problem, but notes the values and responsibilities of the government, journalists and others sharing information, and the public. Through this additional contextual information and analysis, the blame for the consequences resulting from the information becoming public does not appear to lie with any one individual or organization.

Although infrequent, commentaries with thematic framing provide some sense of what is missing from those with episodic framing: discussions of the broader questions about governments' need to keep secret or classified information, such as the *Philadelphia Inquirer* editorial (WikiLeaks reveals leaky ship of state, 2010, December 1) that pointed out, "Too often, government officials hide documents simply to save themselves from embarrassment" (para. 5), or questions about the culpability of a government that had so much bad behavior to hide, as Sheldon Richman (2010, November 29), an op-ed contributor to *The Christian Science Monitor*, noted, "But a government that can make war while keeping essential information about its justification and conduct secret is neither open nor fit for free people" (para. 1). These

commentaries bring some attention to the responsibility of the government, rather than blaming WikiLeaks for acting irresponsibly. Other commentaries discussed the overuse of "secret" classification, how the public good would be best served with regard to secret information, which legal precedent would protect WikiLeaks and Assange as publishers of secret information provided to them by a third party, and so on. The effect of this contextual information was to remove the emphasis from the role of the individual actors (Assange or WikiLeaks), and place more emphasis on the responsibility of the government, the secret classification system, and other elements related to the leaks.

Journalists frequently used episodic framing when offering commentary about WikiLeaks. Although WikiLeaks had published several documents in the previous three years, several of which were recognized by international non-governmental organizations to have exposed corruption and wrong-doing, the focus of most commentary was on the leaks that WikiLeaks had published most recently and what the immediate impact of that information might be or what action was required in response to that event. In discussing the most recent leak, journalists typically offered a judgment about the relative value of the revelations in terms of truly "secret" information revealed, the political impact of the leaks, the impact of WikiLeaks' activities on cyber-security, journalism or some other aspect of information-sharing. However, these potential effects were almost always discussed in isolated terms, as related only to the release of the most recent information. The dates of the articles are telling of the episodic framing, as they are clustered around the dates of the three major leaks: late July, late October and late November in 2010.

Further examples of episodic framing show the focus on the most recent material released by WikiLeaks. *Washington Post* columnist Howard Kurtz (2010, July 27) asked, "Should the

New York Times, the *Guardian* and *Der Spiegel* have done it? Should they have collaborated

with the organization known as WikiLeaks in publicizing 92,000 pages of secret documents

about the war in Afghanistan?" (para. 1). These questions were posed in reference to the most

recent releases, and framed the debate about WikiLeaks as having only to do with the posting of

one set of leaks. In a column for *The New Republic*, political analyst and writer Andrew

Bacevich (2010, July 25) began,

> Based on initial press reports, the leaking of '90,000 classified documents' related to the
> Afghanistan war doesn't really tell us much that we don't already know. Our Afghan
> partners are less than reliable. Nation building is a painstakingly slow enterprise. At least
> some Pakistanis are playing a double game. NATO forces continue to kill non-
> combatants, despite universal acknowledgment that doing so alienates the people whose
> affections we are desperate to win. The insurgents are on the march. Who, if any one, is
> likely to find any of this news?

Again, the author analyzed only the most recent publication, offering his judgment that the

releases did not reveal any new information, but without any discussion of the previous four

years' worth of information that WikiLeaks had released, much of it controversial and having

resulted in prizes from journalism-related organizations. This focus on only the apparent news

value of the most recent leak was common after both the Afghan War leaks and the Iraq War

leaks.

Discussion

The frames used in professional journalists' commentary about WikiLeaks fell into a few

major groups: those that charged the group with harming the U.S.—WikiLeaks threatened the

war effort, hurt diplomacy, put lives at risk, and WikiLeaks is a terrorist organization or threatens

national security; those who differentiated it from professional journalism based on the

distinctions that it did not reveal anything new, lacked an editorial process or editorial judgment, or lacked accountability, and those that defended its right to publish and even called it journalism, based on the functions that it served or the negative consequences for all journalists if WikiLeaks were punished. The contradiction evident in the treatment of WikiLeaks as journalists reflects the complicated questions raised by its activities.

The frames that highlighted the negative consequences of publishing the leaks and put all the blame for those consequences on WikiLeaks, and those that pointed out the ways in which WikiLeaks differed from professional journalists combined to create a sense of WikiLeaks as an outcast, a violator of the journalistic paradigm that was clearly not part of the profession. While most journalists engaged in efforts to scapegoat WikiLeaks and exclude it from the profession, some attempted to include it. The distinction was largely between those who are already themselves outsiders to some degree: Web-based magazine *Salon* published some of the strongest defense of WikiLeaks, while the more established newspapers (including *The Washington Post*, *Wall Street Journal*, *USA Today*, *The New York Post* and *New York Daily New*s) were more likely to condemn WikiLeaks. The outlier was the *New York Times*, the only U.S. paper that worked in cooperation with WikiLeaks to publish articles about the leaks. Whether the fact that the *Times* also published a series of articles based on the leaks was the reason for its more supportive stance toward the organization is only conjecture, but it is a major distinction between the *Times* and the other journalists in this analysis. Of course, the *Times* also published commentary by executive editor Bill Keller (2011) that strongly separated him and the newspaper from WikiLeaks and Assange.

Using the theoretical framework of paradigm repair, discussed in the literature review, these efforts to cast WikiLeaks as a renegade and blame it for the danger or threats identified in

the framing of the political consequences of the leaks can be seen as professional journalists attempting to identify and reject the problematic element. Journalists pointed to WikiLeaks' failings in areas that they apparently believed were crucial to the journalistic paradigm. The differences journalists identified are where they drew the boundaries of their profession: publishing information that is "new," exercising editorial judgment or having an editorial procedure, and being accountable. Thus, journalists attempts to repair their paradigm through ostracizing an organization that violated that paradigm revealed these key attributes that distinguish the profession.

The combination of the prevailing episodic framing, which emphasized individual responsibility, with the conflict frame, contributed further to the characterization of a conflict in which the individual actor that was the focus of the discussion was blamed. Journalists cast WikiLeaks as the aggressor, attacker or provocateur in a conflict with the U.S., or as the renegade in the profession of journalism. Each action of WikiLeaks was framed as a discrete event, for which WikiLeaks bore most of the responsibility. The political consequences of WikiLeaks' actions were defined as either damaging to U.S. interests in terms of credibility or the ability to continue operations, or helpful to opponents of the United States. In some cases journalists simply suggested that Assange himself was an opponent of the U.S. government and his primary goal was to attack U.S. interests. This framing left no room for consideration of the responsibility of the U.S. government in the negative consequences of the leaks becoming public, whether through poor internal security systems or behaving in a way that would put lives in danger when the details of that behavior were made public.

The solutions suggested or implied in commentary varied as well: to take action against WikiLeaks or Assange (prosecution using the Espionage Act, using technological tools to shut

down servers, or sending U.S. Special Forces to find Assange), to take action to shore up U.S. cyber-security, or even improve U.S. behavior to avoid future problems, or to ignore WikiLeaks, prosecute Assange using the Espionage Act, hunt Assange down using U.S. Special Forces. However, the solutions all contributed to the framing of Assange and WikiLeaks as enemies of the United States. In casting WikiLeaks as political enemies, journalists did not leave room for consideration of WikiLeaks as journalists.

CHAPTER 7. Conclusion: The future of professional journalism

This conclusion considers the analysis of terms and framing in the theoretical framework of paradigm repair, discussing how journalists' commentary on WikiLeaks showed evidence of efforts to repair the paradigm of professional journalism, how that paradigm was defined—on what basis journalists distinguished their own work from WikiLeaks—and the consequences of those efforts for journalists as well as for WikiLeaks and other new media organizations. In particular I address the implications of denying journalistic status to WikiLeaks, both for WikiLeaks and for professional journalists. In the preface to Beckett and Ball's book on WikiLeaks, Emily Bell (2012) wrote, "In a digitized age of data capture and dissemination, where vast amounts of information can be published and shared among networks of citizens and activists without the mediation of the press, WikiLeaks raises fundamental questions about journalism, its process and its role in a modern society" (vii). Precisely because it critiques the professional ideology of journalism and even undermines journalists' claims to professional authority, I used WikiLeaks to examine how journalists have responded to this challenge to their professional ideology. WikiLeaks challenged the professional ideology of journalists and its basic premises: that gathering, analyzing and providing information to the public is the responsibility of an institutionalized press with a particular hierarchical structure, work routines, and ethical codes. In addition, as a truly global media organization, WikiLeaks is unique in raising the question of whose public interest U.S. journalists serve, as WikiLeaks claims to create "a better society for all people" through transparency. I have sought to examine how professional journalists have responded to WikiLeaks through an analysis of the terms and frames they used in discussing WikiLeaks in commentary, editorial, and opinion articles.

Paradigm repair theory

Paradigm repair theory posits that when journalists perceive challenges or threats to their professional ideology, they respond with efforts to "repair" the paradigm by identifying and normalizing or discrediting those who challenged or threatened the paradigm, and by closing ranks and drawing boundaries between those who are legitimate members of the community and those who are not. The tendency of the dominant paradigm is to view, and then subsequently to frame, as other and illegitimate, those institutions that challenge their dominance. Considered through the lens of paradigm repair, the terms and framing used by most journalists can be seen as efforts to define and defend the boundaries of their profession by identifying WikiLeaks as an outsider and pointing out the ways in which it violated the journalistic paradigm. Through their criticism of WikiLeaks professional journalists implied that the legitimate or responsible way of doing journalism relies on particular practices, routines, structures and professional values that make up the ideology or paradigm of professional journalism. Moreover, they implied, if they did not say outright, that WikiLeaks does not comply with these practices, routines, structures or values, and is therefore not a legitimate part of the journalists' community. In commentary about WikiLeaks, professional journalists defined legitimate journalism on the basis of whether the information provided was really "new," whether an editorial process was in place or editorial judgment was exercised before publication, whether the organization publishing the information could be held legally accountable, and whether it had a political aim (or objectivity). This was accomplished through the use of terms to describe WikiLeaks, its activities, and its founder in ways that suggested they did not possess these qualities, or were simply dangerous or questionable. Framing WikiLeaks as an attacker, enemy, or a threat makes it especially difficult

to consider any other view of the organization—for example, as a legitimate organization seeking to share information in the public interest, in order to improve democratic functions.

Evaluating WikiLeaks

WikiLeaks provided journalists with an opportunity to observe a different model for sharing information in the public interest. It promoted and practiced source transparency, by publishing original documents for viewers to examine. It also positioned itself as an organization that served the broader global public interest, rather than a particular nation's public interest, showing a clear willingness to go against the interests of the U.S. government in order to share information that it believed was significant to others outside (and perhaps inside) the United States. However, WikiLeaks revealed the weaknesses of a non-legacy journalism organization in disseminating information widely, as it necessarily sought the collaboration of various newspapers to interpret and publish its most important documents. It also veered a great deal more towards the editorial hierarchy of legacy journalism, as the site eliminated its wiki functionality. Its editorial process was ultimately more opaque than most legacy journalism organizations, as very little information is available about the individuals involved in determining the authenticity of documents and deciding which documents were to be published. WikiLeaks generated an extremely emotional response in many cases, and the behavior of its most prominent spokesperson was also evidently emotional, complicating some of the considerations here. Ultimately, however, the organization provoked journalists to consider important questions about their own practices, and rather than do so, many journalists responded critically and defensively.

Journalists described WikiLeaks as a website or internet organization, rather than a news organization or publisher, avoiding terms that might align WikiLeaks' actions with journalism. They emphasized the "stateless" or "amorphous" quality of WikiLeaks, and claimed that it had "political" ambitions or goals. Although WikiLeaks says its goals are to use transparency to expose wrong-doing in government, much of the commentary by professional journalists about the organization only said that its goals were "political," or even claimed its goals were explicitly to harm the U.S. The most damning commentary called WikiLeaks such things as "nihilists," "cyber weasels," and "cyberanarchists." The verbs journalists used to describe WikiLeaks' actions further distinguished it from journalism: they said documents were "dumped" or "released," and they qualified disclosures as "irresponsible," "unauthorized," "unfiltered," or even "criminal" and "illegal"—despite the fact that no U.S. law prohibits publishing secret or classified information that was provided by a third-party source. By describing the activities of WikiLeaks as dumping, posting, or leaking rather than publishing, reporting, or journalism, and by accusing it of criminal activity, professional journalists delegitimized or at least marginalized WikiLeaks and its work, and defined the boundaries of professional journalism very narrowly. Perhaps the most laudatory terms journalists used were "whistle-blower" and "muckraker." In this way, journalists refused to fully include WikiLeaks in the profession of journalism, even when they suggested WikiLeaks was a watch-dog, rather than an attacker. Professional journalists effectively set WikiLeaks apart from the work that *they* themselves do, making it an "other," different and lacking the legitimacy of their version of journalism, with the concomitant rights, roles and responsibilities they claim. The effect of this marginalization is consistent with efforts to repair a paradigm by identifying and condemning outsiders. In all these critiques it was

clear that journalists did not consider WikiLeaks to have engaged in legitimate journalism, or to

be a journalistic organization.

This was not the case throughout the history of WikiLeaks. WikiLeaks publications prior

to 2010, which were smaller in scale or not related to the U.S. government or its interests did not

provoke nearly as much criticism; in fact, several editorials and columns were supportive of

WikiLeaks. These early defenses of WikiLeaks later gave way to sharp criticism or, at best,

begrudging defense. Even those journalists who expressed opposition to legal action against the

organization—because any action against WikiLeaks might open the door for action against

journalists, too—were careful to note that they considered WikiLeaks' actions abhorrent. The

majority of journalists stopped short of calling WikiLeaks a journalism organization despite its

many similarities to journalistic activity, particularly the shared function of publishing

information in the public interest.

Journalists on WikiLeaks: Framing

The frames used by professional journalists in their commentary further contributed to the

ostracizing of WikiLeaks. Whether discussing the importance of WikiLeaks in terms of its

political consequences or consequences for journalism and information-sharing, most journalists

framed WikiLeaks in terms of how the leaks it made public affected the U.S. government and its

interests. Journalists most often claimed that the actions of WikiLeaks were harmful or

threatening, to the U.S. war effort, U.S. diplomacy, international diplomacy or the lives of U.S.

allies abroad, or that the existence of the organization itself represented a threat to national

security. The underlying message delivered by using these frames was that the main concern in

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the events was the status of the U.S. government and its ability to enact its desired foreign policy. In this criticism and dismissal of WikiLeaks there was a high level of credence paid to government and other institutions of power. Rather than challenging the existing power structures, journalists more often assumed a stance that aligned them with the government, taking as a presumptive position that the legitimacy of the U.S. government and the policies it pursues was of the utmost importance, and framing WikiLeaks as a problem in whatever sense and to whatever degree that it threatened U.S. interests, whether diplomatic, political or military. Very rarely did journalists or their news organizations adopt a perspective critical the U.S. government. In fact, journalists consistently aligned themselves with the interests of the U.S. government, suggesting a possible conflation of American public interest and American national government interest.

Framing WikiLeaks in terms of the political consequences of its actions on the U.S. government, rather than on the issues that WikiLeaks asserted as important, such as transparency of information, meant that professional journalists prioritized the goals of the U.S. government and made them appear more legitimate, while WikiLeaks' goals were not given any consideration at all. The frames tended to simplify the impact and the aims of WikiLeaks. Often, it was described as lacking form, lacking oversight, or lacking ethics. In reality WikiLeaks offered a clearly defined ethic, albeit one that was not in line with professional journalism. WikiLeaks stated its objective was to use transparency to expose wrongdoing in government and abuse of power. The tendency of a frame to crowd out alternate views meant that most journalists completely ignored the ethics promoted by WikiLeaks.

The problem with journalists accusing WikiLeaks of failing to serve U.S. interests is that WikiLeaks has never purported to serve the U.S. public interest. As a truly global journalism

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organization, WikiLeaks has no responsibility to serve the public interest of American citizens or preserve the national security of the United States. In fact, what is best for the global public interest may be at odds with what is best for U.S. public interest. Criticism leveled at WikiLeaks for actions that may have damaged U.S. national security interest is largely irrelevant in the context of WikiLeaks' role, and ignores the larger question about the responsibilities of a global media organization, and the United States' role in a global context. Professional journalists in the United States may be committed to a professional ideology that is limited in its ethical application. WikiLeaks does not privilege U.S. public interest over others; a stance that makes professional journalists in the U.S. appear provincial in a networked global society.

Regarding the consequences for journalism, journalists' framing of WikiLeaks was inconsistent: Many professional journalists condemned WikiLeaks and framed its actions in terms of how it differed from professional journalism and violated the standards and ideology of professional journalists, but a few argued that WikiLeaks ought to be granted the same protection as journalists, and that its activities were indistinguishable from those of professional journalists. Although specific trends emerged in the commentary by professional journalists about WikiLeaks, the response was not uniform. Some journalists claimed the information published by WikiLeaks represented unacceptable risks or damage done, while others wrote that the information in the documents was largely consistent with the information already in the public sphere. Different authors asserted in commentary both that WikiLeaks was an illegitimate, unauthorized—or worse, criminal and reckless—organization that threatened U.S. interests abroad by revealing dangerous information, and that the leaks it had shared revealed no new information. Despite the evident contradiction in these two assertions about the information, journalists consistently criticized WikiLeaks and its activities as judged by the standards of

professional journalism. And in either case, again, the importance of WikiLeaks' activities was framed in terms of their impact on the U.S. government.

Mark Coddington's (2012) comparison of the *New York Times*' and the *Guardian's* efforts at paradigm repair with respect to WikiLeaks noted that the *Times* distinguished itself from WikiLeaks on the basis of institutionality (having characteristics of an institution, meaning an embedded organization or pattern of behavior that helps constitute social structure), source-based reporting routines, and objectivity. These same distinctions were apparent in commentary analyzed here. The lack of institutionality was evident in terms used to describe WikiLeaks as either lacking institutional form or as "stateless." Journalists in commentary analyzed here also pointed to WikiLeaks' lack of an editorial process and WikiLeaks' or Assange's lack of journalistic objectivity, in line with Coddington's findings. The lack of newness in the information and the lack of accountability were problematic qualities of WikiLeaks asserted by journalists as the basis for exclusion from the profession in this study, but were not evident in Coddington's study of the *Times*. This may have to do in part with the fact that the *Times* published several stories using the information, and therefore presumably did not believe the leaks to be "old news." Regardless of the basis for the contrast, my analysis clearly found that the majority of journalists merely presumed that WikiLeaks' actions did not constitute journalism.

In commentary analyzed here, journalists referred to a responsible or right way of doing journalism, differentiating WikiLeaks from legacy journalism on the basis of several criteria. One of the most common standards concerned WikiLeaks' lack of objectivity or the fact that it had political agenda or editorial stance, often attributed to Assange as the founder or spokesperson. Journalists largely ignored the long history, dating back to early partisan press, of

an editorial stance in legacy journalism in the United States. They also ignored the goal of the organization as described by WikiLeaks, namely, transparency in government as a way to combat corruption. Another criterion emphasized as a way to distinguish WikiLeaks from journalists was the editorial oversight provided by "responsible" journalists, whose work passes through an editorial process that they implied provides some measure of legitimacy, accuracy or ethical superiority. However, it is a kind of legitimacy based on adherence to established protocol rather than evaluating broader consequences, quality or ethical implications. Several journalists contended that the information WikiLeaks had published revealed nothing new, a criticism that would seem to describe much of the work of professional journalists, as they routinely publish information that has also been published by others.

Journalists also promoted the editorial judgment and weighing of interests (the needs of the many v. the needs of the few, national security v. the public's right to know, better diplomacy v. more transparency) as a professional responsibility they have, criticizing Assange for his failure to do so, but in fact WikiLeaks has apparently already considered the various interests and has decided in favor of transparency above all as a guiding principle. Assange has stated that breaking the use of power to control or limit people is more important than the rights of those who have secrets, or the interests those secrets protect. While journalists may disagree with his particular goals, they cannot credibly accuse WikiLeaks of having failed to weigh the competing interests involved in sharing information.

Accountability was another characteristic used to distinguish WikiLeaks from professional journalists, who pointed out that WikiLeaks lacked a physical location and was therefore not subject to state laws, and kept secret the identities of its members. They challenged the legitimacy of its "unauthorized" sources. However, the fundamental contradiction of

WikiLeaks—that it exists to keep secret the identity of sources who make public the secret information they obtain—is one familiar to journalists. Journalists have long relied on, and even fostered, relationships with anonymous sources in order to bring to light information that had been kept from the public. Thus, WikiLeaks rails against secrecy and champions transparency, while closely guarding the secrets of its sources, its staff or their location, and most any other information about the organization. It does so as a prerequisite to making public the kind of information he seeks to expose. On the other hand, it provided transparency in terms of the information it published, by making public all source documents, so that a reader could see original material rather than just a reporter's interpretation of that material. Journalists do not offer the same kind of transparency in their reporting.

I have discussed the framing of WikiLeaks in two ways—the amount of contextualization (i.e. episodic/discrete versus thematic framing) and the news topic frame (i.e. conflict, political consequences, consequences for journalism/information). As discussed in the previous chapter, professional journalists largely used episodic framing in discussing WikiLeaks, and most commonly framed WikiLeaks in terms of political consequences, consequences for journalism or information, conflict, or often, a combination of two of these. The effect of the combination of episodic framing with these consequences frames is to emphasize the responsibility of WikiLeaks in the consequences of the information being published. The event that is the subject of commentary is divorced from the larger surrounding and background context, contributing to the sense of responsibility of the individual (Assange) or the individual organization (WikiLeaks). In using episodic framing, journalists also addressed WikiLeaks and questions about the legitimacy of the organization based on the content of its reports, rather than the activities in which it was engaged or its organizational goals. The conflict frame placed

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WikiLeaks in opposition to the U.S. government and its interests, either implicitly or explicitly

identifying WikiLeaks as a problem or a threat, in need of solution or response. The tendency of

episodic framing to emphasize the responsibility of the individual actor in combination with the

conflict frame serves to place WikiLeaks as the responsible party in the conflict. By framing

WikiLeaks as a problem or a threat, or an organization engaged in conflict with the U.S.—a

conflict in which it carries most of the responsibility—journalists characterized WikiLeaks as a

political actor, rather than a journalistic one. Framing WikiLeaks as a threat placed it outside the

profession of journalism and made it difficult for audiences to consider the potential positive

activities or goals of the organization.

Journalistic status

Professional status within any domain brings a degree of legitimacy or credibility. In

journalism, despite the lack of formal requirements for professional status, professionalism

brings these same informal benefits, as well as some legal and other more formal benefits. The

formal benefits of being considered a member of the institutional press include access to press

conferences or galleries, protection under shield laws and higher levels of protection from

lawsuits related to content they publish. Case law and Supreme Court decisions have held that

journalists deserve special protection against certain kinds of subpoena and require a different

standard for conviction in libel cases. Recent legal decisions have held that an individual is

considered a journalist—and afforded the corresponding legal protection—based on the activity

in which they are engaged, the newsworthiness of the content published, and the intent of the

individual, rather than the terms of employment or official function. However, journalists

engaging in paradigm repair have identified the standards for inclusion in their profession as more limited than those suggested by the court. Journalists in commentary analyzed here made distinctions based on adherence to their ideology of accountability, editorial structures, and objectivity, which is more limiting than the court's definition based on activity, content and intent, and, in the emerging media ecology, less helpful and more confusing. They claimed or implied that WikiLeaks was not legitimate because it lacked the practices, routines, structures and values that make up the ideology of modern professional journalism. However, the characteristics of that ideology do not necessarily offer the best or right way of serving the public interest, and may appear inferior to the alternative modes of production being offered online.

Of course, an exclusionist attitude towards newer media is nothing new. As noted in the literature review, "Each invention introduced a new group of reporters who felt less bound by their predecessors' rules and traditions. Over time, the outsiders invariably forced the veteran insiders to adjust to new practices. But initially reporters for each new media met stiff resistance from the press corps's establishment" (Ritchie, 2005, p. xiii). Thus WikiLeaks and other new media can be seen in this context as just the next in line in a long tradition of journalists excluding newcomers. The consequences in some cases might have meant exclusion from press areas or news services, but there may be other consequences with even greater import, such as exclusion from legal protection. Most journalists denied WikiLeaks free press rights outright in suggesting the U.S. government take legal action against the site, although some commentary was exceptional in this regard and defended its rights. However, even the *New York Times*, which published several editorials supportive of WikiLeaks' right to publish, also distanced itself in other ways from the organization. For example, executive editor Bill Keller explained in a

column that he considered Assange neither a "collaborator" nor a journalist; instead, he said Assange was a source, and "a man who clearly had his own agenda" (Keller, 2011, January 26).

The consequences

Journalists framed WikiLeaks as a threat to the U.S. government and an outsider to the profession of journalism by ignoring the information and the arguments that would have made it appear more legitimate. The overall effect was to cast WikiLeaks as a rogue operation, even a political enemy, certainly an outsider to journalism, and unworthy of free speech and press protection. As Benkler (2011) pointed out, "The rhetorical framing of Wikileaks in the socio-political frame of global threat and terrorism, in turn, facilitated and interacted with a range of responses that would have been inconceivable in the more factually appropriate frame of reference: such as what counts as responsible journalism, or how we understand the costs and benefits of the demise of more traditional models of journalistic self-regulation in the age of the networked public sphere" (p. 2). Perhaps more than paradigm repair, journalists' efforts to exclude WikiLeaks from their profession or interpretive community could be more accurately called "defensive ossification" as these efforts at paradigm repair result in journalists appearing increasingly irrelevant as they cling to outmoded professional distinctions. Many journalists appeared to adopt a simplistic or reflexive acceptance of the superiority of the legacy journalist method without legitimate self-reflection, excluding WikiLeaks from journalism on the basis of a definition based on a description of what legacy journalists do rather than a prescriptive ethical guideline that takes as its primary goal providing the best contribution to the public good.

The risk of this kind of exclusion through paradigm repair is two-fold: the increased

vulnerability of excluded actors and others like them, and the damage done to journalists

themselves through narrowing definitions of their profession and the inability to adapt to

changing contexts. First is the vulnerability of those excluded from journalistic status to

censorship and other attacks, as WikiLeaks was. By excluding WikiLeaks from the profession of

journalism and the legitimacy and legal benefits it brings, journalists have left WikiLeaks and

others who are not "professional journalists" more open to legal attack. These non-institutional

journalists do not have the advantages of institutional safe-guards and financial and legal

assistance. As Benkler (2011) pointed out, they are more vulnerable than professional journalists:

"The emphatic denial of membership in the club does not make a formal constitutional

difference; but as a matter of constitutional culture, it puts the practitioners of the networked

fourth estate at greater risks than fringe journalists have been in the United States for almost a

century" (p. 39). If challenged, certainly a high-level court might use the correct test in

determining status and rights, but many organizations would never have the opportunity to take

their case to a high-level court before being discouraged from publishing or sharing information.

The attacks leveled against WikiLeaks by banks that withdrew funding and internet servers that

suspended the site demonstrate how the right to share information could be withheld from those

who lack the status and institutional protection of professional journalists. If journalists continue

to fight to maintain an exclusive claim to journalistic status and rights, they put these outsiders at

greater risk of being silenced.

Second is the risk to journalists, whose defensive efforts may hinder them. When

journalists define their paradigm so narrowly, they put their own work at risk. For example,

previous studies of paradigm repair have indicated that journalists condemned the internet as a

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non-credible news source (Ruggiero, 2004), but as newspapers increasingly move online and stop publishing paper versions, they occupy the same medium they previously identified as deviating from the paradigm—and then increasingly weaken that resistance over time. They may also exclude practices that could ultimately prove useful or even improve their own activities, such as WikiLeaks' publication of all source materials for its reports. WikiLeaks goaded journalists toward greater source transparency, which could provide a great deal of value to professional journalists, and enhance the information they provide to the public. Perhaps journalists could provide a greater service to public information by offering more access to primary source materials, or allow the public a more comprehensive view of the sources of that information, particularly given the degree to which professional journalists in this study were inclined to support the U.S. government. Yet they generally rejected the premise of WikiLeaks and its approach to "scientific journalism." Attempts to "repair" the paradigm may also distract journalists from the very real issues and challenges they face, and prevent them from solving problems or addressing weaknesses in their professional ideology.

By attempting to exclude some activities from the world of journalism, professional journalists risked leaving WikiLeaks and similar new or non-traditional media open to attack, while also limiting the activities of and protections for professional journalists. Their framing established one set of activities as "journalism," legitimate and worthy of special status, while other activities that might share some characteristics were not legitimate or worthy of that status. As Benkler (2011) warned, we cannot afford to create "classes of privileged speakers and press agencies, and underclasses of networked information producers whose products we take into the public sphere when convenient, but whom we treat as susceptible to suppression when their publications become less palatable. Doing so would severely undermine the quality of our public

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discourse and the production of the fourth estate in the networked information society" (p. 42).

While several commentaries acknowledged that a legal assault on WikiLeaks might open the

gate for similar attacks on newspapers and other news organizations, they did not recognize the

same potential in their own shunning of WikiLeaks and its activities.

A model for the future

The lessons learned from the response of professional journalists to WikiLeaks can be

used to guide journalists in adapting to the emerging media ecology and in responding to other

"new" media that appear to challenge their authority, but which may lack the same routines or

practices that journalists have enshrined in their professional ideology. Free expression is

understood to serve a purpose in a democratic society: providing citizens with information they

need to make decisions about self-government. This serves as a justification for providing some

legal protection for journalists, but that protection must be granted on the basis of intention to

disseminate information of public interest and the behaviors that follow from that intention,

rather than a particular set of practices. Again, the distinctions between professional journalists,

citizen journalists and others are becoming more confusing and less helpful in a networked

society. Journalism ethics theory, media law and two commissions have provided a framework to

guide the future, inclusive definition of journalism.

Despite their rhetoric to the contrary, professional journalists are not uniquely responsible

for public information. The First Amendment to the Constitution protects the right of every

citizen to publish and speak freely, and the Supreme Court has established over dozens of

decisions that this is a crucial ancillary to the right to self-government. In protecting the right to

free expression, justices have weighed the value of a robust public debate about issues of public importance against the other rights of individuals that would be affected by that speech. Likewise, any information-sharing activity (speaking or publishing) should be judged based on its value to contribute to a robust public debate, and the ability of citizens to make informed decisions about their government. As previously discussed here and in the literature review, case law has suggested journalism is defined by activity, intent and content (*In re Madden*, 1998). If journalism is defined by what is done rather than who does it, the rights of all those who seek to share information of a journalistic nature will be protected. In addition, the protection needed for individuals who publish information of public interest, particularly information that exposes wrongdoing by governments and other institutions of power, will be more easily applied to all those who need it. As long as professional journalists resist this definition, they risk confining themselves to a severely limited set of activities, and putting at risk of legal attack and public scorn any activity that doesn't fit within their definition.

Finally, the Knight Commission (2009) discussed in the literature review can offer guidelines for the role of journalists, and these guidelines can also set standards for what should guide journalists, and therefore what should count as journalism. The Knight Commission concluded that communities "need accurate, relevant news and information to fuel the common pursuit of the truth and the public interest" (2009). Its recommendations included to "maximize the availability of relevant and credible information," "enhance the information capacity of individuals," and "promote public engagement" in order to better provide communities with the information they need: "accurate, relevant news and information to fuel the common pursuit of the truth and the public interest" (Knight Commission, 2009). The Commission's report suggested that journalists should be concerned with accurate, comprehensive and relevant

information in context, with the goal of advancing the pursuit of truth and the public interest. Whether there is an editorial structure, or what kind of editorial structure is in place in a particular organization, whether an organization published something that had not been published anywhere else, or whether an organization has a physical location or a published staff list are irrelevant to providing that information. That crucial question to use in judging journalists was indeed raised by a few journalists who commented on WikiLeaks' activities—does the information serve the public interest? However, they failed to raise the question of how the public is defined. While journalists in this analysis seemed to consider only the U.S. public interest, the changing nature of the media ecology as represented by WikiLeaks demands considering the interests of an international public, one that is formed through online networks and is not divided by state boundaries. Perhaps we do not yet have a code of ethics for this kind of journalism, but we can find suggestions for the creation of such a code in the existing ethics of journalists.

The fundamental concern of any quasi-journalistic actor must be providing information that serves the needs of the public, and increasingly in a networked world, an international public. Journalists are still needed to provide a dedicated source of reporting and Sue Robinson (2011) in describing "journalism as process" offered a model for how professional journalists and others work together to develop a news account that is not complete when the journalist publishes it, but rather develops over time with input and contributions from readers. Benkler (2006) suggested what the networked society might provide: "a platform for engaged citizens to cooperate and provide observations and opinions, and to serve as a watchdog over society on a peer-production model." Journalists, professional and otherwise, sharing information of public interest ought to consider how their actions contribute to the three recommendations of the

Knight Commission: to increase the availability of relevant and credible information, to improve the capacity of individuals to engage with that, and to promote public engagement. Of course, as Benkler (2011) pointed out, "being part of the mass media is no guarantee of high-quality and effective journalism; nor is being an online outlet a guarantee of falsehood and echo-chamber effects. The new system will have high quality, effective participants of each type, and low quality rumormongers on either side of the traditional/networked media divide" (p. 56). Professional journalists especially remain important players in this new media ecology, not because they have a long-standing claim to authority, but because they have access to some of the most powerful tools for disseminating information. A website with high traffic is a valuable piece in the information-sharing system.

Further research in this area might consider how professional journalists in other nations, not tied to an ideology based on serving the public interest of the American public, responded to WikiLeaks, and whether their framing also decried WikiLeaks as a threat to their national government. Another area that merits exploration is the conceptualization of an international public and how it might be served by a global network of media organizations and contributors to online media content. Paradigm repair theory might continue to be useful as a way to analyze journalists' responses to crises, but perhaps further research could address the question of how effective—or very ineffective—such responses are.

Conclusion

The practice of journalism that evolved into a profession in the relatively short history of the United States again faces redefinition due to technological innovation and economic

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challenges. In this changing media ecology, the response of journalists to WikiLeaks offers a view of a profession that has been largely reactionary and defensive. Journalists distanced themselves from WikiLeaks and characterized it as an outsider to journalism, one that was illegitimate and violated the standards of the profession. Episodic framing and an emphasis on the content of particular leaks rather than WikiLeaks' organizational structure or ethical principles further caused it to appear as an outsider. The analysis of journalists' framing of WikiLeaks is a case study that offers insight into how they respond to these challenges: by marginalizing, criticizing and placing in opposition to government and security interests those challenges. In so doing, they stagnate by avoiding questions about the weaknesses in their own model, and missing opportunities to adopt new work practices, and they put at risk those most vulnerable elements of the new media ecology, as well as their own work in future iterations.

The multitude of voices entering the public discourse through online communication media creates ambiguity about reality—or rather about the legitimacy of one particular version of reality—and undermines journalists' claim to special status as the creators, controllers or framers of information. By claiming an exclusive professional status and accompanying responsibilities, and especially by claiming an "objective," or fair and balanced perspective, journalists have asserted that their version of events is more authoritative and even legitimate than others on the basis of the work practices and routines they follow, or the structures of their organizations. However, as was made clear in the literature review, a great deal of research and analysis suggests that more collaborative models involving open participation are legitimate means for processing and evaluating information and participants, and may result in better information (Surowiecki, 2004) and a more engaged participatory public (Bruns, 2008). Meanwhile, journalists continue to attempt to dismiss or discredit challengers by constructing

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boundaries that exclude them, to increasingly useless and even damaging effect. The consequences of this may be first, to leave those challengers vulnerable to legal or financial attack; second, to put at risk protections for professionals' work as it evolves in the future; and third, to prevent journalists from addressing the real weaknesses of their professional ideology or from embracing new practices suggested by new media. While the first may be part of the desired effect of paradigm repair as journalists protect their turf, it is not necessarily in the best interest of the public, which journalists claim they are committed to serving. If journalists stake their claim to special duties, responsibilities, and protection on the particular work processes, routines, structures or even publication models of their current media, they fail to protect the goals of an informed electorate more broadly, and perhaps even journalists, specifically, as their use of media evolves and changes in the future.

The distinctions journalists make between different kinds of journalism, whether professional, citizen, pro-am or otherwise, are increasingly confusing and less helpful. The concerns about whether WikiLeaks will be considered journalism may already be irrelevant in terms of the public's perception, and perhaps even legally. As media scholar Jay Rosen (2010, July 26) pointed out, the technology for sharing information now permits freedoms that the legal and institutional structures had not permitted or endorsed: "In media history up to now, the press is free to report on what the powerful wish to keep secret because the laws of a given nation protect it. But WikiLeaks is able to report on what the powerful wish to keep secret because the logic of the Internet permits it. This is new." WikiLeaks and similar organizations may not need the permission or endorsement of professional journalists—professional journalists may have to adopt new practices in order to remain legitimate, and increased transparency of source materials may be one of those practices. The reaction of professional journalists may ultimately have more

importance for their own continuing legitimacy and credibility than for that of WikiLeaks or other new media organizations. However, the concern for other new entrants into the practice of making information public—entrants who lack the technological savvy or hacker backing of WikiLeaks—are still vulnerable, and it is their right to freely publish information in the public interest that must be protected.

Already, the fight over information has moved beyond the control of professional journalists, publishers or media regulators. The "hacktivist" group Anonymous has repeatedly sought out secret information and then publicized it, taking the role of WikiLeaks as a publisher of secret information and removing the need to wait for whistle-blowers or leaks. In July 2011, individuals claiming to be working with Anonymous leaked internal emails from military contractor Booz Allen Hamilton. In December 2011, the group hacked and published customer data from the security analyst firm Stratfor. Then, again, in February 2012, Anonymous leaked a confidential phone call between the FBI and Scotland Yard regarding the prosecution of several hackers, and an archive of emails and documents from the trial of a staff sergeant accused of leading a group of Marines who killed 24 unarmed Iraqi civilians in the town of Haditha in November 2005. Certainly these cases are different from WikiLeaks, at least in terms of the legal implications—Anonymous specifically seeks out and acquires private information through illegal means, and then makes it public—but they indicate the degree to which control over publishing secret information is not in the hands of journalists, governments or other institutions. Those who defend WikiLeaks on free speech grounds often point out that publishing information is not illegal, but the individuals who leak information to WikiLeaks are subject to laws related to their employment contracts and related agreements. The actions of a group like Anonymous are quite different, and force a change in the discussion of information and privacy, but may

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leave journalists in the same position they're in now: trying to define their profession in the face of an information glut. Although Rosen's point about "the logic of the Internet" is important, the legal protection for free information and free expression remains necessary.

If the logic of communication has changed, what has not changed is the ethical justification for a free flow of information in the public interest. Despite the economic challenges their profession faces, U.S. journalists must support and demonstrate commitment to the principles of free expression, regardless of their distaste for the content being publicized. Just as defenders of free speech cannot credibly demand prosecution of speech when someone says something they don't like, journalists cannot credibly defend the freedom of the press unless they defend the right of everyone to publish freely. Those whose profession claims a duty to freedom of information ought not be so vehement in their criticism of an organization dedicated to exposing secret information. Professional journalists may need to broaden their understanding of who deserves protection under the First Amendment, and advocate for the broad application of that amendment's protection of free expression.

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