

**THE SUBFIELD OF ONLINE JOURNALISM:
A STUDY OF THE LEGITIMIZING PRACTICES OF
ONLINE NEWS ORGANIZATIONS**

GILLIAN BROOKS

2016

ST. EDMUNDS COLLEGE
UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE

THIS DISSERTATION IS SUBMITTED FOR THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY IN SOCIOLOGY

DECLARATION

This dissertation is my own work and contains nothing that is the outcome of work done in collaboration with others, except where specifically indicated in the text.

No part of this dissertation has been or is being submitted for any degree, diploma, or other qualification.

This dissertation does not exceed the permitted length.

ABSTRACT

*The Subfield of Online Journalism:
A Study of the Legitimizing Practices of Online News Organizations*
by Gillian Brooks

Traditional news organizations exist within an apparatus of accountability, held together by their reputation and the professionalization of the occupation of journalism. Legitimacy in journalism has solidified over time; but with the emergence of online media, traditional journalistic standards have been challenged as online news organizations attempt to establish a new standard. This study explores the changing nature of journalism as a space of contested power relations and networked communities, focusing specifically on how online news organizations, born digitally, become legitimate.

Based on close to 200 hours of interviews conducted over a period of six months at prominent online news organizations in the United States, this dissertation seeks to identify the manner in which online news organizations, specifically *Breitbart.com*, *The Drudge Report*, and *The Huffington Post*, gain legitimacy in the subfield of online journalism. There exists a unique structured space internal to the subfield of online journalism – a subfield of practices and power relations – with online organizations accumulating varying degrees of social capital in order to legitimize their role within this evolving ecology.

In relying on Pierre Bourdieu's concept of the field, Mark Suchman's work on organizational legitimacy, and Anand Narasimhan and Mary Watson's work on field formation, this study outlines the conditions under which certain online news organizations can participate and gain legitimacy in this emerging subfield. I argue that three characteristics determine whether an online news organization can be considered legitimate; in analyzing these characteristics, I demonstrate how they help to create legitimacy in specific cases. If media scholars are to understand how online news organizations have emerged in recent years and become a key source for information, an interrogation of this unique space, in all of its complexities, is essential.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER 1: CLASSIFYING JOURNALISM FROM TRADITIONAL TO DIGITAL	1
I. FROM OFFLINE TO ONLINE: EXAMINING THE PROFESSIONAL IDENTITY OF JOURNALISTS	5
II. AN INDUSTRY TRANSITIONS	14
NOTIONS OF ACCESS EVOLVE	19
III. GATEKEEPING, GATE-WATCHING, WATCHDOGS AND CITIZEN JOURNALISTS	26
IV. UNDERSTANDING NOTIONS OF LEGITIMACY	32
COMPARING LEGITIMACY AND REPUTATION FROM AN ORGANIZATIONAL LENS	34
ISOMORPHISM AND INSTITUTIONAL LOGICS	45
V. UNDERSTANDING “THE FIELD”	48
NEW PLAYERS ENTER THE FIELD	53
VI. SITUATING THE FIELD OF JOURNALISM AND THE ROLE OF CAPITAL	59
VII. OUTLINING THE STUDY	63
CHAPTER 2: DIGITAL NATIVES AND CASE STUDY RESEARCH	65
I. CASE STUDY RESEARCH	67
II. CASE STUDY SELECTION	81
III. RESEARCH DESIGN: A STRUCTURED NETWORK EMERGES	87
IV. MEET THE CASES: INTRODUCING ANDREW BREITBART	91
V. THE MATT DRUDGE PERSONA	93
VI. THE WORLD ACCORDING TO ARIANNA HUFFINGTON	97
VII. MAKING CONTACT, GAINING ACCESS AND UNDERSTANDING GATEKEEPERS	98
VIII. WASHINGTON, D.C.	100
IX. NEW YORK	106
X. LOS ANGELES	113
XI. METHODOLOGICAL LIMITATIONS	117
XII. ETHICS	118
CHAPTER 3: DEVELOPING A CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK	120
I. THE FIELD OF JOURNALISM VS. THE SUBFIELD OF ONLINE JOURNALISM	123
II. BOURDIEU’S <i>PRINCIPLES OF LEGITIMATION</i>	128
III – INTRODUCING THE PROXIMITY PARADIGM	131
IV – STRUCTURING THE STUDY	138
CHAPTER 4: GAINING STATUS THROUGH AFFILIATION	141
I - STATUS AFFILIATIONS AND SOCIAL CAPITAL	141
II – ANDREW BREITBART AND THE DEMOCRATIC MEDIA COMPLEX	142
UNDERSTANDING BREITBART’S ECHO-CHAMBER	145
III - MATT DRUDGE ARRIVES UNINVITED AND STAYS	147
DRUDGE’S NETWORK OF (JOURNALISTIC) RICHES	150
IV - ARIANNA HUFFINGTON CARVES HER OWN SPACE	151
BREAKING BREAD: A DISCUSSION OF HUFFINGTON’S BRENTWOOD BRUNCH	154
V - APPLYING THE PROXIMITY PARADIGM	162
CHAPTER 5: GAINING THE “SCOOP” THROUGH SOCIAL CAPITAL	163
I – ADVOCACY JOURNALISM EMERGES ONLINE	164
II – BREITBART’S USE OF THE SCOOP	167
“WEINERGATE”: THE ANTHONY WEINER SCANDAL	169
III – DRUDGE AS A NEW MEDIA PIONEER?	174
DRUDGE VS. THE DEMOCRATS	175

IV – HUFFINGTON’S GALAXY OF STARS	184
SCOOPING “DEEP THROAT” AGAIN	189
V – REVISITING THE ASSOCIATIVE RESOURCES OF RETURN TRANSACTION MODEL	191
CHAPTER 6: THE USE OF SOURCES	194
I - ANDREW BREITBART AND HIS OUTLIER SOURCES	198
BREITBART AND THE ACORN SCANDAL	200
OUTLIER SOURCES AND BREITBART’S ECHO-CHAMBER	205
II - THE SOURCES ACCORDING TO DRUDGE	206
“THE DRUDGE MOMENT”	208
III - HUFFINGTON AND THE “NEW MEDIA ELECTION”	211
THE ROLE OF EXCLUSIVE CELEBRITY SOURCES	217
SOURCES REQUIRED TO GAIN SOCIAL CAPITAL	219
CHAPTER 7: CONCLUSION	221
I – OVERVIEW OF RESEARCH FINDINGS	221
II - BROADER ARGUMENT AND TRENDS	224
III – POTENTIAL AREAS OF INTEREST	226
IV – CONTRIBUTIONS AND IMPLICATIONS	229
V - LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY	236
VI - AREAS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH	238
VII - IT’S THE COMPANY YOU KEEP	241
APPENDIX I: INTERVIEWS CONDUCTED	242
APPENDIX II: AN EXAMPLE OF NOTES FROM THE FIELD	258
APPENDIX III: TOOLS USED DURING FIELDWORK	260
APPENDIX IV: INTERVIEW GUIDES	265
APPENDIX V: INTERVIEWEE CONSENT FORM	273
APPENDIX VI: ANALYZING THE DATA AND DEVELOPING A FRAMEWORK	274
APPENDIX VII: U.S. POLITICAL CAMPAIGN DONATIONS FROM 1990 – 2010	276
APPENDIX VIII: RELEVANT NOTES ABOUT DRUDGE FROM MICHAEL ISIKOFF’S BOOK <i>UNCOVERING CLINTON</i>	283
APPENDIX IX: EMAIL TRANSCRIPT WITH ANDREW KIRK, <i>THE DAILY BEAST</i>	285
APPENDIX X: AUTOPSY REPORT FOR ANDREW BREITBART	288
APPENDIX XI: ACORN INVESTIGATION IN CALIFORNIA	289
BIBLIOGRAPHY	290

“Better a good journalist than a poor assassin,”
Jean-Paul Sartre.

Chapter 1: Classifying journalism from traditional to digital

In the journalistic field there exists a distinct logic grounded in professional standards (Bourdieu 1998). This institutional logic is evolving as online news organizations seek to co-exist alongside traditional media. As Adrienne Russell states in *Networked: A Contemporary History of News in Transition*: “Contemporary journalism products and practices give new relevance to long-standing questions at the heart of what used to be called the journalism profession” (2011: 2). Journalism as a profession – like law, finance, and medicine – is based on established rules that are understood and valued by those who practice it (Schudson 1978). In the field of journalism, objectivity is at the core of this logic, and – following World War I – has defined the industry’s standards (Russell 2011: 8). For Michael Schudson, a journalism historian at Columbia University’s School of Journalism, objectivity means that “a person’s statements about the world can be trusted if they are submitted to established rules deemed legitimate by a professional community” (Schudson 1978: 7). With online media organizations gaining prominence as a source for news, should a new logic be introduced? John Lloyd and Jean Seaton state in their book, *What Can Be Done? Making the Media and Politics Better*, that technological innovations are changing traditional elements of journalism which have previously defined the profession: “New technologies re-engineer the relationship between how views and information are exchanged, judged, and assigned significance, and how public opinion is formed” (2006: 1).

My research attempts to fill this gap, exploring the logics of practice that exist in the subfield of online journalism. According to Richard Scott, institutional logics “refer to the belief systems and related practices that predominate in an organizational field” (2001: 139). The institutional logic of the field of journalism stems from what Pierre Bourdieu calls, “a specific doxa, the doxa of a specific field” (Willig 2012: 6). A specific doxa refers to “a system of presuppositions inherent in the membership of a field” (Bourdieu 2005: 37). In her study on the journalistic field in Denmark, Ida Willig revealed that in addition to the logics of practice that were paramount in this field, there also existed doxic values that were, although harder to identify, equally significant in shaping the field:

Danish news journalism has operated with five so-called “news criteria” for at least 30 years: timeliness, relevance, identification, conflict and sensation. The

criteria have been reproduced in textbooks since at least the early 1970s and have been taught at the School of Journalism for just as many years. We must thus understand the five criteria as highly institutionalized and formalized norms of the journalistic field. It would be tempting to conclude that the five criteria are the dominant news values of Danish journalism. However, in terms of fields, these kinds of formalized, explicated norms are only some of the values of a field, the orthodox news values, whereas there will also be more invisible and doxic values at work (Schultz 2007) (2012: 6).

My study examines how a digitally native online news organization becomes a legitimate member of the structured subfield of online journalism. I will operationalize *legitimacy* by piecing together an empirical puzzle of how an organization becomes part of a subfield; this will be further explained in Chapter Three where I outline my conceptual framework: the *proximity paradigm*. In relying on Pierre Bourdieu's field theory, research relating to organizational theory, and work conducted by prominent media sociologists, my research question asks: how does an online news organization become a legitimate member of the subfield of online journalism? My findings reveal that it is through exhibiting a combination of shared values from the field of journalism and values from the (developing) subfield of online journalism that an online news organization can gain legitimacy within this evolving ecology. If online news organizations (within the subfield) are going to co-exist with traditional media as part of the larger and more established field of journalism, we must analyze this space in all its complexities. As Russell states, "the future of journalism depends on our collective ability to create and accept new organizations, technologies, policies, practices, and ways of understanding our role in the new media environment" (2011: 28).

This dissertation will present a conceptual framework – termed *the proximity paradigm* – describing how three online news organizations gained entry into a subfield by signaling to those in positions of status within the overarching field, their right to co-exist. My study focuses on a phenomenon of how specific online news sites became part of the subfield of online journalism. My proximity paradigm was developed by employing Kathleen Eisenhardt's case study methodology (as will be explained in detail in Chapter Two) and Pierre Bourdieu's *principles of legitimation* (1998) in order to demonstrate how my three case studies accumulated specific resources in order to comprise the developing subfield of online journalism. I will illustrate that these resources represent the logic of the subfield of online journalism. Both the principles of legitimation and the proximity paradigm will be discussed at-

length later in Chapter Three. Both concepts contribute to identifying the online news organization's position as a subfield within the overall field of journalism. These values, as discovered during my fieldwork, represent my conceptualization of the logic of the subfield of online journalism, extending the traditional logic of journalism through an accumulation of specific resources, as will be empirically discussed in Chapters Four through Six.

Throughout this study, I will be referring to “logics” (Bourdieu 1998). Logics represent the underlying values and principles of a distinct field (1998: 86). They can also be viewed as the unwritten grammar of a field, where players within the space act according to “a few generative principles, which are closely interrelated and constitute a practically integrated whole” (1998: 86). In *The Logic of Practice*, Bourdieu views logics as representing the necessary practical coherences and incoherences (1998: 86) of a given “symbolic system” (1998: 86). He adds,

Symbolic systems owe their practical coherence – that is, on the one hand, their unity and their regularities, and on the other, their 'fuzziness' and their irregularities and even incoherences, which are both equally necessary, being inscribed in the logic of their genesis and functioning - to the fact that they are the product of practices that can fulfill their practical functions only in so far as they implement, in the practical state, principles that are not only coherent - that is, capable of generating practices that are both intrinsically coherent and compatible with the objective conditions - but also practical (1998: 86).

The logic of the field of journalism has been examined by numerous scholars, as will be reviewed in this chapter; however, few have conducted an empirical study investigating the logic of the emerging subfield of online journalism as it relates to notions of legitimacy. My conceptualization of the logic of the subfield of online journalism was developed during the six months I spent conducting fieldwork; this will be discussed in detail in Chapter Two. Conducting research on the legitimation of online news organizations is important because the industry, as will be discussed further in this chapter, is undergoing an identity crisis as it attempts to classify varying types of journalism both online and offline (Peters and Broersma 2013). There was an exogenous shock to the field of journalism with the advent of the Internet (Lloyd and Seaton 2006); as a result, the incumbents – legacy news organizations – did not want new players entering the arena hitherto reserved for them, as argued by Jenny Wiik: “Traditional journalistic ideals have attained increasing support over time and the efforts to fix professional boundaries are fierce”

(2009: 351). Marcel Broersma and Chris Peters' research echoes Wiik's point: "A major problem for journalism is thus that it tries to tackle the technological and social transformations of today with the logic of yesterday" (Peters and Broersma 2013: 5). Traditional journalism thus becomes threatened as bloggers, citizen journalists and online writers infiltrate an industry with a stagnant professional logic:

The digitization of information, the innovation of home equipment to produce media content, and the rise of the internet as a free and easily accessible distribution channel has eroded journalism's position. Much of what made journalism "journalism" in the twentieth century – basically the industrialization of information – therefore no longer works (2013: 4).

Many scholars, as will be discussed further in this chapter, suggest that no institution nor official forms of accreditation grant legitimacy to (news) organizations, but rather, "a discourse shared and nourished by practitioners, employers and the public" (Aldridge and Evetts 2003: 558). This discourse, developed and nurtured over time, is evolving as a result of the Internet (Peters and Broersma 2013) and research addressing this evolution is needed in order to understand the changing field of journalism. As Jo Bogaerts and Nico Carpentier state:

Without aiming to create a clear-cut dichotomy between online and traditional journalism, we would nevertheless argue that online journalism is a useful object of investigation, evinced by the fact that "professional consciousness emerges at least in part round ruptures where the borders of appropriate practice needs renegotiation" (Zelizer, 199b: 223; cf. Matheson, 2004: 446) (2013: 61).

In referring to extant literature on field formation, I will highlight why research on the conceptualization of a subfield (of online journalism) is important for examining how technology has contributed to a re-examination of traditional notions of journalism and the structure of their field. As Peters and Broersma state,

Solutions to journalism's ills are thus generally looked at in terms of modifying the pre-existing structure of the news media to adapt to the changing environment... What is regularly overlooked in these conversations is asking what the profession of journalism "is", and how it defines itself. Research that strives to conceptualize the dynamics of change, and to understand the structure of transformation, is scarce (2013: 2).

Reviewing literature on traditional journalism, new media, legitimacy, and institutional logics reveals that in examining the legitimation of online news organizations, it is important to review research from both media sociology and

organizational theory. I will integrate these two related schools of thought to inform my conceptualization of the subfield of online journalism. This chapter will be divided into seven sections. The first section (I) will provide the reader with a review of extant literature relating to journalism's professional identity. Section two (II) will discuss how the industry is transitioning, specifically with regard to notions of access. The third section (III) reviews key concepts that relate to both online and offline journalism: "gatekeeping", "gatewatching", "watchdogs" and "citizen journalism" and how they relate to changes in journalistic practices. The following section (IV) will review definitions of legitimacy and compare it to notions of reputation. Section five (V) will discuss aspects of organizational theory as it relates to field evolution and what happens when nascent organizations seek entry into an established field. The following section (VI) analyzes Pierre Bourdieu's field theory and how it is adapted to journalism by Rodney Benson. The final section (VII) will outline the remainder of my study: how the subsequent chapters will contribute to answering how it is that online news organizations examined in this dissertation gained legitimacy as part of the subfield of online journalism.

I. From offline to online: Examining the professional identity of journalists

Journalism's professional identity has been the focus of debate amongst media scholars for numerous years (Wiik 2009). Since the development of the Internet, new types of journalists have emerged with scholars attempting to position their work according to the logic of the field of journalism (Wiik 209). This section will attempt to answer questions about journalism as a profession in order to provide a historical context for how the industry has evolved from yellow pamphleteering to the Pulitzer Prize, all while defending its mandate as an objective entity that seeks to inform the public. As Tamara Witschge and Gunnar Nygren note:

Journalists believe that journalism provides a valuable and unique public service... they educate people by providing information that they should know rather than want to know. Journalists argue that the journalistic values are such that journalism provides a public service that is of importance to democracy (2009: 53).

A key theme that continually reappears in the extant literature focuses on whether a shared discourse exists on journalism as a "profession". This is at the core of the debate on online journalism. Wiik, along with other scholars discussed in this chapter, notes the impact technology has had on journalism as a profession and whether new

forms of journalism (specifically online media) are part of this same category. She explains,

Journalism being a knowledge-intensive profession makes it particularly interesting in the contextual changes of a rapidly growing information society – the communicative revolution... [The] Internet has been described as the golden gate to deliberative democracy, opening up development possibilities for grassroots communities and public opinion. But it has also been depicted as the death of traditional media, as practically anyone with a computer can now go online and publish (2009: 352).

Mark Deuze remarks that the professionalization of journalism has been contextualized by scholars “as a distinctly ideological development” (2005: 444). He suggests that the consensus regarding what is considered to be journalism is rooted in what Schudson describes as “the cultural knowledge that constitutes news judgment” (2002: 261). The notion that knowing what journalism is and is not, based on the communicators’ consciousness, explains why the industry is experiencing an identity crisis (Deuze 2005). As Deuze explains,

In decades of journalism studies, scholars refer to the journalists’ professionalization process as a distinctly ideological development, as the emerging ideology served to continuously refine and reproduce a consensus about who was a “real” journalist, and what (parts of) news media at any time would be considered examples of “real” journalism. These evaluations shift subtly over time; yet always serve to maintain the dominant sense of what is (and should be) journalism (2005: 444).

If we are yet to arrive at a consensus on professionalism in journalism, how can scholars debate whether online journalism is part of the field of journalism or requires its own subfield? According to Wiik, journalism is a “semi-profession” (2009: 353) given that it is difficult in many societies to exclude individuals from participating in various forms of journalism. She states, “A difficulty with regarding journalism as a profession is that it has never actually reached full professional status: non-exclusivity is mostly inevitable in free-speech societies, which means that any kind of *formal* exclusion becomes hard to manage (Asp 1992)” (2009: 353). Therefore, a shared discourse of “professionalism” is needed offline in order for it to translate online.

Deuze cites self-definition as a defining factor for what it means to be a journalist:

[Journalism’s] ideology has also been identified as an instrument in the hands of journalists and editors to naturalize the structure of the news organization or media corporation one works for (Soloski 1990). Especially when faced with public criticism, journalists apply ideological values to legitimate or self-

police the recurring self-similar selection and description of events and views in their media (2005: 445).

According to Deuze, a consensus amongst scholars exists that, “what typifies more or less universal similarities in journalism can be defined as a shared occupational ideology among news-workers which functions to self-legitimize their position in society” (2005: 446). His study on the professional identity of journalists highlights five characteristics that, according to his work, validate the profession. “Key characteristics of this professional self-definition can be summarized as a number of discursively constructed ideal-typical values. Journalists feel that these values give legitimacy and credibility to what they do” (Deuze 2007: 163). Figure 1.0 illustrates his findings.

Figure 1.0. Deuze’s characteristics of the professionalization of journalism

Public service	Journalists provide a public service (as watchdogs or “news-hounds”, active collectors and disseminators of information)
Objectivity	Journalists are impartial, neutral, objective, fair and (thus) credible
Autonomy	Journalists must be autonomous, free and independent in their work
Immediacy	Journalists have a sense of immediacy, actuality and speed (inherent in the concept of “news”)
Ethics	Journalists have a sense of ethics, validity and legitimacy

Source: Deuze, Mark. “What is Journalism? Professional Identity and Ideology of Journalists Reconsidered”. *Journalism*. Vol. 6 (4). London: Sage Publications, 2005. pp. 442-464

The themes identified in Figure 1.0 emphasize “credibility” and “legitimacy” as defining aspects of journalism as a “public service”, and as part of the “ethics” of the profession; however, Deuze does not elaborate on how this is achieved, nor how the terms are defined. For example he argues that, “journalists have a sense of legitimacy” (2005: 447) in their perception of their role as part of the profession:

It is important to note how ethics can be both a flag behind which to rally the journalistic troops in defense of commercial, audience-driven or managerial encroachments, as well as an emblem of newswriters’ legitimacy when reporting on complex events involving the wants and needs of different media, different people and different ways to be inclusive (2005: 458).

Deuze argues that ethics determine legitimacy. He cites Michael Ryan’s 2001 work, which contends that in order for a journalist to be considered legitimate, he or she must demonstrate “ethical behaviour” (2001): validating their position in the profession. According to sociologist Mark Suchman, legitimacy refers to “the generalized perception or assumption that the actions of an entity are desirable,

proper, or appropriate within some socially constructed system of norms, values, beliefs, and definitions” (1995: 574). Further notions of legitimacy, including how my conceptualization of the term was borrowed from seminal work conducted by Suchman, Rindova and others, will be discussed in section IV of this chapter.

Traditional news organizations have existed within an apparatus of accountability, held together by their reputation and the professionalization of their occupation. As Susan Robinson argues, traditional values have developed over time, and shaped the profession accordingly:

Journalists must abide by a code to be objective, independent, accurate, and truthful. They have a responsibility to society to provide significant, relevant information that can be used to inform democracy. Through these standards, journalists end up setting the agenda for societal debate. That societal debate helps reinforce the dominant hegemony of capitalist America. Not only do journalists frame societal hegemony in their writings, but there is also a dominant framework of reportage shaping the news ... A change in those professional norms would necessarily alter that existing order (2006: 65-66).

Changes in professional norms, highlighted by Robinson, have been met with contention, as scholars have attempted to define what it means to be a professional journalist. This debate is often restricted to traditional journalism, as academics seek to impose a professional designation on the occupation (Peters and Broersma 2013). According to sociological research, in order for an occupation to be deemed a “profession”, a set of defined rules and standards must exist which can be controlled by individuals within the space (Witschge and Nygren, 2009). Eliot Freidson refers to this control as “professional logic” (2001). He argues that three logics exist, which need to be considered when examining the control of work. In addition to professional logic, he highlights the importance of bureaucratic and market-logic. Witschge and Nygren, influenced by Freidson’s work, state:

According to sociological research, the professional logic is a way of controlling the work by rules and standards defined by the professionals themselves. Other logics in control of the work are the bureaucratic logic with rules defined by the state or by organizations, and the market-logic with all power in the hands of the consumers. These three logics are ideal typical models, and most work is controlled through a combination of these three logics (2009: 39).

Witschge and Nygren outline a series of means through which professionals “exercise the control” (Freidson 2001: 146):

- A knowledge-monopoly: No one outside the profession has the knowledge and the ability to do the work of the profession;

- A clear division of labour, and the power to keep others outside the profession;
- Strong professional education and research;
- Strong professional organizations with ethical rules and standards;
- An ideology that asserts greater commitment to doing good work than to economic gain and to quality rather than economic efficiency of work (Witschge and Nygren 2009: 39).

Based on these criteria, many scholars including Wiik (2009) and Witschge and Nygren, argue that journalism cannot be deemed to be a “profession”, but instead should be viewed as a “semi-profession” (2009): due to journalists not being “able to exclude non-professionals from the field” (2009: 39-40). The ability of non-professionals to infiltrate the profession causes industry insiders to become skeptical of newcomers (2009):

Journalism cannot be fully regarded as a profession; it would be against freedom of expression to demand some kind of legitimization from those expressing themselves in media. Media scholars have thus considered journalism as a semi-profession, mostly because of this reason of not being able to exclude non-professionals from the field of journalism. There will always be many routes into journalism (Shoemaker and Reese, 1996; McQuail 2000) making it difficult to identify an exclusive professional track (Witschge and Nygren 2009: 39-40).

Paschal Preston, author of *Making the News: Journalism and News Cultures in Europe*, addresses the skepticism associated with online media. His study focuses on the normalized role of online journalists, and notes the increase in online journalism resulting from the public’s lack of trust in traditional media:

It is clearly the case that online news has become a significant platform amongst younger and other audience groups, especially in the USA where print media such as newspapers have had a marked decline in recent decades and where established media organizations are marked by low levels of public trust (Gronke and Cook 2007) (2009: 39).

While Preston argues that public disillusionment with traditional journalism has led to an increase in online media, he does address the point that within the field itself, online media are still viewed as contentious. Preston cites John Pavlik’s work in *Journalism and New Media*, outlining the ways in which digital technologies pose implications for news-making and journalism. Figure 1.1 outlines these factors:

Figure 1.1. How digital technologies pose implications for traditional journalism

- (i) The way journalists do their jobs

- (ii) The nature of news content

- (iii) The structure and organization of the newsroom and news industry

- (iv) The nature of relationships between and among news organizations, journalists, and many publics (Pavlik 2001)

Source: Preston, Paschal. *Making the News: Journalism and News Cultures in Europe*. London: Routledge, 2009, p. 40

The work conducted by Adrienne Russell aligns with the findings presented by Preston. In *Networked: A Contemporary History of News in Transition*, Russell provides a definition of journalism that includes new media, offering a current example of the changing field of journalism. She defines journalism as

The wealth of news-related information, opinion, and cultural expression, in various styles and from various producers, which together shape the meaning of news events and issues. Journalism has extended far beyond stories created for television broadcast outlets or for publication in traditional commercial newspapers and magazines. Journalism can be a conversation that takes place in the blogosphere; an interactive media-rich interface on a mainstream or alternative news site that provides context to a breaking story; the work of any number of fact-check sites; a tweeted camera-phone photo of a breaking news site; a videogame created to convey a particular news narrative, and so on (2011: 22).

She cites the 2009 U.S. Senate “new shield law” debate that argues what type of journalist is protected from refusing to reveal confidential sources. The lawmakers sought to define journalism according to its business model and “the technology through which it is distributed” (Russell 2011: 23). The final definition – which was eventually adopted – referred to journalists as only those who “work as a salaried employee of, or independent contractor for, an entity” (2011: 23).

Russell’s book chronicles the ongoing debate within the industry and the profession regarding the emergence of a networked-media era with “new and old media and professional and amateur authors work[ing] in the same environment, influencing each other in form and content to shape the meaning of news events and issues (Seward 2009)” (2011: 23). Russell laments that journalism scholarship over the past ten years has offered a polarized interpretation of old and new media, and that as technology continues to play an important role in the progression of the profession, scholars need to take notice:

Although scholars are widening their perspective as alternative news forms and news producers proliferate, an artificial division continues to separate the study of so-called ‘mainstream’ and so-called ‘alternative’ journalism and is

manifest in the way scholars still mostly treat anything but traditional news practices as only tangentially related to news discourse (Russell 2007) (Russell 2011: 19).

Established organizations, such as *The Washington Post*, *CNN*, and *NPR*, have solidified their role as prominent newsmakers as a result of their use of reputable sources, strict publishing guidelines and a reputation for producing quality journalism (Brock 2013).

In *Rethinking Journalism: Trust and Participation in a Transformed News Landscape*, Marcel Broersma and Chris Peters discuss the deterioration of the journalism industry: “There is no doubt, journalism faces challenging times. Since the turn of the millennium, the financial health of the news industry is failing, mainstream audiences are on the decline, and professional authority, credibility and autonomy are eroding” (2013: 2). Witschge and Nygren’s research aligns with Peters and Broersma, as they argue that professional standards in the industry have changed as a result of new media technologies:

The last 20 years the emphasis has shifted to the dynamic processes by which occupations gain professional status. Now the important questions are not if a profession fulfills all the conditions of an ideal typical profession, but about how professionalism is used to change and control an occupation (2009: 40).

In examining extant literature on journalism scholarship, evidence suggests that there still exists a debate regarding whether journalism can be considered a profession. According to Meryl Aldridge and Julia Evetts, the professionalization of journalism has both advanced and retreated numerous times since the beginning of the nineteenth century:

Journalism in the UK emerged as a distinct occupation in the latter half of the nineteenth century (Chalaby 1998; Lee 1976). Almost from the beginning, practitioners disagreed about whether they should try to attain the conventional structures and social standing associated with being a “profession” in Anglo-American societies. In 1907 this resulted in a secession by what became the National Union of Journalists from the original representative group, the Chartered Institute of Journalists. The dispute has never been resolved (2003: 547).

Aldridge and Evetts argue that insufficient attention has been paid by media scholars in defining what is meant by “professionalism”. They cite Jeremy Tunstall’s study (1971) as minimizing the importance of providing a rigorous definition of the concept and its applicability to journalism: “The subsequent characterization of professionalism as an occupational project of market closure and occupational

enhancement has never been applied to journalism” (2003: 548). Aldridge and Evetts cite 1990 as a turning point for the journalistic academy, as scholars such as Eliot Freidson (1994, 2001) began reconsidering the term “professionalism” as an important element for sociological debate (Aldridge and Evetts 2003).

The Chartered Institute of Journalists was founded in 1890 (Aldridge and Evetts 2003: 549). Previously known as the National Association of Journalists (founded in 1884), the Institute received a Royal Charter in 1890 (Aldridge and Evetts 2003: 549) with the mandate that it be dedicated to the “elevation of the status and improvements of the qualifications of all members of the journalistic profession” (Carr-Saunders and Wilson 1933: 268, quoting from the Charter). The discrepancy between achieving professional accreditation in the industry as early as 1890, and the ongoing debate over the merits of “professionalizing” journalism, illustrates that a consensus has yet to be reached.

Aldridge and Evetts present the idea that in any given industry, professional designation needs to be in place. They argue that this contributes to an individual’s identification with their occupation, and subsequently to a perceived degree of status:

It is attractive for workers to perceive themselves as professionals: here the discourse is being used as a framework of occupational and self-identity which could be interpreted as a form of cultural capital (Bourdieu 1990). It is a discourse of self-control, even self-belief, an occupational badge or marker which gives meaning to the work and enables workers to justify and emphasize the importance of their work to themselves and others (2003: 555).

The authors refer to John Soloski’s work on news professionalism in the United States (1989) as part of their understanding of the traditional view of the journalist. Soloski’s study endorses an idyllic narrative often found in popular culture, depicting a journalist pioneering an investigation against a major figure. Aldridge and Evetts quote Soloski as follows:

The romantic vision of journalism is that of a crusading reporter who, much to the consternation of a cantankerous but benevolent editor, takes on one of the more villainous politicians in the city ... and betters the lives of the downtrodden and helpless. ... Moreover, this myth is shared with the US public, providing journalism with a very powerful stock of social capital, identified by Abbott (1988) as the cultural work necessary for professionalization (Aldridge and Evetts 2003: 558).

This Woodward and Bernstein-esque depiction of journalism supports Aldridge and Evett’s argument that the logic of the field of journalism includes acquiring

professional status. However, what happens when exogenous factors – such as technology – infiltrate this space?

Natalie Fenton provides an exemplary look at how technological, economic, and social factors have shaped online journalism. One of the most important questions she asks is “who are the journalists [that make up this online space], and how do they exert influence on one another?” (2010: 4). Fenton approaches the question from historical, economic, regulatory, socio-political, organizational and socio-cultural perspectives: grounding her research in an exploratory capacity, which illustrates how news journalism has been reconfigured online: “This new journalism is open to novices, lacks editorial control, can stem from anywhere (not just the newsrooms), involves new writing techniques, functions in a network with fragmented audiences, is delivered at great speed, and is open and iterative” (2010: 6).

A traditional approach to journalism studies would perceive the field as consisting of two separate entities: producer and consumer (Schudson 2002). These categories become blurred online (Bruns 2005). Fenton argues that audiences (i.e. the consumer) become part of the landscape, as they comment on stories and present their opinions in the same space as the journalists (2010). According to conceptualizations of traditional journalism, this trend corrupts the profession, as there is no longer a divide between the two groups:

News online is thus open to a higher degree of contestation than is typical of traditional news media. This demystification of journalism is claimed to break down the barriers between audience and producer facilitating a greater deconstruction of the normative values embedded in the news genre and a re-imagining of what journalism could and/or should be (Fenton: 2010: 10).

The reimagining of journalism changes the dynamics that used to define this profession (Russell 2011). As Fenton posits, power relations are reexamined as players who may have occupied a subordinate position in the traditional sense vie for greater status online:

The argument that in the digital age, the relations of power remain on the whole the same to the increasing advantage of global media conglomerates is difficult to dispute yet similarly simplistic ... A straight political economic analysis misses, or cannot account for, the possibility that under certain conditions ‘journalism or journalists’ (whoever these may be) may transform power relations both within their own domain and in others (2010: 13-14).

Witschge and Nygren’s 2009 study also contributes to Fenton’s work on the reconfiguration of the profession based on technological influence, agreeing that

further research is required to examine what happens to journalism when it moves online. They conclude that:

There is at once a fading of the professional values due to changes in the journalistic practices and at the same time a return to professional values by journalists themselves, which they deem sets them apart from other news providers in the current broadened mediascape (Witschge and Nygren 2009: 38).

George Brock, author of *Out of Print: Newspapers, Journalism and the Business of News in the Digital Age*, posits that the journalism industry has historically been an area of debate. His work extends from Fenton's research, arguing that "journalism today can be better described as a living experiment rather than a ruinous decline. But that rests on a hope that what is of value in journalism can be adapted to new conditions" (2013: 107). Brock's hopeful vision that the industry will change in a fluid – as opposed to – destructive manner will be addressed in the next section. Specifically, the next section will review previous literature relating to the varying types of journalism that have emerged with the advent of the internet.

II. An industry transitions

With the proliferation of online journalism, professional standards are shifting – as discussed in the previous section – and the state of the industry is being questioned (Russell 2011). This was a common debate that consistently re-appeared throughout my fieldwork with industry insiders asking whether those publishing within this online medium are in fact journalists; and if so, their degree of legitimacy. I will discuss my fieldwork further in Chapter Two; however, the questions raised by my interviewees are those that journalism scholars have already struggled to answer (Russell 2011). Brock argues that the journalism industry continues to be a topic of conversation amongst scholars:

The history of what has happened to journalism so far cannot be written as a *Wired* version of Whig history, a story of never-ending progress. Journalism has always existed in messy and often controversial circumstances, regardless of rows and disruptions caused by what is said or written by journalists (2013: 106).

He continues by discounting previous research that suggests that traditional journalism, the type that caters to mass audiences, is vanishing. Brock argues,

Among the predictions that are often made with confidence is that 'the age of mass media is over'. Given both the fragmentation and proliferation of media

platforms and the weakening of the hold on big audiences of mainstream media, it is tempting to simplify the future of these terms. But we are living in a moment of transition and that ‘demassification’ of the media may turn out to be temporary (2013: 107).

Scholars such as Russell suggest that the blogosphere emerged from the repurposing of mainstream media (2011). She argues,

... low-cost and easy-to-use digital tools combined with widely accessible online and mobile distribution networks “have made it possible for everyone to be not only a consumer of media but also a creator, to not be only a receiver but a selector, recommender, participant or curator” (Aufderheide et al. 2009: 3). It’s the decade where we shifted from mass audience members to networked users (2011: 75).

Journalism scholars began researching the blog phenomenon (initially referred to as weblogs) in the late 1990s (Snow 2010). The term ‘weblog’ was coined on December 17, 1997 by American blogger Jorn Barger, who used it to refer to the process of “logging the web” (Snow 2010: 70). Barger earned critical acclaim as editor of Robot Wisdom, an influential weblog (Snow 2010). Snow notes that Barger’s original motivation was to increase transparency online: “His intent was to make the web as a whole more transparent, via a sort of ‘mesh network’ where each weblog amplifies just those signals (or links) its author likes best” (Snow 2010). The online infrastructure was initially based on vanity postings and online diary entries, with individuals creating their own interface to post publicly about an area of interest (Snow 2010). Barger’s Robot Wisdom focused on James Joyce and a connection between “artificial intelligence and his masterworks, specifically *Ulysses* and *Finnegan’s Wake*” (Snow 2010: 70). Thousands of bloggers followed in Barger’s footsteps, using web 1.0 interface, developed in 1993, as well as static pages and proprietary HTML addresses (Snow 2010). Blog tools emerged in 1999, with users able to utilize blogging software and web hosting services (Snow 2010).

An incident occurred in Washington, D.C. that many scholars have argued exposed the potential of the blogosphere and the need for further research into this area. Blogs began gaining greater notice with traditional journalists as a result of the online narratives that emerged surrounding racist remarks uttered by U.S. Senate Majority Leader Trent Lott in 2002 (Russell 2011).

From 1997 – 2002, bloggers were beginning to transition from curating relevant news items that aligned with the sensibilities of their blog to commenting on

the news items at hand (Russell 2011). The incident involving Senator Lott was representative of this transition. Following a party honouring U.S. Senator Strom Thurmond's 100th birthday, Senator Lott praised the Senator's political history, claiming that the country would have benefited greatly had Thurmond been elected President in 1948 (Esther 2004). He said, "When Strom Thurmond ran for president, we voted for him. We're proud of it. And if the rest of the country had followed our lead, we wouldn't have had all these problems over the years, either." (2004: 10). Thurmond was an outspoken advocate for racial segregation and it became one of his priorities during his presidential campaign. He continued to fight against the Civil Rights movement, opposing the Civil Rights Act of 1957 by famously stating, "All the laws of Washington and all the bayonets in the Army cannot force the Negro into our homes, into our schools, our churches, and our places of recreation and amusement" (Esther 2004: 12). By praising Senator Thurmond's political career, many argue that Senator Lott was in fact supporting the Senator's racist remarks and policies (Russell 2011).

Traditional journalists at the event ignored the comment; however, Lott's remarks were leaked to the public by political blogger, Josh Marshall of *Talking Points Memo* (Russell 2011). Marshall recorded and posted the story to his site and within hours, the mainstream media had picked up the story and continued to report on what had happened at the birthday celebration (Russell 2011). As Russell states,

Journalists present at the party buried the quote but bloggers circulated it widely with added information they had dug up about past racially charged comments made by Lott. Mainstream news organizations were then forced to pick the story back up. The information flow went back and forth. The exchange only increased (2011: 77).

This instance illustrates the transition of the blog from a destination for special interests and niche audiences to a place of original reporting and commentary. The reporting posted on *Talking Points Memo* and the subsequent coverage of the incident by traditional media led to the resignation of Senator Lott as Senate Majority Leader.

In a traditional sense, bloggers possess more autonomy than traditional journalists: they have full editorial rights and are able to publish according to their own motivations and timeline (Peters and Broersma 2013). The unique temporal and spatial capacity which dictates their content allows for a new genre of news production to emerge, one that caters to specialized audiences, relies more on the news consumer for commentary and story ideas, and has a more subjective lens, as

suggested by numerous media scholars reviewed in this study (Russell 2011; Witschge and Nygren 2009; Preston 2009; Brock 2013). Peters and Broersma discuss these defining characteristics of web-based media, referring to the “de-industrialization of news production”. They add:

Successful initiatives like the *Huffington Post* or hyperlocal sites seem to have found – or are at least looking for – new ways to deal with the overload of information on the internet. They organize, specialize, and make use of other outlets and the wisdom of the crowd. They are less focused on publishing “everything that’s fit to print” as soon as possible and don’t try to cater to an audience that is as wide as possible. Rethinking the organization of journalism might therefore involve the de-industrialization of news production” (2013: 6-7).

New media emerged as a result of niche market reporting, with individuals interested in specific subjects organizing themselves into niche news producing outlets, as referenced above by Peters and Broersma (2013). Unfortunately as a result of the conception of online journalism, the traditional field of journalism was unable to identify this new form of media:

... new niche media have been founded that tend to subvert the ‘rules of the game’ journalism has developed in its long-term project of professionalization. To obtain a position in the field, they openly question and challenge the established norms, for example, by crossing ethical boundaries or publishing information that has not been verified (Peters and Broersma 2013: 29).

In *Rethinking Journalism*, Peters and Broersma argue that the crisis that the industry is facing is based on a worrying consensus by key stakeholders that traditional journalism will maintain its stability in the current digital environment. They state:

The problems journalism is facing are far more structural than is often voiced and that to prepare the profession for the next century, we have to rethink journalism fundamentally. What strikes us about current scholarly, professional and social debates is the supposed stability of the object being discussed – journalism – and the commonality of what is considered (2013: 3).

Their book addresses the structural transformation that the journalism industry is currently undergoing, identifying two trends that they view as underlying this transformation: *de-industrialization* and *de-ritualization* (2013). De-industrialization refers to the “de-industrialization of information” (Peters and Broersma 2013: 4). The authors explain that historically, the fundamental tenets of traditional journalism involved the dissemination of information: “The rise of the mass press was the result

of industrial logic brought to information... Over the course of the twentieth century, journalism successfully created an information monopoly because it controlled the distribution channels for news, advertising and other current information” (2013: 4). In today’s digital climate this has evolved (Peters and Broersma 2013). Information is now more readily available and accessible, and thus “much of what made journalism ‘journalism’ in the twentieth century – basically the industrialization of information – therefore no longer works” (2013: 4).

Peters and Broersma view the industry as stunting its potential to grow as a result of relying on its outdated logic: “A major problem for journalism is thus that it tries to tackle the technological and social transformations of today with the logic of yesterday” (2013: 5). They advise industry agnostics to de-industrialize suggesting that “both the news industry and journalism have to transform fundamentally to anticipate the new environment” (2013: 5). Recognizing how deeply rooted the pillars of the profession are, Peters and Broersma do not minimize the impact of de-industrialization in the industry: “This is a tough challenge, however, because of the dominance of industrial logic in every thread of the industry and the profession” (2013: 5). The logic of the field of journalism is a dichotomy that favors those within it, and ostracizes those external to it; as Russell states, “The growing professional faith of journalists generated social cohesion and occupational pride, on the one hand, and internal social control, on the other” (2011: 8).

The second trend underlying the structural transformation of journalism is, according to Peters and Broersma, “de-ritualization”, which refers to the ritualistic manner in which the public previously consumed the news:

Historically, or so we would like to believe, the story of everyday life for many people included regular, definitive moments of news consumption...There was a certain stability to news consumption, and although audience research has never been a strong suit of journalism studies, the notion of ritual – habitual, formalized actions which reinforce the “symbolic power” of media institutions (Couldry, 2003) – provided a good fit to explain these practices (Peters and Broersma 2013: 8).

They argue that in today’s digital news climate, there is a “de-ritualization of news consumption” (2013: 8), whereby technology has infiltrated many of the previous spatial and temporal limits of news consumption (2013). Peters and Broersma add that many of these old patterns of consumption are becoming obsolete as audiences adapt to new ways of consuming information, such as seeking news information when there

is a crisis as opposed to part of their daily ritual (2013). Brock's work on digital journalism aligns with Peters and Broersma's concept of "de-ritualization", illustrating that as a result of the internet, consumers have been conditioned to access the news on their own terms. He writes, "News is a river of endlessly renewed material that never stops flowing; it is no longer an occasional event. You dip into it at the time and place of your choosing" (2013: 111).

Peters and Broersma cite similar work conducted by Michael Schudson and Axel Bruns stating, "Perhaps daily rituals are no longer necessary for 'monitorial' citizens (Schudson 1998), who expect journalism to act as a 'gatewatcher' (Bruns, 2005) on their behalf, which can be tuned into during critical moments" (2013: 10). Many of the ways in which the ritualization of news consumption has changed involves an increased access to technology, allowing for many of the traditional patterns of consumption to become obsolete. As Peters and Broersma argue, "When technology overcomes many of the temporal and spatial limits of news consumption, when the public is unshackled from the distributional constraints of unidirectional, programmatic, mass media, our habits have a tendency to transform" (2013: 8). They advise that if the current model of journalism hopes to survive the new media wave that continues to rise, they must adapt: "... it seems that journalism increasingly needs to habituate itself to the temporal and spatial elasticity of one-and-all" (2013: 11). With extant literature addressing the ongoing transitions that are occurring within the industry, it is important to also review research relating to notions of access.

Notions of access evolve

As a result of what Peters and Broersma call "de-ritualization" (2013), access to journalism has increased (Miel and Faris 2008). This includes access to content, access to increased methods of news dissemination, and greater access to the profession, as identified by such scholars as Domingo (2008), Mabweazara (2011), Miel and Faris (2008) and Schudson (2000). The theme of access, along with the notion of professionalism, also appears in Fenton's work as she highlights the role played by technology: "Many commentators have claimed that journalism is undergoing a fundamental transformation. One of the key reasons cited for this transformation is the changing nature of technology, which is claimed to impact directly upon the practice of journalism and access to the profession" (2010: 4).

Many scholars (Bogaerts and Carpentier 2013, and Steensen 2011) have noted that in traditional journalism, access to the industry is granted to a privileged set of players who occupy positions of power within a news organization. As argued by the Glasgow University Media Group, “access is structured and hierarchical to the extent that powerful groups and individuals have privileged and routine entry into the news itself and to the manner and means of its production” (1980: 114). Understanding how access to the profession has changed with the evolution of digital technology is examined in a 2008 report published by The Berkman Center for Internet and Society at Harvard University. The report, titled “News and Information as Digital Media Come of Age”, chronicles the opportunities, problems and limitations of the new media industry. Authors Persephone Miel and Robert Faris address the changing media environment by commenting on how access to journalism as a profession is no longer limited to those who have had official training:

New tools and platforms have allowed people who are not traditional communications professionals to take part in a decade of explosive growth in online media... The resulting changes are being felt in political life, as public figures realize that when anyone can be a reporter, nothing is ever really “off the record” (2008: 4).

In order to understand this evolution, they begin by defining key terms that reappear in literature relating to the field of journalism, specifically “legacy media”, “web-native media” and “participatory media”. Figure 1.2 defines these relevant terms.

Figure 1.2. Key journalistic terms according to Miel and Farris (2008)

Legacy Media	Web-Native Media	Participatory Media
Media originally distributed using a pre-Internet medium (print, radio, television), and media companies whose original business was in pre-Internet media, regardless of how much of their content is now available online.	Media formats that exist only on the Internet and media entities whose first distribution channel is the Internet.	Media formats or entities where the participation or editorial contributions of people whose primary role in life or in relation to the specific media entity is something other than media producer – Jay Rosen’s “people formerly known as the audience” – are viewed as central. Pre-Internet participatory media forms include letters to the editor, community access cable TV, radio call-in shows, and so on.

Source: Miel, Persephone and Robert Faris. “News and Information as Digital Media Come of Age”. *The Berkman Center for Internet & Society at Harvard University*. 2008, p. 3

The professional identity of journalists is being compromised as identified by Miel and Faris (2008). With varying degrees of access to the profession and an increase in different types of journalism, the field is undergoing a transition where anything is possible:

With the proliferation of new formats and roles, it is easy to perceive the online media environment as a chaotic free-for-all: everyone is potentially a journalist or a commentator, the audience could be an unpredictable collection of casual Googlers or an intensely active but closed community, and computer programs choose the top news stories of the day. But even in this fluid environment, there are several distinct media structures that can be distinguished (2008: 10).

Miel and Faris outline the five types of media structures referenced above. They are (i) publisher; (ii) news agency; (iii) aggregator; (iv) author-centric; (v) audience-driven. Figure 1.3 illustrates the differences between these structures.

Figure 1.3. Types of media structures based on the distribution of the functions of authors, audience and editors (Miel and Faris 2008)

Publisher	Unites all functions under one enterprise: reporting, editing, packaging, and delivering the news to a specific audience.
News Agency	Performs the same news-gathering and editing functions, but acts a news wholesaler, selling the resulting stories to media outlets that package and distribute it, rather than seeking its own audience.
(Online) Aggregator	Recreate the functions of a publication like Reader's Digest, collecting and arranging materials produced by others. But online, where the editors may be any combination of human staff, computer algorithms, and the audience itself, aggregators can publish an infinite number of virtual publications or programs – a new one for every audience member, every few minutes.
Author-Centric	Represents the independent authors like bloggers who are using the distribution possibilities of the Internet to identify an audience outside of the confines of a larger media organization.
Audience-Driven	Owe their existence to the nature of the network; the contributions of their distributed online audience as authors or editors are critical to the formation of their content.

Source: Miel, Persephone and Robert Faris. "News and Information as Digital Media Come of Age". *The Berkman Center for Internet & Society at Harvard University*. 2008, p. 3

According to Miel and Faris, these structures represent "online and offline variations of legacy media" (2008: 10).

Numerous scholars, including Bogaerts and Carpentier, seek to understand the coping strategies used by journalists whose professional identity is being renegotiated by online media. Similar to the findings presented by Miel and Faris, Bogaerts and Carpentier posit,

As is the case with any discourse, modernist journalistic identity discourses are in principle reasonably stable, but can become confronted with destabilization that challenge its very nature... In the specific case of the challenges presented by online journalism, we can see coping strategies that denounce the validity of the rivaling system of online journalism, or that try to incorporate or domesticate it. On the other hand, we can also see coping strategies that shift the traditional journalistic identity more towards an interpretive and objective position (2013: 70).

The compromised identity of the traditional journalist continues to be examined by media sociologists as they attempt to categorize the varying types of media that have developed over recent years (Miel and Faris 2008). “Journalistic identity politics” (Bogaerts and Carpentier 2013: 60) are both maintained and contested, as positions of status within the profession continue to be renegotiated (Bogaerts and Carpentier 2013). Referred to as a “postmodern journalistic identity crisis”, Jo Bogaerts and Nico Carpentier examine the ongoing struggle that is occurring in the field of journalism as the industry attempts to protect its professional identity (2013). Their article “The Postmodern Challenge to Journalism” addresses threats to journalism’s identity and the subsequent coping mechanisms employed by the industry to maintain its professionalism. They write, “The first decades of the twentieth century led to a period of high modernism in (American) journalism because of the increasing professionalization of journalists and the consolidation of a shared occupational ideology” (2013: 60). The authors criticize the profession for its lack of self-criticism (2013), arguing that journalism has naively convinced itself that

By claiming professionalism (Tuchman, 1972; Soloski, 1990), orienting their actions towards a certain habitus (Matheson, 2003; Benson and Neveu 2005) and sharing interpretations of the profession (Zelizer, 1993b), journalists maintain an image of competence and authority” (2013: 61).

This form of impression management has not allowed the industry to grow to include online media as part of their modernist journalistic identity, instead they have developed strategies to keep their professional identities secured (Bogaerts and Carpentier 2013). While numerous scholars have studied the field of journalism, Bogaerts and Carpentier seek to exclusively examine online journalism due to the fact that according to them it “is one of the sites where these truth claims are both maintained and contested, which in turn renders professional identities and the coping mechanisms to protect them visible” (2013: 61). Figure 1.4. outlines the core “nodal points” in journalism as identified by Bogaerts and Carpentier. Nodal points refer to anchors that act as signifiers stabilizing a specific discourse (Bogaerts and Carpentier 2013). The authors rely on discourse theory, referencing Foucault, Zizek, Butler and Laclau and Mouffe, arguing that a given social space is “discursively constructed, which means that their meanings are the temporary and contingent result of a process of signification” (2013: 62). Laclau defines a discourse as “a structure in which

meaning is constantly negotiated and constructed” (1988: 254). Nodal points, according to Jacob Torfing, author of *New Theories of Discourse: Laclau, Mouffe and Zizek*, “sustain the identity of a certain discourse by constructing a knot of definite meanings” (1999: 88-89). Bogaerts and Carpentier elaborate on the definition by clarifying that, “nodal points are characterized by a certain emptying out of meaning, which is exactly what accounts for their structural role in the unification of discourse. From this perspective, journalism, like any social field, is seen to gain its meaning through discursive processes” (2013: 62).

Figure 1.4. The core nodal points of the journalistic ideology

VALUE	DEFINITION
Public service	“Journalists regard themselves as bringing a service to the public which mainly consists in ‘working with some kind of representative watchdog of the status quo in the name of the people’ (Deuze, 2005: 447)” (2013: 63).
Ethics	“In order to justify this public-service role, journalism points to the existence of a sense of ethics that guarantee the integrity, reliability and status of journalists. Most often this ethical consciousness is identified with a commitment to objectivity and truth, but the ethical framework is broader” (2013: 63).
Management	“Another nodal point that is closely linked to the public-service ideal is the journalist’s role perception as gatekeepers who manage the flow of information, which is inextricably linked to the journalist’s main source of professional distinction: their ability to decide what is news and what is not (Zelizer, 199b: 220). But journalists do more than managing the news; they also manage and control a wide series of resources” (2013: 63).
Autonomy	“Autonomy...structures the mainstream journalistic identity. Journalists emphasize that in order to carry out their work in a professional manner and to be journalistically creative they must be independent, have editorial autonomy and enjoy freedom both from internal and external pressures. However, in this insistence on autonomy and freedom, editorial independence has been elevated to ‘the status of an ideological value in that it functions to legitimize resistance to [...] change’ (Deuze 2005: 449)” (2013: 63).
Membership of a professional elite	“...what constitutes a journalist as a professional is exactly his position within a hierarchically structured organization. Indeed, as Singer (2003: 153) illustrates, ‘organizational affiliation has largely defined the professional journalist in the past: one qualifies as a professional precisely because of a loss of individual control over the publication or broadcast of one’s work’” (2013: 64).
Immediacy	“Though the main professional trait of journalists is deciding on newsworthiness, part of that ideal is also to get the news across as quickly as possible (Weaver and Wilhoit, 1996: 263)... Important in this regard is the value attributed to the ‘scoop’ and other ways of gaining prestige by covering a news item first” (2013: 64).

Objectivity	“By insisting on the value of objectivity in their work in varying degrees, journalists claim to have unmediated access to reality and the ability to represent it in a factual and truthful manner” (2013: 64).
-------------	--

Source: Bogaerts Jo and Nico Carpentier. “The postmodern challenge to journalism”. *Rethinking Journalism: Trust and Participation in a Transformed News Landscape*. London: Routledge, 2013. pp. 63-64

As has been identified, the logic of the field of journalism is based on a discourse that has been nurtured and maintained by elite professionals specifically with regard to news-gathering and news-producing techniques (Bogaerts and Carpentier 2013). The authors highlight three changes that have occurred within the field of journalism as a result of the rise of technology. Firstly, they posit that, “the internet has become used as a resource for traditional journalistic practices such as source-gathering” (2013: 65). Secondly, they note that access to the profession has changed significantly with the advent of the internet: “the internet offered non-professional journalists the opportunity to distribute their material” (2013: 65). Finally, Bogaerts and Carpentier state that the third change that the online environment has had on the field of journalism is that “it spawned a distinct possibility for providing news, for professionals and non-professionals alike” (2013: 65). Overall, they argue that the three characteristics listed above have the potential to “destabilize traditional journalism” (2013: 65) as a result of the four technological features that define the online environment: “accessibility, hypertextuality, multimodality and interactivity (Deuze 2003: 205)” (2013: 65). It is these four features, according to Bogaerts and Carpentier, that jeopardize the gate-keeping role of the journalist and as some scholars argue, lead to the de-professionalization of the journalist: “[A]s newsgathering expert systems become available to the general public the gate-keeping function of news people will diminish and as a group, they will probably experience de-professionalization (Broddason, 1994: 241, as cited in Singer, 2003: 147)” (2013: 65).

In “Online Journalism and the Promises of New Technology”, Steen Steensen evaluates what David Domingo (2006) has termed “the three waves of research into online journalism” (2011: 311). Figure 1.5 outlines these three “waves”.

Figure 1.5. Waves of research into online journalism (Domingo 2006)

Wave	Approach	Definition
First Wave	Normative Investigation	“Domingo argues that research about online journalism in the first decade of its existence was partly paralyzed by what he labels ‘utopias of online journalism’ (2006, p. 54). These utopias were especially related to how hypertext, multimedia and interactivity would foster innovative approaches that would revolutionize journalism” (Steensen 2011: 311).
Second Wave	Descriptive and Empirical	“...focus[es] on the degree to which the wonders of the new technology described by the first-wave researchers actually materialized” (Steensen 2011: 311-312).
Third Wave	Constructivist	“A wave of research that takes a constructivist rather than a technological determinist approach to researching online journalism... this third wave of online journalism research is still just a modest ripple compared to the ‘tsunami wave’ of research embarking on a more technological approach that has continued to flood the literature on online journalism” (Steensen 2011: 312).

Source: Steensen, Steen. “Online Journalism and the Promises of New Technology”. *Journalism Studies*. Vol. 12, No. 3, 2011, pp. 311-312

He argues that the technological determinist approach to online journalism research has encouraged an “investigation of the three assets of new technology that are generally considered to have the greatest impact on online journalism: hypertext, interactivity and multimedia (Dalhgren, 1996; Deuze, 2003, 2004; Deuze and Paulussen, 2002; Domingo, 2006; Paulussen, 2004; among others” (Steensen 2011: 312). These three characteristics were addressed by Bogaerts and Carpentier with regard to “destabilizing professional journalism” (2013: 65). However, they also include “accessibility” as a threat to the profession’s demise, while Domingo neglects this characteristic (Domingo 2006). Steensen highlights various assets of new technology that other scholars have examined. For example, he cites “interactivity, hypertextuality, multimediality, immediacy, ubiquity, memory and personalization” (2011: 312) as seven assets of new technology that impact online journalism. Steensen also argues that previous scholars have acknowledged “convergence, transparency, hypermedia, user-generated content, participatory journalism, citizen journalism, wiki-journalism and crowdsourcing” (2011: 312) as concepts to describe the same assets. He reproduces a table (Figure 1.6) to categorize these various concepts according to the following categories: “hypertext”; “interactivity”; and “multimedia” (2011: 313).

Figure 1.6. Assets of new technology on online journalism in reliance on hypertext, interactivity and multimedia (Steensen 2011)

Hypertext	Interactivity	Multimedia
Archival Contextualization Ubiquity Transparency Memory	Figurational Immediacy User-generated content Participatory journalism Citizen journalism Personalization Wiki-journalism Crowdsourcing	Convergence Hypermedia

Source: Steensen, Steen. "Online Journalism and the Promises of New Technology". *Journalism Studies*. Vol. 12, No. 3, 2011, p. 313

With scholars such as Steensen and Bogaerts and Carpentier having researched the varying interactive roles that exist in online journalism, W. Davis Merritt's work in journalism studies provided a discourse for future scholars (such as those listed above) to discuss non-traditional roles in journalism, such as the emergence of "the citizen journalist" (Merritt 2010: 28). The next section will extend the literature presented in this section by providing an in-depth review of how an increase in access to the profession has threatened "gatekeeping", one of the fundamental tropes of the profession; created the phenomenon of "gatewatching" (Bruns 2004); and encouraged the development of citizen journalists.

III. Gatekeeping, gate-watching, watchdogs and citizen journalists

In terms of the industry's professionalization, Jane B. Singer argues that gatekeeping is an ethical element of the field:

Journalistic ethics, as they are codified and articulated by both individual practitioners and journalism organizations or institutions, can be seen as stemming from this perspective of the journalist as gatekeeper. The role carries with it the notion of someone who has a particular set of responsibilities both to the people on the other side of the gate – the audience, or the public broadly defined – and to the other gatekeepers, including the journalist's employer and other journalists working with the profession as a whole (2008: 63).

Gatekeeping is often seen as part of a watchdog element of journalism: with journalists keeping an eye on those in power, strategically revealing to the public certain elements of news over others (Singer 2008). Bennett refers to it as "screening and selecting perspectives on what is important and why it matters" (2001: 25). While journalists must report to their editors and publishers in terms of appropriate publishable content, once a story is made public, few investigate the content. Axel

Bruns introduces readers to a term referring to journalistic surveillance - “gatewatching” - an online adaptation of the journalistic trope, “gatekeeping”. Figure 1.7 outlines the defining elements of gatewatching.

Figure 1.7. The defining elements of “gatewatching” according to Bruns (2008)

These practitioners are watching out for material passing through those gates that is relevant to their own audience’s interests and concerns and introduce it into their own coverage of news/current events;

They combine/contrast the coverage of a number of mainstream news organizations in order to highlight differences in emphasis or interpretation, and thus point to a political bias or substandard journalistic handiwork;

If through a recombination and reconsideration of existing materials, such coverage produces compelling new insights previously overlooked by first-tier media, it offers a means of re-introducing alternative viewpoints into first-tier media debates

Source: Bruns, Axel. “Gatewatching, Gatecrashing: Futures for Tactical News Media”. *Digital Media and Democracy: Tactics in Hard Times*. Ed. Megan Boler. Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 2008. p. 250

For Bruns, the Internet has re-defined the temporal, spatial capacity which hitherto confined traditional journalism in terms of column inches and airtime restrictions:

Due to the abundance of potential news sources in the networked environment of the World Wide Web, such information evaluation becomes a critical task, and for many online news gatherers their role is less similar to that of the traditional journalist than it is to that of the specialist librarian, who constantly surveys what information becomes available in a variety of media and serves as a guide to the most relevant sources when approached by information-seekers (2003: 36-37).

Bruns defines “gatewatching” as a hybrid between the role of a gatekeeper journalist and specialist librarian (Bruns 2003). He regards the role of sources as the defining element separating the two entities:

Gatewatching completes the shift from a focus on summarizing the information contributed to a news story by a variety of news sources, while at the same time positing one’s own story as the primary source of information replacing these sources, to a concern with pointing out (and pointing to) those very sources *as* primary sources, and positioning one’s own piece simply as a key node connecting the reader to this first-hand information, but in itself only as a secondary source ... Therefore, as the term implies, gatewatchers keep a constant watch at the gates, and point out those gates to their readers which are most likely to open onto useful sources (2003: 37-38).

As Brian McNair states in his 2013 article, “Trust, truth and objectivity”, online media has adopted a gatekeeping approach towards traditional journalists, watching what they publish and critiquing it as they see fit (McNair 2013). He states,

Online newsmakers spent a great deal of their time checking up on, and then spreading the news about, errors of fact, not to mention deliberate deception on the part of the ‘old media’. If the established news media had acted as a Fourth Estate watching over political power, emerging online media have acted as scrutineers of the print and broadcast watchdogs – what Bruns calls ‘gatewatchers’ (2011a) (2013: 86).

According to Bruns, gatewatchers *publicise* news as opposed to *publishing* it. He encourages *publicising* over *publishing* given the transparent nature of online news; readers can investigate the story on their own terms once they have been directed to do so (Bruns 2003):

Gatewatchers fundamentally *publicise* news (by pointing to sources) rather than *publish* it (by compiling an apparently complete report from the available sources)... Gatewatching also requires more work of the reader, who (in line with general trends for online audiences) is really an active *user* rather than a passive recipient of news, and takes on some of the role of the traditional gatekeeper-journalist themselves (2003: 38, 40).

According to Bruns, the traditional gatekeeping paradigm has evolved; traditional journalists, once considered watchdogs of those in power, now have their own watchdog: online journalists (i.e. gatewatchers):

Gatewatchers draw on news reports/official publications but frequently use journalists’, politicians’, and corporate actors’ own words against them by creatively (but, ideally, truthfully) reappropriating, repurposing, recombining, recontextualizing, and reinterpreting such content to show a very different conception of reality (2008: 252).

In *Feeding Frenzy: Attack Journalism and American Politics*, media scholar Larry Sabato outlines the transition in journalism which has led to the “watchdog” sensibilities of modern journalists (1991: 26). He chronicles the three eras of journalism: “lapdog journalism”, taking place between 1941 and 1946, whereby reporters served and reinforced the political establishment, acting as passive mouthpieces for those in authority (1991); “watchdog journalism”, prominent from 1966 to 1974, when journalists scrutinized those in power for the first time, with the Vietnam War and the Watergate scandal in the U.S. instigating such a shift (1991). Since 1974, Sabato argues that journalists have existed within the era of “junkyard dog journalism”, whereby the private lives of those in power no longer exist, reporting has become intrusive and aggressive, and a philosophy of “anything goes” has become the standard (1991).

Along with Sabato’s three “eras of journalism” (1991), many scholars have

examined a new era of journalism: the rise of the amateur (Volkmer and Firdaus 2013). The amateur journalist is an important element in the industry's evolution, specifically with regard to their tendency to scrutinize the work conducted by traditional journalists, as highlighted previously with Bruns' concept of "gatewatching" (2008). Ingrid Volkmer and Amira Firdaus point to four discourses that have emerged with the rise of user-generated content in journalism:

One set of discourses identifies news models, such as citizen journalism (e.g. Paulussen, et al., 2007; Allan and Thorsen, 2009), blogs (e.g. Lowrey, 2006; Perlmutter, 2008), new forms of participatory online news production and dissemination (e.g. Bruns, 2005; Beckett and Mansell 2008) and online news sites of newspapers and news broadcasters (2013: 101).

Russell hails the role played by amateur journalists in contributing to traditional journalism (2011). She writes, "The value of amateur war reporting, citizen journalism projects, WikiLeaks data dumps, ironic and satirical journalism ... rises when they are evaluated based on the level and quality of engagement they foster" (2011: 133).

Merritt argues that citizen journalism grew out of the need for politically inclined citizens to find a way to participate in the democratic conversation previously reserved for established journalists and politicians (2010). Merritt suggests that citizen journalism is a result of citizens being motivated by the idea that an informed public contributes to greater public life: "Citizen journalism's core exists in people motivated to tell other people about facts and events they believe are important and exchange thoughts about the meaning of the facts and events" (2010: 28). While mutual interest is a defining factor separating citizen from traditional journalism, Merritt notes that given that citizen journalism emerged within the technological context of the internet, cohesion within the field is lacking:

The ever-expanding Internet provides virtually everyone unfettered access to information and a way to publish to the world. Operating in that vastness are an undetermined number of people who share an interest in public life going well. They are telling other people about events they believe are important and exchanging thoughts about the meaning of those events ... Given the fragmentation imposed by its origins in technology, citizen journalism unavoidably lacks both an architecture and a unifying theory (2010: 22).

Volkmer and Firdaus' work aligns with Merritt's thesis that given the context in which user-generated content developed, it is not surprising that the relationship between traditional journalists and non-professionals is fragmented (Merritt 2010). They write,

Journalistic adoption of user-driven new media is not so much “innovation” as it is “incorporation” into existing journalistic practices... Professional journalistic norms dictate that user-generated information requires professional journalistic legitimation and verification before it can be incorporated into news reports (2013: 107).

While Volkmer and Firdaus and Merritt discuss the fragmented nature of the industry, in *Uses of Blogs*, Axel Bruns and Joanne Jacobs highlight the collaborative nature of the blogosphere (2006: 5). They define blogging as “a distributed, broad-based practice of content production” (2006: 5). They elaborate:

All bloggers are potential users (in the narrow sense of information recipient) as well as potential producers of content, and the blogosphere overall is an environment for the massively distributed, collaborative produsage of information and knowledge (2006: 6).

Unlike Bruns and Jacobs, many scholars are hesitant to embrace the collaboration potential made possible through such interactive and interpretive practices as blogging and citizen journalism (Lasica 2003). J.D. Lasica for example, hails the role adopted by online communities in contributing to a new form of journalism: “On almost any major story, the Weblog community adds depth, analysis, alternative perspectives, foreign views, and occasionally first-person accounts that contravene reports in the mainstream press” (2003: 73). Geert Lovink, a new media analyst, agrees with Lasica’s theory that online communities contribute to the understanding of a given news story. He emphasizes in his book, *Zero Comments: Blogging and Critical Internet Culture*, that while online content is often met with skepticism, it is best understood as an interpretation of a given news story:

Even though news agencies such as Reuters do not consider blog entries worth mentioning, opinion makers might take notice ... in this way, the gatewatcher is placed inside a hermeneutic circle, in which news is taken as a given and then interpreted (2008: 6).

Work conducted by McNair highlights the interpretive nature of online journalism, as identified by Lasica (2003) and Lovink (2008). He defines the “interpretive moment in the news cycle” as the moment where “spaces in the public sphere, where evaluation of, and opinion about either the substance, the style, the policy content, or the process of political affairs replaces the straight reportage of new information” (2000: 61). According to Schudson, a reporter’s interpretation of a news item was one of the main tenets of journalism in the nineteenth century:

The journalists who wrote commentary acquired enhanced prestige, trusted not only to report about the world accurately, but to interpret and make sense of it in a manner analogous to that of philosophers and artists... becoming significant social and political actors in their own right – journalists of particular influence, whose opinions mattered as much as their reporting skills, and who became a factor in shaping the events being reported (1995: 49).

In *The Power of News*, Schudson recognizes the importance of journalists using commentary in their news stories; however, he refers to a journalistic environment that predated the blogosphere (1995). With the industry undergoing an identity crisis, as identified by extant literature (Bogaerts and Carpentier 2013, Peters and Broersma 2013, and Deuze 2005), Schudson and Downie (2009) view the phenomenon of online journalism not as an ending to traditional journalism, but as an extension of news reporting and distributing strategies that prioritize digital over print:

Newspapers and television news are not going to vanish in the foreseeable future, despite frequent predictions of their imminent extinction. But they will play diminished roles in an emerging and still rapidly changing world of digital journalism, in which the means of news reporting are being re-invented, the character of news is being reconstructed, and reporting is being distributed across a greater number and variety of news organizations, new and old (Schudson and Downie, October 19, 2009).

Publicising, gatewatching and conducting citizen journalism all center around the theme of collaboration – be it with traditional media, online sources, or other journalists (Steensen 2011). Steensen's review of research on online journalism concludes that the traditional journalistic trope of gatekeeping is preferred when compared to other online practices identified:

The process of selecting and filtering news however, remains the most closed area of journalistic practice, allowing the authors to conclude that: '[t]he core journalistic role of the 'gatekeeper' who decides what makes news remained the monopoly of professionals even in the online newspaper that had taken openness to other stages beyond interpretation' (Domingo et al., 2008: p. 335)... Traditional norms of gatekeeping are preferred over participatory media (2011: 317, 320).

As addressed by Bogaerts and Carpentier, gatekeeping is one of the coping strategies adopted by traditional journalists when threatened by online media (2013). Journalists have renegotiated their professional discourse by acting as an intermediary between providing news information and interpreting it:

Such coping strategies testify to efforts to maintain the ideal of the gatekeeper... journalists protect their claim on the discourse of 'good'

journalism by partially shifting their competencies ... towards a new gatekeeper function which is to direct audiences toward 'valuable' information and to offer them interpretation of these resources (Steiner, 2009: 383) (2013: 69).

With traditional journalists both adopting coping strategies and renegotiating their competencies in order to defend their professional identity (Bogaerts and Carpentier 2013) and amateur journalists critically watching media gatekeepers in the hopes of uncovering questionable content (Bruns 2008), the field of journalism continues to be in a state of flux (Brock 2013). As traditional media organizations attempt to retain their relevancy in the field, and online media struggle to define their position in this space, numerous organizational theorists (as will be discussed in the next section) have conducted research that addresses this conflict: examining what happens when nascent organizations seek entry into an established field. The following section will review extant literature on organizational theory, specifically in relation to legitimacy, a condition required for acceptance into a given industry (Glynn 2001).

IV. Understanding notions of legitimacy

As the previous section illustrated, there have been numerous studies conducted on the state of the journalism industry, with many examining the role of the internet in changing traditional tenets of journalism and the identity of professional journalists. As Jenny Wiik states in "Identities under Construction: Professional Journalism in a Phase of Destabilization":

It is important to notice the twofold character of the field [of journalism] as it extensively marks the identity-making of journalists: they have to achieve legitimacy in the eyes of their peers as well as in relation to other adjacent fields (the audience, politicians, advertisers, etc.) (2009: 354).

For this study, I chose to use the concept of legitimacy – as opposed to other concepts – because the term was first discussed (with regard to journalism) in Bourdieu's *On Television and Journalism* (1998). His study examines the reproduction of values within the field of journalism and how peer review from within the field ("peer recognition") and external validation from circulation numbers ("public recognition"), contribute to the principles of legitimation guiding the field of journalism (1998).

In examining how nascent organizations create a name for themselves, many organizational theorists, such as Hessels and Terjesen (2010), Zimmerman and Zeitz

(2002) and Baum and Silverman (2004), have examined the role of legitimacy in contributing to start-up companies: “legitimizing processes are of crucial importance in new venture start-ups” (Karlsson and Wigren, 2012: 299). While economic capital is crucial for a new company, Karlsson and Wigren note that both the founder’s background and network should be considered when gauging the potential success of their new venture. They write,

While new firms lack financial resources, all new firms are founded by individuals with reputations, ideas, social networks, knowledge and human capital...Several scholars have shown that legitimacy plays an important role in new venture creation...We contend that new organizations in general suffer from an initial lack of legitimacy, stemming from the fact that they are new (2012: 298-299).

My study addresses notions of legitimacy: a term that numerous scholars (Aldrich, Stinchcombe, Karlsson, Wigren, Zimmerman and Zeitz) have discussed in relation to new business ventures. As Zimmerman and Zeitz state in “Beyond Survival: Achieving New Venture Growth by Building Legitimacy”,

Legitimacy reflects the normative requirement for inclusion in a system: The key point from our perspective is that legitimacy is a *relationship* between the practices and utterances of the organization and those that are contained within, approved of, and enforced by the social system in which the organization exists... Legitimacy ultimately exists in the eye of the beholder (2002: 416).

This section will provide a systematic understanding of the term “legitimacy” based on literature on organizational theory as examined by Zimmerman and Zeitz (2002), Deephouse and Carter (2005), and King and Whetten (2008). I will also refer to definitions of legitimacy offered by John Mauer (1971) and Mark Suchman (1995).

In Zimmerman and Zeitz’s 2002 article, the authors suggest that organizations can apply four distinct strategies in order to acquire legitimacy. They refer to this approach as “strategic legitimation” (2002: 421). The first three strategies they present in their paper were initially presented by Suchman (1995), whereas Zimmerman and Zietz propose a fourth strategy to consider (see Figure 1.8). In addition to these four types of legitimation strategies, they also outline three sources of legitimacy: (i) sociopolitical regulatory legitimacy, (ii) sociopolitical normative legitimacy, and (iii) cognitive legitimacy (2002: 422-423).

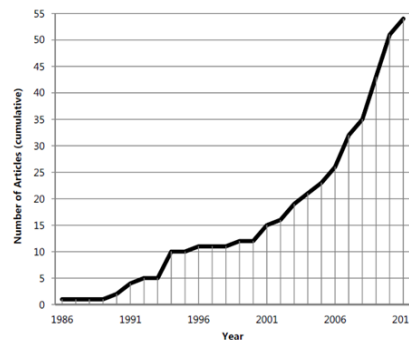
Figure 1.8. Legitimation strategies for new ventures

Strategy	Definition	Example	Theorist
Conformance	Conformance involves “following the rules”. A new venture that conforms does not question, change, or violate the social structure	Addressing regulations	Suchman 1995
Selection	Selection involves locating in a favorable environment (Scott, 1995a; Suchman, 1995).	Selecting where to locate a new venture	Suchman 1995
Manipulation	Manipulation involves innovation and/or a substantial departure from prior practice.	Manipulating norms and values of society, such as changing the value that a company publicly offering its stock should generate a profit at the time of the initial offering	Suchman 1995
Creation	Creation involves the creation of the social context – rules, norms, values, beliefs, models, etc.	Creating new operating practices, models, and ideas such as Amazon’s introduction of retailing books online to the mass market	Zimmerman and Zeitz 2002

Source: Zimmerman, Monica and Gerald J. Zeitz. “Beyond Survival: Achieving New Venture Growth by Building Legitimacy”. *Academy of Management Review*. Vol. 27, No. 3. 2002. p. 423

Comparing legitimacy and reputation from an organizational lens

In recent years, research relating to the concept of legitimacy has increased (Ueberbacher 2013) with scholars from a variety of disciplines – such as entrepreneurship, organizational theory and sociology – exploring its numerous perspectives and definitions in a variety of studies. Figure 1.9 illustrates this research trend, tracking the number of articles that have been written on legitimacy, with more than half of the 54 articles having been published between 2006 and 2011 (Ueberbacher 2013).

Figure 1.9. Cumulative number of articles on legitimacy research (2006 – 2011)

Source: Ueberbacher, Florian. “Exploring Legitimation Strategies of New Ventures”. *University of St. Gallen School of Management*. PhD Dissertation. 2013, p. 19

Oftentimes, scholars align legitimacy with the concept of reputation, arguing that both are critical to an organization's chance of survival. In "Rethinking the Relationship between Reputation and Legitimacy: A Social Actor Conceptualization", Brayden King and David Whetten argue that both concepts (reputation and legitimacy) are reciprocal when referring to an organization's social identity. They ask: "who is this actor similar to and how is this actor different from all similar others" (2008: 192). The first question refers to legitimacy based on the definition that "organizations have legitimacy when they conform to social expectations associated with a particular population" (Deephouse and Carter 2005: 331), while the latter refers to the reputation of the organization: is the organization "viewed favorably relative to the ideal standard for a particular social identity – an ideal, or esteemed, X-type organization?" (King and Whetten 2008: 192). They argue that legitimacy and reputation are complementary concepts based on the role of the stakeholder in determining whether the organization in question merits legitimacy and/or a favorable reputation:

Reputation and legitimacy are grounded in meaningful comparisons between organizations that are linked to standards that stakeholders use to assess the appropriateness and quality of an organization's behavior... Our contribution is to show that reputation can be viewed as an extension of legitimacy and that the two perceptions are connected through an organization's adoption of particular social identities (2008: 193).

An organization's social identity, according to King and Whetten, reflects the organization's membership to a particular identifiable group (2008). They further describe social identities as

"Classification" schemes that members and outsiders use to identify the organization (Albert and Whetten 1985: 268-269), as categories that connote membership to a particular identity class (Zuckerman 1999: 1405) and as the coupling of a label with specific schemata that shape the kinds of expectations that audience members have of an organization (Hannan et al, 2007: 101 – 102) (2008: 194).

The role of legitimacy in identifying an organization's social identity is paramount according to their study: "through social identity selection, organizations become linked to the crucial social and cognitive mechanisms through which assessments of legitimacy and reputation emerge" (King and Whetten 2008: 194). The authors suggest that for an organization to be identifiable by stakeholders, they must illustrate certain defining features that represent their capability within a given space (2008).

King and Whetten state, “[they] must possess identifying features capable of rendering them recognizable as particular types of actors, as well as making them distinguishable from all similar actors” (2008: 195). From a theoretical perspective, King and Whetten draw on identity theory referencing the “universal organizational need for recognizability” (2008: 195) as the foundational element for acquiring legitimacy. They write, “We have elected to highlight these so-called organizational actor needs because of their parallel meanings – membership in taken-for-granted social categories is the principal means whereby organizations gain legitimacy” (2008: 195).

Central to King and Whetten’s study is an emphasis on the external assessment of an organization’s legitimacy; the organization’s identity is evaluated against measures of legitimacy according to features shared by similar organizational identities. In order for an assessment to occur based on what King and Whetten have termed *accountability standards* (2008), organizations must establish a degree of identity:

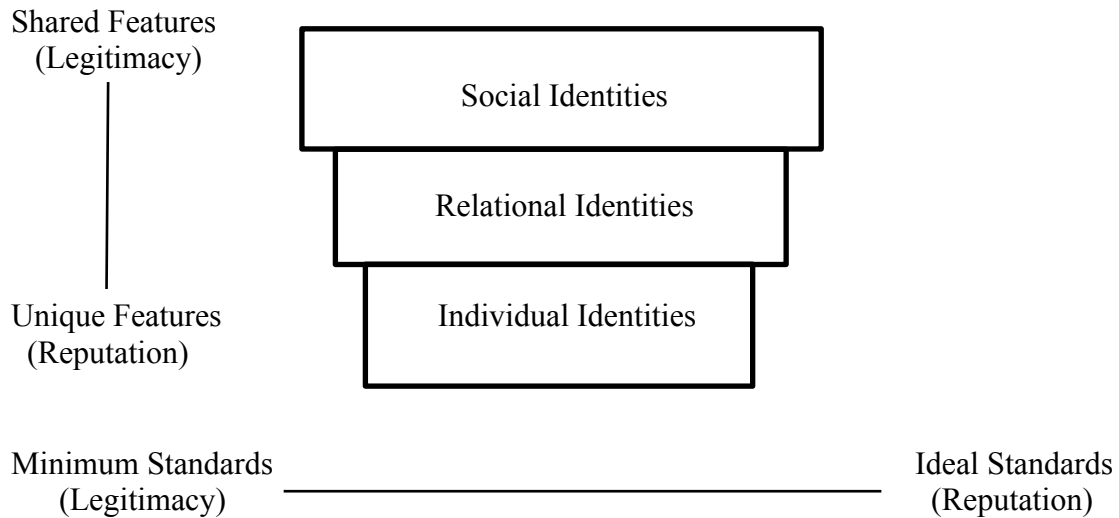
Organizational identity’s link to external assessments of the organization (reputation and legitimacy) is based on *accountability standards* that define norms of appropriate behavior and esteemed performance among organizations sharing a particular social category... In a very real sense, social identities form the ontological basis of the organization, inasmuch as internal and external audiences make assumptions about how an organization should behave based on its categorical memberships... By associating themselves with a group that can be evaluated by common standards and metrics, organizations make themselves known to the public and become assessable (2008: 197-198).

In the above quote, “esteemed performance” refers to measuring an organization’s reputation, whereas “norms of appropriate behavior” refers to measuring an organization’s legitimacy. King and Whetten further explain accountability standards as being distributed along a continuum, illustrating that accountability standards “indicate not only the minimum requirements for membership, but also the highest standards to which all members aspire” (2008: 198). Figure 1.10 illustrates this dynamic, illustrating that once an organization exhibits its “shared features”, thus legitimating its position, demonstrating elevated standards allows the organization to distinguish itself from its peers:

At their base level, standards indicate requirements for membership. But, once an organization has proven that it belongs, additional accountability standards exist that are extensions of those minimum standards...While the minimum

standards are associated with sanctions for failing to live up to the basic requirements of category membership, including the possibility of expulsion (Hannan et al., 2007), the ideal standards are coupled with the intangible rewards of esteem (King and Whetten 2008: 198).

Figure 1.10. Hierarchically ordered identity referents and corresponding relationship to legitimacy and reputation



Source: King, Brayden G. and David A. Whetten. "Rethinking the Relationship Between Reputation and Legitimacy: A Social Actor Conceptualization". *Corporate Reputation Review*. 2008. Volume 11, Number 3. p. 198

King and Whetten conclude that reputation and legitimacy are reciprocal characteristics for an organization's social identity (2008); they cite Hayagreeva Rao's 1994 study on automobile manufacturing as an example of the interdependent relationship of reputation and legitimacy. In "The social construction of reputation: Certification contests, legitimation, and the survival of organizations in the American automobile industry", Rao concluded that "reputation is the outcome of legitimation" (1994: 29). His study investigated how certification contests legitimated organizations in the American auto industry from 1895 to 1912. He cited organizational sociologists to distinguish between sociopolitical legitimacy and cognitive legitimacy:

Sociopolitical legitimacy consists of endorsement by legal authorities, governmental bodies, and other powerful organizations. Cognitive legitimacy implies the taken for granted assumption that an organization is desirable, proper, and appropriate within a widely shared system of norms and values (Zucker, 1986; Scott, 1987) (1994: 30).

Rao's findings echo King and Whetten's argument that reputation and legitimacy are reciprocal concepts stating, "... if models of reputation emphasize a tight coupling between endowments and evaluations, then models of legitimacy direct attention to

the collective processes by which reputation is collected and sustained” (1994: 30). Cognitive validity is, according to Rao, achieved through certification contests. These certifications are *social tests* of products and organizations, as examined by James Thompson in *Organizations in Action* (1967). As Rao states, “victories in certification contests legitimate organizations and validate their reputation because of the taken for granted axiom that winners are ‘better’ than losers and the belief that contests embody the idea of rational and impartial testing” (1994: 32). Rao’s study posits that for an organization to distinguish itself from its competitors, it must abide by the minimum standards that determine the legitimacy of the organization according to a set of shared values. Therefore illustrating that reputation cannot be achieved without legitimation:

For an organization to be able to distinguish itself in an innovative way, the organization must be able to justify its activities according to the minimum standards of the prototypical organization. The reputation-enhancing strategy must be complementary with the minimum standards. For instance, organizations adopting new technologies or new product lines must demonstrate to the relevant stakeholders how the change is consistent with the identity profile of the organization (King and Whetten 2008: 201).

In Violina Rindova, Ian Williamson, Antoaneta Petkova and Joy Marie Sever’s article, “Being Good or Being Known: An Empirical Examination of the Dimensions, Antecedents, and Consequences of Organizational Reputation”, they argue that reputation consists of two distinct dimensions: “(1) a perceived quality dimension, which captures the degree to which stakeholders evaluate an organization positively on a specific attribute, such as ability to produce quality products (2) a prominence dimension, which captures the degree to which an organization receives large-scale collective in its organizational field” (2005: 1035). According the article, key scholars in organizational sociology and institutional theory have defined reputation as

A valuable intangible asset that provides a firm with sustainable competitive advantages (Barney, 1991; Hall, 1992) because it influences stakeholders’ economic choices vis-à-vis the organization (Benjamin & Podolny, 1999; Dollinger, Golden, & Saxton, 1997; Deephouse, 2000) and contributes to differences in organizational performance (Rindova et al., 2005: 1033).

The construct of reputation, according to Rindova et al., is based on an organization’s past actions whereby they signaled to stakeholders that they were superior to their peers: “Reputation forms on the basis of past actions, through which firms signal to

stakeholders their ‘true’ attributes (Clark & Montgomery, 1998; Weigelt & Camerer, 1988)” (2005: 1033). The study also suggests that reputation forms “as a result of information exchanges and social influence among various actors interaction in an organizational field (Rao, 1994; Rindova & Fombrun, 1999)” (2005: 1033-1034). Figure 1.11 outlines the two distinct dimensions of reputation presented in Rindova et al.’s study.

Figure 1.11. Dimensions of reputation

Economics Perspective	Institutional Perspective
Addresses how stakeholders evaluate a particular organizational attribute	Concerned with the collective awareness and recognition that an organization has accumulated in its organizational field
Emphasizes the <i>perceived quality</i> dimension of organizational reputation	Emphasizes the <i>prominence</i> dimension of organizational reputation

Source: Rindova, Violina P., Ian O. Williamson, Antoaneta P. Petkova, and Joy Marie Sever. “Being Good or Being Known: An Empirical Examination of the Dimensions, Antecedents, and Consequences of Organizational Reputation. *Academy of Management Journal*. Vol. 48, No. 6. 2005. p. 1034

Rindova et al. test a model of the experiences and consequences of the two dimensions outlined in Figure 1.11. They seek to advance reputation research by proposing that the perception affiliated with a given organization – with regard to their reputation – is derived from strategic signals presented by the organization in question: “perceived quality is influenced by the signals that organizations send when they make strategic choices about the resources deployed in producing products and services” (Rindova et al., 2005: 1034). The authors add that the role of third parties should not be overlooked in this transaction: “prominence is influenced by the choices that the influential third parties, such as institutional intermediaries and high-status actors, make vis-à-vis organizations (Deepphouse, 2000; Pollock & Rindova, 2003; Rao, 1994; Stuart 2000)” (2005: 1034).

In order to test their proposed theory on the perceived quality of an organization, Rindova et al. empirically investigated the effect of the reputation of full-time MBA programs in the United States on corporate recruiting. The authors selected this context for their study as MBA graduates are recruited by potential employers based on the reputation of the business school they attended: “Because the quality of MBA graduates is difficult to evaluate a priori, business schools’ reputations are likely to strongly influence recruiters’ demand for MBA graduates” (2005: 1034).

Rindova et al. identify two types of actors that have a significant influence on an organization's prominence: institutional intermediaries and high-status actors (2005). Institutional intermediaries are defined as

Entities that specialize in disseminating information about organizations or in evaluating their outputs (Fombrun, 1996; Rao, 1998). By virtue of their specialization in collecting and disseminating information, institutional intermediaries are likely to be viewed as having superior access to information and/or expertise in evaluating organizations (Rao, 1998) (2005: 1037).

The authors cite media as a type of intermediary (Rindova et al. 2005). High-status actors on the other hand, refer to individuals – within their organizational field – who are deemed to be well-informed and able to offer a positive evaluation of the organization in question (Rindova et al. 2005). They state,

Affiliation with high-status actors increases prominence because such affiliation enables stakeholders to assume that the high-status actors, who are believed to be well informed, have evaluated the organization positively (Stuart, 2000). High-status actors themselves tend to garner a disproportionate amount of attention within their organizational fields (Rao et al., 1999), such as “basking in reflected glory”, which refers to the transfer of a positive evaluation from one object to another (Cialdini, Borden, Thorne, Walker, Freeman, & Sloan, 1976). Thus, ties to high-status actors are likely to enhance the prominence of an organization (2005: 1038).

Following their investigation, Rindova et al.'s findings support the claim that endorsement from intermediaries provides organizations with reputational prominence (2005). In their study, expert intermediaries included business school faculty that had received their doctorate from a prestigious university, along with the publication of faculty research in prominent scholarly journals; general intermediaries included MBA program rankings by the media in such publications as *U.S. News & World Report*, *BusinessWeek* and the *Financial Times*. The authors conclude,

Our results also provide empirical support for the theoretical argument that the prominence dimension of reputation depends on support and endorsement by influential third parties, such as institutional intermediaries and high-status actors ... These findings suggest that receiving recognition from experts in an organizational field may be an important contributor to organizational prominence (Rindova et al. 2005: 1044).

The findings from this study can be best understood in applying a Bourdieusian framework whereby key actors (or “institutional intermediaries”, as referred to by Rindova) are able to exert value on subsequent players seeking “organizational prominence” (Rindova et al. 2005: 1044). As Bourdieu states:

Through the practical knowledge of the principles of the game that is tacitly required of new entrants, the whole history of the game, the whole past of the game, is present in each act of the game... There is a field effect when it is no longer possible to understand a work (and the value, i.e. the belief, that it is granted) without knowing the history of the field of production of the work. That is how the exegetes, commentators, interpreters, historians, semiologists and philologists, come to be justified in existing, as the only people capable of accounting for the work and the recognition of value that it enjoys (1993a: 74-75)

The common held notion that legitimacy is based on a cognitive belief system (Mauer 1971 and Suchman 1995) is addressed in Martin Ruef and W. Richard Scott's study using 143 hospitals – located in northern California – to investigate two forms of organizational legitimacy – managerial and technical – over a 46-year period (1998). Their study addresses the operationalization of the concept of legitimacy noting, the historical consensus among scholars, that legitimacy is cognitively based:

Early theorists were content to assert or assume the importance of culturally based rule systems but did little more than illustrate such effects. More recently, a growing number of researchers have attempted to operationalize the concept of legitimacy. In moving from vague, general assertions about organizations being legitimated by societal values or being consistent with socially constructed models, researchers have had to confront several conceptual and measurement issues (Ruef and Scott 1998: 878).

The conceptual and measurement issues raised by the authors in this study include: “what social actors are doing the legitimating?” (1998: 878). Similar to Rindova et al.'s 2005 study, the role of social actors should not be overlooked in research relating to reputation and legitimacy. According to Rindova et al., intermediaries provide the necessary reputational prominence for organizations seeking greater status (2005). John Mauer's research on legitimacy parallels Rindova's findings, asserting that, “legitimation is the process whereby an organization justifies to a peer or subordinate system its right to exist (1971: 361). As this section has illustrated, a common definition of legitimacy involves recognition by a key stakeholder of a shared cognitive belief (Rindova 2005; Mauer 1971; Suchman 1995; Ruef and Scott 1998). Mark Suchman's definition echoes this finding:

Legitimacy is a perception or assumption in that it represents a reaction of observers to the organization as they see it... Legitimacy is socially constructed in that it reflects a congruence between the behaviors of the legitimated entity and the shared (or assumed shared) beliefs of some social group (1995: 574).

Suchman views legitimacy as a set of “constitutive beliefs” (1995). He argues that interpretations of legitimacy are divided into three distinct categories (see Figure 1.12).

Figure 1.12. Categories of legitimacy

- | | |
|-------|--|
| (i) | Legitimacy grounded in pragmatic assessments of stakeholder relations. |
| (ii) | Legitimacy grounded in normative evaluations of moral propriety. |
| (iii) | Legitimacy grounded in cognitive definitions of appropriateness and interpretability (cf. Aldrich and Fiol, 1994). |

Source: Suchman, Mark. “Managing Legitimacy: Strategic and Institutional Approaches”. *The Academy of Management*. 1995. Vol. 20, No. 3. p. 572

His third point aligns with Rindova, Mauer, Ruef and Scott’s work on organizational legitimacy, noting that legitimacy is determined based on whether the organization in question is deemed to be “appropriate” in terms of abiding by the values internal to the institutional field (i.e. “cognitive definitions”) (Suchman 1995). Suchman’s seminal text “Managing Legitimacy: Strategic and Institutional Approaches” outlines the strategies necessary for achieving and maintaining organizational legitimacy. In examining the “evaluative and cognitive dimensions” (1995: 573) of legitimacy, he argues that the concept “reflects embeddedness in a system of institutionalized beliefs and actions” (1995: 574).

In their 1998 study on organizational legitimacy in hospitals in northern California, Ruef and Scott state that stakeholder evaluation is an act of legitimation, whereby organizations seeking legitimacy rely on the influence of a stakeholder (or an intermediary as presented by Rindova et al. 2005) to determine their fate:

Whether an organization is legitimate, or more or less so, is determined by those observers of the organization who assess its conformity to a specific standard or model. All stakeholders participate in this process, evaluating one or another aspect of the organization with varying degrees of knowledge and with varying degrees of influence on the overall level of legitimacy (1998: 880).

Their study focuses on a normative assessment of legitimacy from the perspective of external stakeholders. They state, “Our own study of hospitals concentrates attention on the normative assessments of technical and managerial legitimacy made by a collection of industry-wide professional bodies external to the hospitals being evaluated” (2005: 880). The salience of the legitimacy assessment is an important factor to consider in examining the legitimation of organizations, as suggested in their study. The authors argue, “All legitimacy assessments are not of equal importance...

It is also clear that all constituencies do not have equal weight, and their assessments do not have equal influence” (1998: 882). Therefore, in examining managerial and technical legitimacy in hospitals, the authors consider the hospital’s “generality of survival” (1998: 882) as both a success criterion and an indicator of salience (1998). Ruef and Scott explain,

Hospital organizations improve their survival chances insofar as they are successful in obtaining legitimacy from such normative sources as the Joint Commission of the Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations (JCAHO) or the American Hospital Association (AHA). More generally, a number of theorists (Meyer and Scott, 1983; Baum and Oliver, 1991) have argued that organizations operating in highly institutionalized environments are more likely to survive to the extent that they are successful in obtaining legitimacy from those normative sources that are in a position to approve or disapprove their structures, staffing, and programs (1998: 883).

Their study proposes that the salience of varying forms of normative legitimacy will fluctuate depending on “the institutional characteristics of an organizational sector” (Ruef and Scott 1998: 893-894). They conclude that hospitals with a significant degree of legitimacy have the potential to improve their chance of survival in environments that are “characterized by the presence of extensive formalized relations” (1998: 898). Removed from the context of hospitals in northern California, Ruef and Scott’s research on the legitimation of organizations provides insight on “varying sources of legitimacy, the levels at which they operate, the institutional elements that they target, and the environments that contextualize their effects” (1998: 898).

While King and Whetten argue that legitimacy and reputation are complementary concepts with regard to an organization’s social identity, other scholars do not view this paradigm as being reciprocal. King and Whetten outline the relationship by stating,

Legitimacy standards inform organizations’ reputation-seeking activities, in turn, shape the minimum standards of what it means to belong to a particular category. Changes in the ideal standards, upon which reputation is based, have consequent effects on the minimum standard of legitimacy (2008: 201).

In “An Examination of Differences Between Organizational Legitimacy and Organizational Reputation”, David Deephouse and Suzanne Carter view both concepts as “representing assessments of an organization by a social system” (2005: 329). The authors outline the similarities and differences between reputation and

legitimacy as they investigate the legitimacy and reputation of commercial banks in the US from financial, regulatory and public perspectives (2005). Figure 1.13 outlines the similarities and differences of the concepts.

Figure 1.13. The similarities between legitimacy and reputation

SIMILARITIES	
Evaluation	They result from similar social construction processes as stakeholders evaluate an organization (Ashforth and Gibbs, 1990; Fombrun and Shanley, 1990).
Acquisition of resources	An important consequence of both is the improved ability to acquire resources (Hall, 1992; Suchman, 1995).
The role of antecedents	The concepts have been linked to similar antecedents, such as organizational size, charitable giving, strategic alliances, and regulatory compliance (Fombrun and Shanley, 1990; Galaskiewicz, 1985; Oliver, 1990; Stuart, 2000).

Source: Deephouse, David L. and Suzanne M. Carter. "An Examination of the Differences Between Organizational Legitimacy and Organizational Reputation". *Journal of Management Studies*. Vol. 2. No. 2. March 2005. p. 330

According to Deephouse and Carter, there are two distinct criteria for distinguishing legitimacy and reputation: "the nature of the assessment stated in the definition and the dimensions on which legitimacy and reputation can be assessed" (2005: 331). The authors emphasize the role of "assessment" in differentiating between the two concepts. According to numerous scholars cited by Deephouse and Carter, reputation is equated with notions of prestige when compared to an entity's competitors. They write,

In contrast to legitimacy, reputation has been assessed in past definitions in terms of relative standing or desirability (Shrum and Wuthnow, 1988), quality (Podolny, 1993), esteem (Dollinger et al., 1997; Fombrun, 1996, p. 37; Hall, 1992, p. 138; Heugens, 2004), and favourableness (Deephouse, 2000). Shenkar and Yuchtman-Yaar (1997) equated reputation with image, esteem, prestige, and goodwill in developing the encompassing concept of organizational standing, because all terms indicate the relative position of an organization amongst its counterparts. Ruef and Scott (1998) similarly highlighted status comparisons as central in reputation (2005: 331).

Legitimacy and reputation can also be compared in examining the dimensions on which they can be assessed (Deephouse and Carter 2005). The authors cite Ruef and Scott's 1998 study, whereby they limited assessments of legitimacy to "those involving regulative, normative or cognitive dimensions" (Deephouse and Carter 2005: 332, citing Ruef and Scott 1998: 879). By comparison, Deephouse and Carter posit that reputation "can also be assessed on 'virtually any attribute along which organizations may vary that can serve as a source of status comparisons'" (2005: 332).

Isomorphism and institutional logics

The main focus of Deephouse and Carter's study is to illustrate that there exist two essential antecedents that "may *distinguish* legitimacy and reputation" (2005: 332). These antecedents are: (i) isomorphism and (ii) financial performance. Deephouse and Carter define isomorphism as "a state concept at the organizational level, indicating the extent to which an organization is mimetic (i.e. similar) on certain attribute(s) to other organizations in an organizational field" (2005: 332). They also cite Westphal, Gulati and Shortell's definition of isomorphism: "Institutional isomorphism is manifested empirically as increased conformity" (Westphal et al., 1997: 371), adding that "a fundamental proposition of institutional theory is that isomorphism leads to legitimacy (DiMaggio and Powell, 1983; Meyer and Rowan, 1977)" (Deephouse and Carter 2005: 333).

Unlike King and Whetten (2008) who argued that the concepts of legitimacy and reputation are reciprocal, Deephouse and Carter (2005) examine the following propositions in relation to reputation, legitimacy and isomorphism, as outlined in Figure 1.14.

Figure 1.14. Propositions for examining the differences between legitimacy and reputation

Proposition 1: Isomorphism is positively related to legitimacy.

Proposition 2: For organizations with lower reputations, isomorphism is positively related to reputation. For organizations with better reputations, isomorphism is negatively related to reputation.

Proposition 3: For organizations with lower levels of financial performance, financial performance is positively related to legitimacy. For organizations with higher levels of financial performance, there is no relationship between financial performance and legitimacy.

Proposition 4: Higher financial performance is positively related to reputation.

Source: Deephouse, David L. and Suzanne M. Carter. "An Examination of the Differences Between Organizational Legitimacy and Organizational Reputation". *Journal of Management Studies*. Vol. 2. No. 2. March 2005. p. 333, 335-336

From a methodological perspective, Deephouse and Carter tested the above propositions using data from commercial banks in the Minneapolis-Saint Paul Metropolitan Area in the United States from 1985 to 1992: "Commercial banking is an appropriate setting to test out propositions because the industry faces strong institutional and competitive pressures, which means that legitimacy and reputation are important (Scott and Meyer, 1991; Weigelt and Camerer, 1988)" (2005: 336). Relying on financial information and media data to capture the perspectives of the

financial community and the general public respectively, the authors investigated the role of isomorphism and financial performance as antecedents:

We created measures of regulative legitimacy from the perspective of bank regulators, normative legitimacy from the perspective of the general public, financial reputation from the perspective of bank customers and rating agencies, and normative reputation from the perspective of the general public (Fombrun, 1996; Scott, 1995) (Deepphouse and Carter 2005: 337).

The findings from this study illustrate that isomorphism improves an organization's legitimacy, but its influence on reputation depends on the reputation of the organization. The authors state,

Our expectations for isomorphism are by and large met: three of four tests support our propositions and the unsupported test is still indicative of a difference between the two concepts. Consistent with institutional theory and past research, we find that isomorphism is positively related to both dimensions of legitimacy (Deepphouse and Carter 2005: 350).

For Deepphouse and Carter, with regard to an organization's potential for survival, legitimacy outweighs reputation, suggesting that the consequences of having a poor reputation is insignificant compared to being an illegitimate organization: "Being less well regarded than another organization does not threaten the organization's continued existence as long as the organization's legitimacy remains unchallenged" (2005: 351).

In "Managing the Rivalry of Competing Institutional Logics", Trish Reay and Bob Hinings define logics as being "an important theoretical construct because they help to explain connections that create a sense of common purpose and unity within an organizational field" (2009: 629). Their study investigates what happens when competing institutional logics exist in a given organizational field (2009). Reay and Hinings explain that institutional logics, organizational fields, and institutional change are connected concepts, with "institutional logics provid[ing] a link between institutions and action, and are [thus] an important concept for understanding organization fields (Friedland and Alford 1991; Scott et al. 2000; Thornton and Ocasio 2008)" (2009: 631). They emphasize that a player's actions within an organizational field are based on their understanding of institutional logic, often referred to as the rules associated with that specific field:

Institutional logics provide the organizing principles for a field (Friedland and Alford 1991). They are the basis of taken-for-granted rules guiding behavior of field-level actors, and they "refer to the belief systems and related practices

that predominate in an organizational field” (Scott 2001: 139) (Reay and Hinings 2009: 629).

The authors suggest that although two or more institutional logics may exist in an organizational field at the same time, a change in the field’s dominant logic is indicative of potential institutional change: “Logics are also important in understanding institutional change because a change in the field’s dominant logic is fundamental to conceptualizations of institutional change. Studies have shown how a new logic may be introduced to a field and become dominant – providing new guidance for field members (Kitchener 2002; Hensmans 2003; Scott et al. 2000)” (Reay and Hining 2009: 629). Reay and Hinings are interested in examining how the existence of multiple logics can exist together in an organizational field. Their central research question states: “How do actors manage the rivalry of co-existing and competing institutional logics?” (2009: 629).

In examining the provincial healthcare system in Alberta, Canada during a period of government reform, the authors wanted to “understand how actors’ actions or statements reflected the logic of *medical professionalism* or the logic of *business-like health care*” (Reay and Hinings 2009: 635). For the sake of their study, actors were considered to be physicians, government, and Regional Health Authorities (2009: 633). In analyzing their data set of archival documents, interview data and participant observations (2009), Reay and Hinings identified four mechanisms for managing competing logics. The mechanisms focus on themes of independence and formal and informal collaborations:

These mechanisms constitute different components of formal and informal collaborative relationships that were established inside organizations. Each of the mechanisms allowed physicians and managers at the local level to maintain their independence but also collaboratively accomplish work demanded by societal, legislative and professional pressures (Reay and Hinings 2009: 643 644).

The study concludes by addressing how competing logics can co-exist within a field where there is no dominant logic. Reay and Hinings comment that while previous literature focused on “the replacement of one dominant logic with another” (2009: 647), they suggest that based on their analysis of the healthcare system in Alberta, organizations should focus on collaborative activity:

We propose that institutional change may occur when actors develop mechanisms of collaboration that support the co-existence of competing logics... Our findings suggest that, in at least some cases, maintaining separate

identities and a common purpose for collaborating may be more successful than attempting to develop a common identity for collaboration (209: 647-648).

This section has reviewed extant research on legitimacy and reputation, specifically examining the concepts from an organizational theory perspective. In developing my theoretical framework, I will be drawing not only on the research I conducted in the field, but also many of the concepts addressed by scholars identified in this chapter. Specifically, I will be systematically examining King and Whetten's proposition that when acquiring legitimacy, there is a "universal organizational need for recognizability" (2008: 195). I will also be re-addressing Rindova et al.'s work on the role of social actors – specifically high-status actors (2005) – and notions of legitimacy. As stated in their study, "ties to high-status actors are likely to enhance the prominence of an organization" (Rindova et al. 2005: 1038). In comparisons between legitimacy and reputation, I will not be addressing the concept of reputation in my study as legitimacy outweighs reputation, as addressed by Deephouse and Carter (2005). It was important to discuss the term in this chapter as it is often conflated – as opposed to associated – with definitions of legitimacy. Given that I will be examining how online news organizations become legitimate in an emerging subfield, attempts at analyzing the organizations' reputation are futile, as nascent organizations need to acquire legitimacy before their reputation can be assessed (Deephouse and Carter 2005). Finally, I will be extending the work conducted by Reay and Hinings with regard to introducing a new logic to an already established field.

This dissertation is attempting to situate online news organizations as comprising a subfield of the field of journalism; as a result, it is important to systematically examine field theory as it relates to field formation, the emergence of new players and, how varying types of capital contribute to this evolution. The following section will review literature relating to field theory and the relative positioning of (or proximity to) key resources within a field (Bourdieu 1989; Anheier et al, 1995: 860).

V. Understanding "the field"

In order to examine the evolution of a distinct field, it is important to review the seminal literature that addresses the formation and maintenance of fields.

According to Wiik, Bourdieu's field theory is influenced by Max Weber and addresses how various professions are understood (2009). She explains that field theory "constitutes a fruitful framework for understanding the meaning of professions in different contexts. Bourdieu described the various areas of modern societies as semi-autonomous fields of increasingly specialized action, structuring human relations (2009: 353)".

According to Rodney Benson and Erik Neveu, one's position in a field is dependent on one's level of authority within the space: "A field is a field of forces and a field of struggles in which the stake is the power to transform the field of forces. In other words, within a field, there is competition for legitimate appropriation of what is at stake in the struggle in the field" (2005: 44). An understanding of the concept of "the field" has been defined by numerous scholars, and is expressed schematically in Figure 1.15.

Figure 1.15. Defining "the field" and its evolution

Pierre Bourdieu (1993b)	"A space of positions and position-takings," (1993b: 30). "... it is a field of forces, but it is also a field of struggles tending to transform or conserve this field of forces. The network of objective relations between positions subtends and orients the strategies which the occupants of the different positions implement in their struggles to defend or improve their positions (i.e. their position takings)" (1993b: 30).
Rodney Benson (2005)	"The field is a field of forces and a field of struggles in which the stake is the power to transform the field of forces; there is ultimate competition for legitimate appropriation of what is at stake in the struggle in the field" (2005: 44).
Nick Couldry (2010)	"The field is a competitive space organized around a common set of resources and practices" (2010: 139).
Angela Phillips (2010)	"In Bourdieu's conception of the field, power in society is held not only by those who have economic capital, but also those who wield cultural capital (and through it the ability to establish and maintain social norms which he refers to as 'symbolic capital'" (2010: 89).
John Thompson (1991)	"[Bourdieu] views the social world as a multi-dimensional space, differentiated into relatively autonomous fields; and within each of these fields, individuals occupy positions determined by the quantities of different types of capital they possess" (1991: 29).

Source: Benson, Rodney. *Bourdieu and the Journalistic Field*. Cambridge: Polity Press, 2005; Bourdieu, Pierre. *The Field of Cultural Production*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1993b. Couldry, Nick. "New Online News Sources and Writer-Gatherers" in *New Media, Old News*. Ed. Natalie Fenton. London: Sage Publications, 2010, pp. 138-152. Phillips, Angela. "Old Sources: New Bottles" in *New Media, Old News*. Ed. Natalie Fenton. London: Sage Publications, 2010, pp. 87-101. Thompson, John. Ed. *Language and Symbolic Power*. Cambridge: Polity Press, 1991.

I am using the notion of the field in my work in order to conceptualize how stakeholders, organizations and resources co-exist within a distinct space. Specifically, attempting to understand how subfields form according to a particular logic. I will argue, drawing on Bourdieu's field theory (1993b), that there are distinct shared values and standards that structure a field's subfield, and membership (thus achieving legitimacy) in this environment is made possible based on the accumulation

and demonstration of social capital. This will be outlined in detail in Chapter Three. The following subsection will review previous studies that examine field evolution and the role of stakeholders in contributing to an emerging organization's success in a given field.

In "Insiders, Outsiders, and the Struggle for Consecration in Cultural Fields: A Core-Periphery Perspective", Gino Cattani, Simone Ferriani, and Paul D. Allison, seek to understand how in the Hollywood motion picture industry, some movies win Academy Awards and others do not (2014). They argue that this distinction is based on the embeddedness of the candidate within the field as well as peer evaluation of a candidate's work (2014) that determines a film's success during award season. Cattani et al. state,

Building on recent research emphasizing how legitimacy depends on consensus among audiences about candidates' characteristics and activities, we examine the relationship between cultural producers' (candidates) position in the social structure and the consecration of their creative work by relevant audiences. We argue that the outcome of this process of evaluation in any cultural field, whether in art or science, is a function of (1) candidates' embeddedness within the field, and (2) the type of audience – that is, peers versus critics – evaluating candidates' work (2014: 258).

The authors hypothesize that peers are more likely to "favor candidates who are highly embedded in the field" (2014: 258), as opposed to film critics who will not exhibit "such favoritism" (2014: 258). Bourdieu is referenced throughout this study, specifically with regard to his seminal work on cultural fields. Echoing Bourdieu, they write,

The ability to impose judgments of symbolic legitimacy, or the power to consecrate, in cultural fields allows participants to reproduce their positions – thus influencing the choice of (and return to) different aesthetic strategies (DiMaggio 2010). Because these judgments produce prestige hierarchies and affect field evolution, cultural fields are in a constant state of struggle between established and emerging actors who compete for symbolic distinction based on subjective rules of merit, and the vested interests and social objectives these rules embody (2014: 258).

Cattani et al. highlight the structural repercussions of new entrants "break[ing] the silence of the doxa and call[ing] into question the unproblematic taken-for-granted world of the dominant groups (Bourdieu 1993: 83)" (2014: 258). This leads to a binary conceptualization whereby cultural producers and those who challenge the status-quo are classified as "incumbents and dissidents, insiders and outsiders,

orthodox and heretics, and core and peripheral players” (2014: 258). In examining the Hollywood motion picture industry, Cattani et al. relied on a data set that comprised 2,297 movies “distributed in the United States by the eight major studios” (2014: 265) from 1992 to 2004. They focused their analysis on over 12,000 players that had worked on “at least one of the 2,297 movies” (2014: 265). These players occupied the following professions: “director, writer, leading and supporting actor/actress, editor, cinematographer, and production designer” (2014: 265).

Prior to their analysis, Cattani et al. made two predictions regarding whether a movie would receive an award by the two identified audiences – peers vs. critics:

Prediction I: When peer organizations bestow accolades, they are likely to favor members in the core of a cultural field over those in the periphery, holding other factors constant.

Prediction II: When critic organizations bestow accolades, they are not likely to favor core members of a cultural field over those in the periphery, and they may actually favor those in the periphery (2014: 265).

In order to identify core and peripheral players, the authors conducted a network analysis based on the work of Faulkner and Baker (1993), Faulkner and Anderson (1987), and Anheier and colleagues (1995). To begin, they assumed that if professionals were working on the same movie, they had “a tie to one another” (2014: 267). Cattani et al. note, “Over the study period, approximately 346 different professionals (about 3 percent of the total) were in the core in at least one year... The small size of the core reflects the unequal distribution of ties in the movie industry’s social structure” (2014: 267). They remark on Faulkner and Anderson’s findings from their 1987 study “Short-Term Projects and Emergent Careers: Evidence from Hollywood”, stating “the film community like most culture industry systems and like most high-performance systems is dominated by an active elite and manifests inequality in productivity, and cumulative resources in the form of ties” (2014: 267).

Cattani et al.’s findings reveal that players occupying a peripheral role in the core of the Hollywood network have a lower chance of success among peer organizations: “A professional in the periphery had 71 percent lower odds of being chosen for an accolade than did a professional in the core” (2014: 270). The results from their analysis also illustrate that there is a discrepancy between peers and critics with regard to the likelihood of members of the periphery receiving an award (2014). Cattani et al. write,

Periphery had a highly significant negative effect for peers (-1.423) but no detectable effect for critics... The odds ratio for peers was .24, translating to a 76 percent reduction in the odds of an accolade for members of the periphery compared with members of the core. The interaction between *critic* and *periphery* is highly significant, implying that the effects of periphery for critics and peers are significantly different (2014: 272).

Following these findings, the authors were interested in investigating why peers were less likely to award an accolade to those in the periphery. They concluded that similar to the studies on legitimacy discussed in the previous section, organizations seeking status must illustrate an understanding and a respect to the shared values of a given field in order to be included (King and Whetten 2008; Deephouse and Carter 2005; Meyer and Scott 1983). Cattani et al. state, “One possibility is that peers’ preference for core cultural producers is restricted to the realm of elite peers who may have a stronger stake in conformity and reciprocity” (2014: 273). Another similarity between Cattani et al.’s work and the research conducted by such scholars as Rindova et al. 2005 and Ruef and Scott 1998 is the emphasis on the role of social audiences. Rindova et al. refer to these players as “intermediaries”, whereas Ruef and Scott call them “stakeholders”. According to Cattani et al., audiences play a significant role in cultural producers’ claims for recognition, identifying “the ongoing tension between the core and the periphery of the social field” (2014: 275). They add,

A rich and vibrant tradition building on Bourdieu’s pioneering insights treats cultural producers as engaged in an ongoing struggle to secure notoriety, prestige, and esteem from colleagues. In this struggle to define what counts as culturally legitimate, the social audiences that control access to symbolic and material resources play a crucial role. Cultural consecration can be viewed as the most definitive form of cultural legitimation (2014: 274-275).

According to Cattani et al., their research on consecration in cultural fields contributes to broader work on cultural sociology and the sociology of evaluation (2014). They encourage, as illustrated in their paper, that an increase in research relating to networks and external markers of legitimacy is needed. They write,

Little attention has been devoted to how consecration is shaped by processes of social validation enforced by external evaluators. Our findings are consistent with recent evidence (Allen and Parsons 2006; Rossman et al. 2010) that consecration does not occur in a social void, but is instead embedded in patterns of relationships and shaped by audiences that grant or deny distinction to competing candidates. Crucially, attaining such consecration likely hinges on whether peripheral players can appeal to a homologous social audience whose members share the same or similar

dispositions and whose views, beliefs, and tastes are attuned to their own (2014: 276).

The role of external stakeholders is a recurring theme in extant literature relating to notions of legitimacy, the field, core and periphery players, and networks. In order to understand how new organizations gain access to a specific field, it is important – as will be discussed in the next subsection – to systematically examine previously conducted studies relating to this research area.

New players enter the field

While Cattani et al., examined the likelihood of Hollywood films receiving accolades during the annual award season, Anand Narasimhan and Mary R. Watson conducted a similar study focusing on the music industry and the Grammy Awards (2004). Their study titled, “Tournament Rituals in the Evolution of Fields: The Case of the Grammy Awards” examined the role of award ceremony rituals in organizational field evolution (2004). Narasimhan and Watson highlight four specific processes that, according to them, influence field evolution: “(i) distributing prestige in ‘situated’ performances; (ii) enacting a highly charged ceremonial form designed to attract the collective attention of a field; (iii) serving as a medium for surfacing and resolving conflicts about the legitimacy of field participants; (iv) and tightening horizontal linkages within the field” (2004: 59).

In their study, they introduce the concept of the field “as a cogent location in which to situate the interplay of institutional and organizational forces. Conceptually, field is broader than industry, which usually refers to a set of equivalent firms that produce a similar product or service (Kenis and Knoke 2002)” (Narasimhan and Watson 2004: 59). The authors continue by asking: “how do fields evolve? That is, how do ‘those organizations...in the aggregate’ come to ‘constitute a recognized area of institutional life’?” (2004: 59). In referring to previous research that has examined central and periphery actors as “significant institutional change agents” (Narasimhan and Watson 2004: 59-60), the authors cite two seminal studies that discuss institutional fields: art museums in the United States (DiMaggio 1991) and the commercial broadcasting industry in the U.S. (Leblebici, Salancik, Copay and King 1991: 358). In relying on this extant literature, they ask specifically: “Who are the relevant actors in a field, and how do some of those actors situate themselves in

privileged positions? ... What is the structural means by which conflicting and complementary interests of central and peripheral actors are expressed and resolved?” (2004: 60). In order to answer these questions, Narasimhan and Watson analyze award rituals, which they argue are central elements for field evolution, given that “they are transorganizational structures embodying the interests of motivated social actors” (2004: 60). Transorganizational structures were first proposed by Paul DiMaggio and Walter Powell in “The Iron Cage Revisited: Institutional Isomorphism and Collective Rationality in Organizational Fields” (1983). Narasimhan and Watson’s interpretation of this concept of field structuration refers to such structures that allow,

A field to cohere by increasing interaction among a set of organizations, fostering the sharing of information-processing routines, engendering the formation of coalitions and patterns of domination, and heightening mutual awareness of being involved in a common enterprise (2004: 60).

For their study, the Grammy Awards provide an example of a structuring process for the field of commercial music (2004). It is the ritual of this awards ceremony that acts as a mechanism for determining the status of players within it (2004). They write,

The key contribution of our current work is showing *how* award ceremonies shape the evolution of fields. Drawing on Appadurai’s (1986) notion of “tournaments of value,” we refer to award ceremonies as “tournament rituals”. Participation in tournament rituals is both a privilege endowed upon influential social actors in an organizational field and an instrument of status contests among them. Peripheral actors who are sidelined or suppressed in the process are likely to covet inclusion since what is at stake in a tournament ritual includes status, fame, reputation, and professional worth (Goode, 1978) (Narasimhan and Watson 2004: 60).

The authors cite Rao’s study on the automobile industry (as discussed in the previous section) to illustrate the importance of rituals in perpetuating distinct logics within a given field. They write, “As Rao’s (1994) study shows, the enacting of fieldwide rituals requires institutional entrepreneurs to create self-serving logics and categories and to hold them up as appropriate” (2004: 62). An understanding of the shared values of a given field and their degree of “appropriate[ness]” to the logic of that field, continues to consistently reappear in literature relating to legitimacy (King and Whetten 2008; Deephouse and Carter 2005; Reay and Hinings 2009; Rindova 2005).

Both qualitative and quantitative methodologies were used in this study and focused on data from 1975 through until 1994 (Narasimhan and Watson 2004: 63).

Specific data resources included content analysis of texts in trade periodicals, specifically lead articles from *Billboard*, *Variety* and *Rolling Stone* magazines; an analysis of certified sales data from the Recording Industry Association of America, validating that “the most visible commercial impact of winning a Grammy award was improved record sales” (2004: 66); and 18 semi-structured interviews with various players from the music industry. These 18 interviewees included officials from the National Academy of Recording Arts and Sciences, Grammy award winners, record label executives, distribution firms and employees at *Billboard* magazine.

Following their data analysis, Narasimhan and Watson introduced four key analytical themes relating to ritual: “(i) as a ‘situated’ performance, (ii) as a focus on attention, (iii) as both a medium for and an outcome of conflict within the field, and (iv) as a mechanism for interlocking interaction of otherwise disparate social actors” (2004: 66). Overall, Narasimhan and Watson’s themes relate to the division between central and peripheral players in the field of commercial music. They cite Andrew Hoffman’s 1999 article, “Institutional evolution and change: Environmentalism and the U.S. chemical industry” with regard to the participation of peripheral actors, writing: “Hoffman (1999) argued that fields evolve when the patterns of participation and interlocks change to accommodate peripheral categories of actors. The three themes elucidated ... clearly reveal that the Grammy ritual involves the interests of artists who are the central actors in the commercial music field” (2004: 71).

Narasimhan and Watson’s findings illustrate that along with the participation of both central and periphery players as highlighted above, the conflict that emerges between these two groups is an important factor in field formation, specifically as it relates to accommodating change (2004). They reference Bourdieu’s (1993) argument that “the tension between the established and subdominant actors in a field is the source of variety in the production of symbolic goods” (2004: 76). These symbolic goods contribute to the evolution of the field, as illustrated in Narasimhan and Watson’s anecdote about the inclusion of rap music – a once peripheral genre – as an official category at the Grammy Awards (2004). They write,

Tournament rituals should be seen not only as a fieldwide mechanism for making sense of important goings-on, but also as a means for acknowledging, affirming, and adapting to significant changes in a field... The incorporation of rap music into the Grammy awards shows that the ritual as enacted served both to pass judgment on what was legitimate and to provide a forum for marginalized groups’ assertions about their relevance and centrality to the field (Kertzer 1988) (2004: 76).

In examining the notion of rituals, Narasimhan and Watson infer that what is at stake for peripheral players – in asserting their relevance to a specific field – is an accumulation of the same resources that comprise the logic of the field: “... inclusion into tournament rituals requires actors to use the available symbolic, political, and economic resources as material in constructing self-serving accounts of their own legitimacy (Friedland and Alford, 1991)” (2004: 76). Narasimhan and Watson conclude that given that fields are “cognitively constituted in the minds of field participants” (2004: 78), new industries are often overlooked as a result of limited cognitive legitimacy based on a consensus reached by central players. They cite Benedict Anderson’s seminal study in explaining this conflict of cognition as it relates to field formation:

In his celebrated study on ‘imagined communities’, Anderson (1991) concluded that the idea of a nation presupposes the existence of one and that nations tend to be only as stable as their citizens’ consensual imaginations will allow them to be. Following Anderson, we can argue that fields are cognitively constituted in the minds of field participants. Scholars need to better understand the mechanisms of collective cognition and sense-making that make a field real and consequential to its constituents (2004: 77-78).

Narasimhan and Watson’s study concludes that the availability of symbolic, political, and economic resources is crucial for peripheral players seeking status in the field of commercial music. Helmut K. Anheier, Jurgen Gerhards and Frank P. Romo’s work extends Narasimhan and Watson’s research by arguing that an examination of field formation and the inclusion of specific players over others should include Bourdieu’s social topography (1995).

In “Forms of Capital and Social Structure in Cultural Fields: Examining Bourdieu’s Social Topography”, Anheier et al., test Bourdieu’s theory of cultural fields, which states that a player’s status within a field is dependent on their endowment of cultural, economic and social capital (Bourdieu 1986). They write,

Within cultural fields, as in all others, actors are assumed to compete for social positions. This competition gives rise to social structure, which, understood here as a social topology, positions actors relative to each other according to the overall amounts and relative combinations of capital available to them (Bourdieu 1989; Muller 1985, p. 164). The topology is “so constructed that agents who occupy similar or neighboring positions are placed in similar conditions” (Bourdieu 1989, p.17), which in turn, makes such actors more likely to develop similar dispositions, interests, and habits (1995: 860).

Anheier et al.'s study seeks to provide empirical support for Bourdieu's theory that "differences in capital endowments are in fact related to the social topography (social structure) of cultural fields in a significant and meaningful way" (Anheier et al. 1995: 860). They test this theory on a group of writers and "literati" in Cologne, Germany, examining the relationship between forms of capital and social structure in the field of literature (1995). They test the social position of the German writers in their dataset according to the following factors: (i) market position; (ii) reputation; and (iii) organizational influence (2005: 861).

Anheier et al. begin their study by engaging in a "thought experiment" (1995: 865) in order to explore the relationship between forms of capital and social structure. In conducting this type of experiment, they relate "the dominant form of capital to two types of partitions in social structures: segmentation and hierarchy" (1995: 865). They define the two partitions in Figure 1.16.

Figure 1.16. The two types of partitions in social structures

TYPE	DEFINITION	EXAMPLE(S)
Segmentation	Refers to the number of relatively distinct, structurally separate, and unrelated parallel components of the social structure.	a) The distinctions between restricted and large-scale production of cultural goods
		b) The symbolic differences between "high culture" and "low culture", "serious literature" and "light literature"
Hierarchy	Refers to the extent to which partitions yield clusters of social positions in terms of status differences.	a) The positions of prominent writers as the elite and the unknown, "struggling" writers as the periphery

Source: Anheier, Helmut K., Jurgen Gerhards, Frank P. Romo. "Forms of Capital and Social Structure in Cultural Fields: Examining Bourdieu's Social Topography". *American Journal of Sociology*. 1995. p. 866

For each type of capital that Anheier et al. sought to analyze, they hypothesized a form of partition relating to both segmentation and hierarchy, as outlined in Figure 1.16 (1995: 866). They state:

Economic capital operating alone will result in a social structure characterized by low segmentation and strong hierarchies. Social capital by itself leads to high segmentation and weak hierarchies, and cultural capital produces strongly segmented and hierarchical social structures (1995: 866).

Anheier et al.'s data collection and research design focused on the social networks among 222 writers living in Cologne (1995: 869). This is the total population of writers living in the city (1995). Using a semi-standardized questionnaire, the researchers conducted personal interviews with 67.6% of the writers (1995: 870). In order to measure the existing social network among these 222 writers, Anheier et al.,

presented the subjects with a complete list of all the writers in Cologne and asked them four questions relating to the type of ties they had with other members in the network (1995: 870). Anheier et al. referred to this method as “aided-recall” (1995).

The questions were as followed:

1. Familiarity with the work of other writers (AWARENESS): “On this list, would you please check the names of those authors whose work is familiar to you?”
2. Friendships ties to other writers (FRIENDSHIP): “On this list, would you please check the names of those authors whom you consider as friends?”
3. Received help and assistance from other writers (ASSISTANCE; results are derived from a Boolean union of the following two questions): “On this list, would you please check the names of those authors with whom you have discussed manuscripts in the past?” “On this list, would you please check the names of those authors who were helpful in establishing contacts with publishers?”
4. Loyalty and reference ties (INVITATION): “On this list, would you please check the names of those writers you would like to invite for dinner?” (1995: 870-871).

Following the collection of this data and in constructing four binary matrices (1995: 871), Anheier et al. were able to identify the hierarchical structure of the writers along with their degree of capital (1995). They concluded that there was “strong support” (1995: 892) for Bourdieu’s theory of cultural fields. Specifically, they identified that in examining the social structure of writers in Cologne, “cultural capital proved the dominant factor in the differentiation of social positions” (1995: 892).

From the literature reviewed in this section, I will be focusing on field formation, specifically identifying embeddedness and ties to elites (Cattani, Ferriani and Allison 2014); the use of available resources within a field, be it symbolic, political and/or economic (Narasimhan and Watson 2004); and, how social positions within fields are solidified based on relative combinations of available capital (Anheier, Gerhards and Romo 1995). The role of stakeholders within a field (as introduced by Rindova et al. 1995) is also discussed by the authors cited above in terms of the development of a social topology whereby a consensus reached by central players becomes an important indicator of legitimacy (Narasimhan and Watson 2004). I seek to examine how this occurs and how it contributes to an organization’s embeddedness within a given field and/or subfield. The next section of this chapter will review work relating specifically to the field of journalism and types of capital.

VI. Situating the field of journalism and the role of capital

In examining media organizations, Rodney Benson argues that it is important for researchers to rely on field theory in order to conduct research which will provide a holistic understanding of the dynamics occurring within this unique ecology: “‘The field’ opens up a new unit of analysis for media research: the entire universe of journalists and media organizations acting and reacting in relation to one another” (2005: 11).

Benson adds that in order for an entity to dominate a field and subsequently gain legitimacy, it must have specific resources, such as capital:

Organizations or individuals who dominate a field are generally those who successfully convert one form into the other and in doing so, amass both ‘social capital’ or friendship and colleague networks, and ‘symbolic capital’ through which their dominance is legitimated (2005: 4).

This process of conversion will be discussed in detail in my empirical chapters: as I set out to explain how the use of social and symbolic capital provides online news organizations with the resources necessary for legitimation within the subfield of online journalism. As Wiik argues, “The actors of a field compete with each other to attain legitimate power within that field. They do this by [an] accumulation of symbolic capital, which is most easily explained as attributes acknowledged by other actors and in relation to specific field rules” (2009: 353).

In examining the field of journalism, Bourdieu refers to it as a unique ecology that operates according to a variety of factors, both internal and external:

Journalism is a microcosm with its own laws, defined both by its position in the world at large and by the attractions and repulsions to which it is subject from other such microcosms. To say that it is independent or autonomous, that it has its own laws, is to say that what happens in it cannot be understood by looking only at external factors (1998: 39).

In *On Television and Journalism*, Bourdieu analyzes TF1, a French broadcasting corporation, highlighting the importance of considering a news organization’s location within a “universe of objective relations between the different, competing television networks” (1998: 39). With his study focusing on the conflicts between television and print journalism, he posits that the role of competition in such a conflict can lead to the formation of complex power dynamics within the field. He explains,

Competitors within a given field often have polemical images of one another. They produce stereotypes about one another and insults as well... These

images are often strategies that take into account and make use of power relationships, which they aim to transform or preserve. These days, print journalists, in particular those who occupy a dominated position within this sphere (that is, those who write for lesser newspapers and are in lesser positions) are elaborating a discourse that is highly critical of television (1998: 49).

Bourdieu's reference to those "occupy[ing] a dominated position" (1998: 49) within the field illustrates that a specific standard is being imposed on those occupying a subordinate position, enforcing a discourse of what is considered to be "correct" journalism (Bourdieu 1998). Foreman, Whetten and Mackey refer to this need for "correctness" as an essential element of legitimacy:

Legitimacy is a judgment of the appropriateness of the organization as an example of a social type, form, category, or role. This evaluation of "correctness" is guided by the criteria of fit or similarity – that is, the degree to which an organization's attributes and behaviors are consistent with its pronouncements about "what kind of organization we are"... Said another way, legitimacy is an assessment of identity with respect to what is *required* – what every organization of a particular form, or performing a particular role, must do (2012: 184).

Their understanding of legitimacy extends from Bourdieu's work in *On Television and Journalism*, which highlights the relative importance of shared values – referred to in the above quote as "an organization's attributes and behaviours" – in the field of journalism. As he states: "In each field, the university, history, whatever, there are those who dominate and those who are dominated according to the values internal to that field" (1998: 57). These internal values will be further understood in examining Bourdieu's use of different types of "capital", a concept that helps explain in a structured way the production and reproduction of shared values with the field (Bourdieu 1986: 241).

Bourdieu sees capital as assuming "three fundamental guises" (1986: 242): economic, cultural and social:

Capital, which, in its objectified or embodied forms, takes time to accumulate and which, as a potential capacity to produce profits and to reproduce itself in identical or expanded form, contains a tendency to persist in its being, is a force inscribed in the objectivity of things so that everything is not equally possible or impossible. And the structure of the distribution of the different types and subtypes of capital at a given moment in time represents the immanent structure of the social world, i.e., the set of constraints, inscribed in the very reality of that world, which governs its functioning in a durable way, determining the chances of success for practices (1986: 241).

Capital is the currency exchanged in a given field (Bourdieu 1986). Bourdieu refers to economic capital as being “immediately and directly convertible into money and may be institutionalized in the form of property rights” (1986: 242). Cultural capital is “convertible, in certain conditions, into economic capital and may be institutionalized in the form of educational qualifications” (1986: 242). Social capital comprises social obligations: “connections which [are] convertible, in certain conditions, into economic capital and may be institutionalized in the form of a title of nobility” (1986: 242). He adds that social capital is also “the aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance or recognition” (1985: 248). Alejandro Portes, author of “Social Capital: Its Origins and Applications in Modern Sociology”, extends Bourdieu’s definition by commenting specifically on the role of social capital within an individual’s social network; he argues that it is “not a natural given and must be constructed through investment strategies, oriented to the institutionalization of group relations, usable as a reliable source of other benefits” (2000: 43). Symbolic capital, while not referred to above as one of the “three fundamental guises” of capital, is an important concept in Bourdieu’s work. As Wiik notes, “Bourdieu theorized mainly on economic and cultural capital, including resources such as money, property, education and titles. Symbolic capital hence includes all other forms of capital regarded as legitimate in the field (Skeggs 1997)” (2009: 353). Symbolic capital, according to John B. Thompson in *Merchants of Culture*, refers to “the accumulated prestige and status” (Thompson 2010: 6) associated with a given entity. Figure 1.17 illustrates an operational model of forms of capital and social structure, as presented by Anheier, Gerhards and Romo (1995)

Figure 1.17. An operational model of forms of capital and social structure in cultural fields (Anheier, Gerhards, Romo, 1995)

Forms of Capital	Basic Distinction	Major Currency	Degree of Segmentation	Degree of Hierarchy	Indicators
Economic	Monetary success versus failure	Money	Weak	Strong	Economic status
Social	Member versus nonmember	Social contacts and connections	Strong	Weak	Membership
Cultural	Recognition versus indifference	Prestige	Strong	Strong	Reputation, Education
Symbolic Cultural	Art versus non-art	Legitimation	Strong	Strong	Genre hierarchies

Source: Anheier, Helmut K., Jurgen Gerhards, and Frank P. Romo. "Forms of Capital and Social Structure in Cultural Fields: Examining Bourdieu's Social Topography". *American Journal of Sociology*. Vol. 100, No. 4, 1995, pp. 859-903

Within each field, different types of capital are prioritized (Bourdieu 1986). In examining the priorities of the field of journalism, Angela Phillips notes that within this field, there is an emphasis on the ability to influence:

Within the "field" of journalism, cultural capital (the ability to define and influence events) is prized. So newspapers are keen at least to provide the appearance of independence. In reality, with the exception of the *Guardian*, which is owned by a trust, all British newspapers are owned by large, commercially driven companies, but the logic of elite (as opposed to popular) newspapers requires that the need to please shareholders must always be balanced by the need to maintain influence (2010: 89).

In her paper, Phillips recounts her interviews with journalists at national and provincial newspapers. She asks them to identify a story which they considered significant: "Journalists interviewed (on both national and provincial press) always referred to ones which they had found themselves, which were original and usually followed up with a considerable amount of research" (2010: 90-91). Phillips proceeds to cite Bourdieu's concept of differentiating oneself in order to gain capital:

Bourdieu (2005: 40) suggests that this need to differentiate is critical for journalists' perception of themselves ... "To exist in the field is to differentiate oneself. [...] Falling into undifferentiatedness [...] means losing existence" (Bourdieu 2005: 40) (2010: 91).

The notion of differentiating oneself in order to exist within a given field is an important concept in field formation that deserves further examination specifically in analyzing how emerging online news organizations become recognized by incumbents in the field of journalism as worthy of being a subfield of their field. This

section has reviewed literature relating to the role of capital in determining the values of the field of journalism, briefly introducing the notion of converting social capital into symbolic capital: “Organizations or individuals who dominate a field are generally those who successfully convert one form (of capital) into the other” (Benson 2005: 4). I will be re-examining the conversion of capital in the subfield of online journalism to determine if the same laws apply with regard to achieving legitimacy. For Foreman, Whetten and Mackey, legitimacy is based on an evaluation of an organization’s identity: “Legitimacy is an assessment of identity with respect to what is *required* – what every organization of a particular form, or performing a particular role, must do” (2012: 184). As a result, it is essential that an assessment of this evolving online space consider the accumulation of varying degrees of capital and how it contributes to an organization’s identity. The final section of this chapter will outline how the next six chapters of my dissertation will attempt to solve the empirical puzzle of how a nascent organization becomes part of a subfield.

VII. Outlining the study

Many scholars have examined the consumption patterns of online media, tracking the public’s diet of online news; however, the internal infrastructure of the field, specifically the blurring of boundaries between the field of journalism and an emerging subfield has often been overlooked by scholars. Many have noted the implications of digital changes in the industry (Preston 2009: 40), the allegedly fluid transition that is taking place within this space (Brock 2013), and the emergence of a “networked media era” (Russell 2011: 23) that positions legacy journalism, online media and blogs alongside one another (2011: 22). In this dissertation, I propose to systemically re-examine the structure of the field of journalism, focusing on where and how online news organizations are positioned within this contested space. Specifically: How does an online news organization become a legitimate member of the subfield of online journalism?

For the sake of this study, “online news organizations” will refer to organizations that produce and disseminate news items through the Internet; they do not have an offline equivalent. Online news organizations are made up of editors, journalists, and business departments, similar to any media organization, but their content is disseminated solely online. I will also refer to the term “blog” and “blogging”, derived from “web log”, a diary-like entry logged onto the World Wide

Web. Blog posts appear in reverse chronological order and provide commentary on a wide variety of topics. For the purposes of this study, I will define a blog as a web journal or web stream of reverse chronological postings by the author, who typically serves as writer, editor and publisher all at once. It also features open comments and an engagement with the audience.

The next chapter will describe the research methodology that I used in this study, introduce my case studies and highlight the methodological implications of examining online news organizations. The following chapter will discuss my conceptual framework, situating its relevance to the study and its role in determining the legitimizing practices employed by my online news organizations. I will illustrate how the framework was developed based on my case study methodology and by reviewing related extant literature. My empirical chapters will focus in turn on the key legitimizing factors that I discovered both during my time in the field and by analyzing the work conducted by both media sociologists and organizational theorists. Chapters Four through Six will each discuss the application of one of the values of the logic of the subfield of online journalism (introduced as the *proximity paradigm* in Chapter Three), and its use by my case study organizations: *Breitbart.com*, *The Drudge Report* and *The Huffington Post*.

Overall, my empirical chapters will attempt to illustrate how the three tenets of the proximity paradigm are linked together: not only because they are representative of the “internal values” of the subfield of online journalism – as revealed in my research interviews – but, because each case study relied on converting varying degrees of social capital into symbolic capital in order to establish (in their own way) a legitimate position in the subfield of online journalism. Finally, Chapter Seven will address some remaining questions about the legitimation of online journalism, research implications, potential areas for future research, and my broader contributions to the field of sociology.

Chapter 2: Digital natives and case study research

If we are to understand how online news organizations have emerged as key sources for information over recent years, we must analyze this space in all its complexities in order to uncover how they went about gaining legitimacy. Accordingly, I conducted qualitative research – specifically case study research – at traditional news organizations and online news organizations in the United States (see Appendix I for a list of all interviews conducted). This included informal and formal interviews and archival research. This chapter will outline the methodology employed during my study and provide a context for how I perceive the structure of the subfield of online journalism.

I relied on Kathleen Eisenhardt’s “Case Study Research” (1989) methodology as the starting point for my study. As Eisenhardt states, “the case study is a research strategy that focuses on understanding the dynamics present within single settings” (1989: 534). She argues that the employment of case study research is fundamental to organizational research and “especially appropriate in new topic areas” (1989: 532). Therefore, it seemed fitting to apply her case study methodology to my research on the emerging subfield of online news organizations. According to Eisenhardt,

Case studies typically combine data collection methods such as archives, interviews, questionnaires, and observations. The evidence may be qualitative (e.g., words), quantitative (e.g., numbers) or both... Finally, case studies can be used to accomplish various aims: to provide description (Kidder, 1982), test theory (Pinfield, 1986; Anderson 1983), or generate theory (e.g., Gersick, 1988; Harris & Sutton, 1986) (1989: 534-535).

The first section (I) of this chapter will provide a detailed explanation of why I chose to conduct case study research (Eisenhardt 1989) and how it contributed to my conceptual framework (to be introduced in Chapter Three). I will also highlight the importance of examining organizations which occupy polarized political positions in the subfield of online journalism: “The cases may be chosen to replicate previous cases or extend emergent theory, or they may be chosen to fill theoretical categories and provide examples of polar types” (Eisenhardt 1989: 537). The following section (II) will discuss my selection of online news organizations: “Selection of cases is an important aspect of building theory from case studies. As in hypothesis testing research, the concept of a population is crucial, because the population defines the set of entities from which the research sample is to be drawn” (Eisenhardt 1989: 537).

The third section (III) outlines my research design illustrating how my chosen methodology contributed to the conceptual development of my study with regard to how players legitimize their status within the subfield of online journalism: “Case study researchers according to Flyvberg (2004: 294) seek to transcend this problem of relevance by anchoring their research in the context studied” (Onatu 2013: 171). The following sections (IV-VI) will provide background information on the three organizations I selected, situating each organization in a political and social context. Understanding the early days of each organization I examined was an essential part in preparing for fieldwork. As John Van Maanen reflects in *Tales of the Field*, “Fieldwork asks the researcher, as far as possible, to share firsthand the environment, problems, background, language, rituals, and social relations of a more-or-less bounded and specified group of people” (1988: 3). The following section (VII) discusses notions of access and the role of gatekeepers in gaining or prohibiting entry to the field:

Central elements of access are gatekeepers. These people can help or hinder research depending upon their personal thoughts on the validity of the research and its value, as well as their approach to the welfare of the people under their charge (Reeves 2010: 317).

I will be reflecting on how I gained access to both online and offline news organizations, relying on my previous experience of working professionally in the media industry. Given my background, I knew that the industry was predominantly a networked community controlled by publicists. As a result, I brought my own biased interpretation to my time in the field:

Fieldwork constructs now are seen by many to emerge from a hermeneutic process; fieldwork is an interpretive act, not an observational or descriptive one (Agar, 1986). This process begins with the explicit examination of one’s own preconceptions, biases, and motives, moving forwards in a dialectic fashion toward understanding by way of a continuous dialogue between the interpreter and interpreted” (Van Maanen 1988: 93).

Sections VIII – X chronicle my experiences as a fieldworker in Los Angeles, New York and Washington, D.C., and the overlap of data analysis and data collection that took place during those six months:

One conventional and strategic definition of fieldwork is the “method that throws the researcher directly into the life-worlds under investigation and requires the careful recording (through fieldnotes) of the problematic and

routine features of that world” (Denzin, 1981). Such a view raises the analytic position of fieldnotes and the recording of observations, conversations, and so forth to a very high, almost sacred level (Van Maanen 1988: 117).

The role of my fieldnotes in conducting case study research cannot be overlooked. Conducting both informal and formal interviews led me to the specific themes that comprise my theoretical framework and can be seen in Appendix II where I have included copies of my notes from the field. Specifically, the richest data that I collected in the field occurred during informal conversations with my interviewees as they provided anecdotal accounts of their experiences in the industry. Henry Mintzberg views the role of anecdotal data captured during fieldwork as an essential element for theory building (Mintzberg 1979). He writes,

For while the systematic data create the foundation for our theories, it is the anecdotal data that enable us to do the building. Theory building seems to require rich description, the richness that comes from anecdote. We uncover all kinds of relationships in our hard data, but it is only through the use of this soft data that we are able to explain them (1979: 587).

The final two sections (XI and XII) of this chapter examine the methodological limitations and the ethical issues discovered during my fieldwork.

I. Case study research

In her seminal article “Building Theories from Case Study Research”, Eisenhardt discusses case study research projects conducted by other scholars in order to illustrate the variety of methods that exist under the category of “inductive case study research”. Figure 2.0 highlights seven inductive case study research projects that Eisenhardt selected based on “recent organizational writing” (1989: 535). In order to illustrate the relevance of this methodology to my study of online news organizations, I included my dissertation at the end of the table. Throughout this chapter, I will further outline the specifics as to why I chose to employ this methodology.

Figure 2.0. Recent examples of case study research

Study	Description of Cases	Research Problem	Data Sources	Investigators	Output
Burgelman (1983)	6 internal corporate ventures in 1 major corporation	Management of new ventures	Archives Interviews Some observation	Single investigator	Process model linking multiple organizational levels
Mintzberg & McHugh (1985)	1 National Film Board of Canada, 1939-1975, with 6 periods	Formulation of strategy in an adhocracy	Archives Some interviews	Research team	Strategy-making themes, "grassroots" model of strategy formation
Harris & Sutton (1986)	8 diverse organizations	Parting ceremonies during organization death	Interviews Archives	Research team	Conceptual framework about the functions of parting ceremonies for displaced members
Eisenhardt & Bourgeois (1988)	8 microcomputer firms	Strategic decision making in high velocity environments	Interviews Questionnaires Archives Some observation	Research team Tandem interviews	Mid-range theory linking power, politics, and firm performance
Gersick (1988)	8 project groups with deadline	Group development in project teams	Observation Some interviews	Single investigator	Punctuated equilibrium model of group development
Leonard-Barton (1988)	10 technical innovations	Internal technology transfer	Interviews Experiment Observation	Single investigator	Process model
Pettigrew (1988)	1 high performing & 1 low performing firm in each of 4 industries	Strategic change & competitiveness	Interviews Archives Some observation	Research teams	In progress

Source: Eisenhardt, Kathleen. "Building Theories from Case Study Research". *The Academy of Management Review*. October 1989. p. 535

Brooks (2016)	3 online news organizations in 1 industry	Achieving organizational legitimacy	Interviews Archives	Single investigator	Conceptual framework about the mechanisms for legitimation in an emerging subfield
---------------	---	-------------------------------------	------------------------	---------------------	--

Numerous scholars have critically analyzed Eisenhardt's methodology, attempting to locate its appropriateness in social science research (Onatu 2013). According to Robert Yin, the case study method "allows investigators to retain holistic and meaningful characteristics of real-life events-such as individual life cycles, small group behavior, organizational change, school performance, international relations, and maturation of industries" (2004: 4). Similar to Yin, scholars such as Benbasat et al (1987: 369 cited in Woodside 2010) view case study research as a viable methodology for examining evolving industries, such as research on information systems:

Firstly, the researcher can study information systems in natural settings, learn about the state of the art, and generate theories from practice. Secondly, the case method allows the researcher to answer "how" and "why" questions, that is, to understand the nature and complexities of the processes taking place. Thirdly, a case approach is an appropriate way to research an area in which few previous studies have been carried out" (Onatu 2013: 170-171).

Given the evolving field of journalism, specifically the growing subfield of online journalism, case study research as a methodology is an applicable strategy to my dissertation as it provides an understanding of the legitimation of three polarized online news organizations in a single setting: the emerging subfield of online journalism and its overlap with the maturing field of journalism. As Onatu notes,

... There are some strengths of case study [research] as it enables the researcher to gain a holistic view of a certain phenomenon or series of events and can provide a round picture since many sources of evidence were used. The capturing of the emergent and immanent properties of life in organizations and the ebb and flow of organization activity by the use of case study, especially where it is changing very fast as information technology has come to bear is another advantage (2013: 171).

In order to systematically analyze the subfield of online journalism – a contested space comprised of varying relations of power – I adopted Eisenhardt's methodological approach as it provided me with the necessary tools to develop a theoretical framework that would address the mechanisms required for legitimation. Figure 2.1 illustrates Eisenhardt's theory building strategy.

Figure 2.1. Process of building theory from case study research

STEP	ACTIVITY	REASON
Getting Started	Definition of research question	Focuses efforts
	Possibility of a priori constructs	Provides better grounding of construct measures
		Retains theoretical flexibility
Selecting Cases	Specified population	Constrains extraneous variation and sharpens external validity
	Theoretical, not random, sampling	Focuses efforts on the theoretical useful cases – i.e., those that replicate or extend theory by filling conceptual categories
Crafting Instruments and Protocols	Multiple data collection methods	Strengthens grounding of theory by triangulation of evidence
	Qualitative and quantitative data combined	Synergistic view of evidence
	Multiple investigators	Fosters divergent perspectives and strengthens grounding
Entering the Field	Overlap data collection and analysis, including field notes	Speeds analyses and reveals helpful adjustments to data collection
	Flexible and opportunistic data collection methods	Allows investigators to take advantage of emergent themes and unique case features
Analyzing Data	Within-case analysis	Gains familiarity with data and preliminary theory generation
	Cross-case pattern search using divergent techniques	Forces investigators to look beyond initial impressions and see evidence thru multiple lenses
Sharing Hypotheses	Iterative tabulation of evidence for each construct	Sharpens construct definition, validity, and measurability
	Replication, not sampling, logic across cases	Confirms, extends and sharpens theory
	Search evidence for “why” behind relationships	Builds internal validity
Enfolding Literature	Comparison with conflicting literature	Builds internal validity, raises theoretical level, and sharpens construct definitions
	Comparison with similar literature	Sharpens generalizability, improves construct definition, and raises theoretical level
Reaching Closure	Theoretical saturation when possible	Ends process when marginal improvement becomes small

Source: Eisenhardt, Kathleen. “Building Theories from Case Study Research”. *The Academy of Management Review*. October 1989. p. 533

Deciding to use her case study research approach began with my central research question: “how does an online news organization become a legitimate member of the subfield of online journalism?” According to Yin (see Figure 2.2.) and Onatu, research questions that centre on “how” and “why” are prime candidates, along with other criteria, for case study research:

The research question that focuses on “how” and “why” favours the use of case studies, histories, and experiments as the preferred research methods. This is because such questions deal with operational links needing to be traced over time, rather than mere frequencies or incidence. They deal with phenomenal issues with real life context (Yin 1994). By focusing on the “how” and “what” question, we tend to benefit from the descriptive powers of the social sciences methods and thus obtain stories which can be used to find out about the “why” (Onatu 2013: 172).

Figure 2.2. Deciding to use case study research

Types	From Research	Required Control	Focus on Contemporary Events
Experiment	How, Why?	Yes	Yes
Survey	Who, What, Where, How many, How much?	No	Yes
Archival Analysis	Who, What, Where, How many, How much?	No	No
History	How, Why?	No	No
Case Study	How, Why?	No	Yes

Source: Yin, R.K. *Case Study Research: Design and Methods*. 4th Edition. Volume 5. Thousand Oaks, California: Sage Publications, 2009, p. 80

Figure 2.2 outlines the three requirements for conducting case study research: “(a) the type of research posed (b) the extent of the control an investigator has over actual behavioural events and (c) the degree of focus on contemporary as opposed to historical events” (Onatu 2013: 171). As a research instrument, a case study needs to follow a precise protocol that involves, according to Yin, specific tools (see Figure 2.3). Appendix III contains the four categories of tools that I employed during my time in the field.

Figure 2.3. Procedures, protocols and tools required for case study research

An overview of the case study project (objectives, issues, topics being investigated)
Field procedures (credentials and access to sites, sources of information)
Case study questions (specific questions that the investigator must keep in mind during data collection)
A guide for case study report (outline, format for the narrative)

Source: Yin, R.K. *Case Study Research: Design and Methods*. 2nd Edition. Thousand Oaks, California: Sage Publications, 1994, p. 64

In conducting case study research, I undertook the following practices: immersing myself in the journalism industry by moving to three relevant geographic locations (Los Angeles, New York and Washington, D.C.); sitting in on meetings (at the organizations); conducting interviews; engaging in informal conversations; taking detailed field notes; analyzing the interviews; conducting archival research through daily “Google Alerts” on each case study and examining relevant literature relating to them. It was important for my study to collect longitudinal data, specifically information from popular media as it provided an additional perspective to understanding this evolving subfield, given that peer recognition (Bourdieu 1998) is an important part of the field of journalism; this will be discussed in Chapter Three. Therefore an examination of the discourses relating to my case studies was required. According to Steensen, research on online journalism “suffers from a methodological deficiency” (2011: 322). He encourages scholars conducting research in this area to use qualitative research, identifying the merits of longitudinal data: “The empirical material is seldom of longitudinal character. This seems to be a flaw considering the swift development of online journalism... Qualitative approaches are rarely utilized” (2011: 322).

My data collection practices evolved during my time in the field, which according to Eisenhardt, is a common occurrence when conducting case study research:

Additional adjustments can be made to data collection instruments, such as the addition of questions to an interview protocol or questions to a questionnaire (e.g. Harris & Sutton, 1986). These adjustments allow the researcher to probe emergent themes or to take advantage of special opportunities which may be

present in a given situation. In other situations adjustments can include the addition of data sources in selected cases (1989: 539).

I conducted close to 200 hours of interviews during my 6 months in the field (August 2011 to January 2012); while my dissertation focuses on three case studies, I also interviewed individuals external to the case study organizations, in order to gain an in-depth understanding of the various roles played by different online news organizations within this space. It should be noted that my study does not include websites that repurpose offline content for the Web. Websites of established news organizations, such as *The New York Times* or *The Washington Post*, were not included in my research, as it cannot be assumed that the factors which shape (digitally native) online news organizations will be the same as those that shape the activities of online versions of offline media.

In examining online news organizations from the perspective of the power relations internal to the subfield of online journalism, it was advantageous to use a case study research method. Given the relationship-based space in which I conducted my research, it was essential that my chosen methodology aligned with the manner in which business was conducted within this space. At the outset of my fieldwork, I predicted that in order to present myself as a legitimate researcher studying the industry, I would have to cite my relationships with known individuals as a means of justifying why a given subject should be interviewed by me. I initially undervalued this emphasis on social capital as a researcher; but after a few weeks in the field, I soon realized that this was the currency in which relational transactions took place. If one did not have a connection to someone, one did not get in. I quickly appreciated that this initially frustrating mandate was in fact one of the main tenets that held together this unique space. As Van Maanen states,

Authors must discuss their pre-understandings of the studied scene as well as their own interests in that scene; their modes of entry, sustained participation or presence, and exit procedures; the responses of others on the scene to their presence (and vice versa); the nature of their relationship with various categories of informants; and their modes of data collection, storage, retrieval and analysis (1988: 94).

With regard to data collection, my interviews focused on attempting to gain an understanding of the motivations of the interviewees in terms of how they see their role and how they define the parameters of the field. While my dissertation focuses on

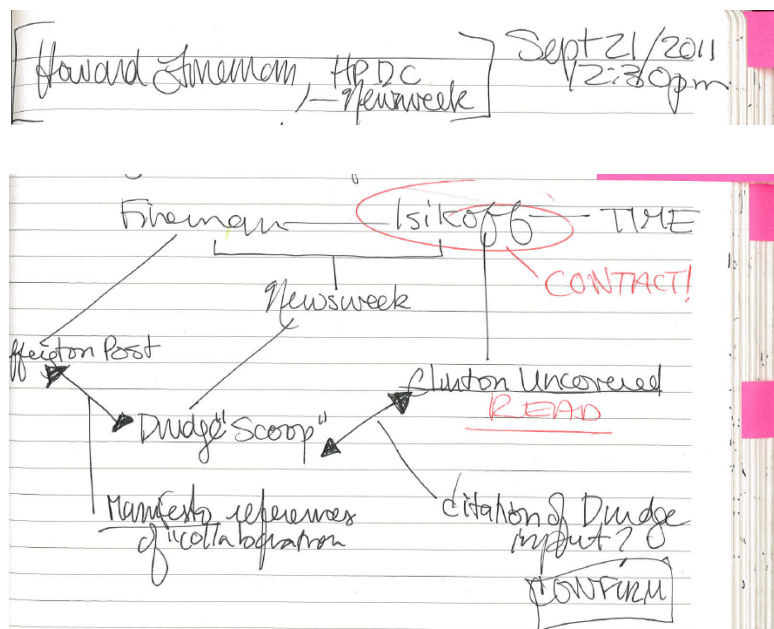
three case studies, I also interviewed individuals external to the case study organizations, in order to gain an in-depth understanding of the various roles played by different online news organizations within this space. Formal interviews were conducted in both a structured and semi-structured method, applying a pre-determined and consistent set of questions. The formal interview would become semi-structured if I asked an unanticipated follow-up question following one of the interviewee's responses. The informal interviews were unstructured and occurred during a candid and spontaneous moment while I was observing the interviewees in their natural environment. Informal interviews regularly occurred when the subject (i.e. the interviewee) and I would be walking from point A to point B, often between the building reception and their office. The informal interviews allowed the interviewee to be more casual as the questions often stemmed from our surrounding environment and my interest in it.

Arksey and Knight view interviewing as “a powerful way of helping people to make explicit things that have hitherto been implicit – to articulate their tacit perceptions, feelings and understandings” (1999: 32). In order to understand the perspective of my interviewees, it was important to interview as many people on the editorial staff as possible at their organizations. In addition, I conducted supplementary interviews with non-editorial staff: specifically employees working in the legal, financial and advertising departments. My motivation for interviewing both editorial and non-editorial staff was to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the organizations: tracking the results from my interviews with the answers from other departments within the same organization. Over the course of my interviews, I began to notice the distinct overlap that existed between departments; and as a result, I modified my interview questions as my understanding of the organization's mandate began to take shape.

I will explain in section II how I selected the organizations and how my initial roster of organizations changed as I learned more about the incestuous sharing of resources that exists between many of the organizations. Understanding the power relations internal to the subfield of online journalism sheds light on the overlapping networks that exist within this space: which resulted in an adaptive methodological approach, encouraging a more investigative element than I had initially anticipated.

Given the schedules of my interviewees, there was often an overlap in interviews. For example, I could have an interview with an employee at *The Huffington Post* in the morning and another in the afternoon with an individual who had a first-hand encounter with Matt Drudge. This individual might then reference another individual whom he/she thinks I should interview, and thus the theoretical sampling continues. This is demonstrated during my formal interview over lunch with Howard Fineman. I had informally interviewed Fineman while I conducted interviews at *The Huffington Post* office in Washington, D.C. It was not until we formally met for a three-hour lunch that he shared his experience working as the Senior Washington Correspondent at *Newsweek* during the Clinton-Lewinsky scandal. While I will be analyzing the scandal in depth in Chapter Four, my interactions with Fineman over lunch provided me with significant insight into the networked nature of the field of journalism. Figure 2.4 is a scanned copy of my field notes from my interview with Fineman on September 21, 2011, illustrating the case study strategy of investigating additional data sources in order to further understand my research setting. The idea to interview Michael Isikoff was based on Fineman's comment about his tenure at *Newsweek*, where Isikoff worked and uncovered the scandal.

Figure 2.4. Field notes from interview with Howard Fineman: Sept. 21, 2011



According to Eisenhardt, data overlapping is a common occurrence in case study research:

Overlapping data analysis with data collection not only gives the researcher a head start in analysis but, more importantly, allows researchers to take advantage of flexible data collection. Indeed, a key feature of theory-building case research is the freedom to make adjustments during the data collection process. These adjustments can be the addition of cases to probe particular themes which emerge (1989: 539).

My interview questions were based on four guides: a) case study organizations; b) non-case study organizations; c) political players; d) field experts. The guides are reproduced in Appendix IV. Within each, questions are further divided according to editorial and non-editorial sections. The interview questions that appear in these guides inquire about the organization's business structure, the editorial decision-making process, demographics, perceived readership details, competitor influence, and company structure. The political player guide was based on associative inquiries: attempts to understand the affiliation between online news organizations and the Democratic and Republican parties. The expert guide was based on questions that I asked leading academics within this space. The questions were often follow-ups to published works; articles that had appeared in one of the online news organizations being examined; and/or experts referenced during interviews with other subjects. All interview guides were semi-structured, divided according to general topics I wished to address. The combination of archival data, and formal and informal interviews contributed to the investigative nature of my research, as each interview led me to consider a new set of questions about the inner workings of this space.

Each interviewee was required to sign a consent form (see Appendix V) that I drafted, which outlined the degree of anonymity that he or she wished to have. Given that I was interviewing many high profile individuals, it was important that they agreed to be quoted by name. While some interviewees agreed to this, the majority chose to remain anonymous, while others requested a copy of their interview transcript so that they could review its contents. After doing this, I did not receive any follow-up requests to change any transcript. In total, I conducted 181 interviews: 128 formal interviews and 53 informal interviews. For those who wished to remain anonymous as part of this study, I noted their gender and title at each organization; providing further details of their identity would breach their anonymity. For example, a female reporter at *The Huffington Post* who wished to be cited anonymously is referenced in this dissertation as: "HPF23". "HP" refers to *The Huffington Post*; "F"

refers to the gender of the interviewee (male or female); and the number refers to the order in which he/she was interviewed at the organization. After having left the field, I understood why many of my interviewees declined to be formally cited; given that many journalists are often moving on from one organization to the next, few wanted their opinions attributed to them. In fact, three years after having completed my fieldwork, many of my interviewees are employed at another media organization, further reinforcing the constantly evolving and incestuous nature of the field of journalism and its online subfield.

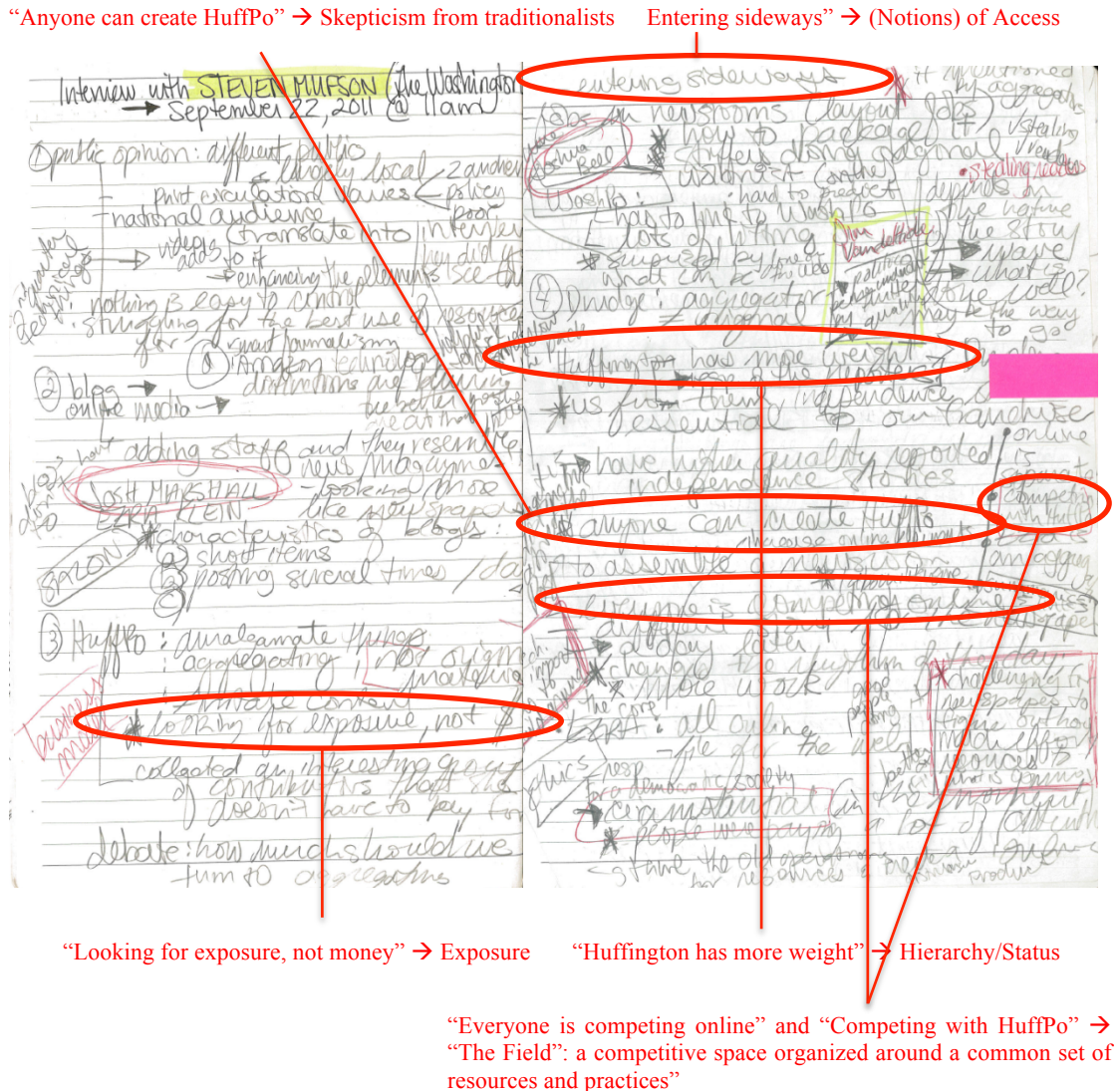
In terms of employing a systematic approach to my case study research, I developed a method of critical note-taking and analysis that became a thematic navigational tool with which to understand the subfield of online journalism. Following each day in the field, I would return home and highlight key words that appeared in my notebook from each interview. As well as audio recording the interviews, I also took copious amounts of notes. Each day, I took what I termed “the words of the day” (the words frequently repeated by my interviewees), and added them to a list at the back of my notebook which would help map out the key themes slowly developing through the fieldwork process. Upon returning from my fieldwork, I transcribed all 181 interviews. Following transcription, I printed out all transcripts and coded each of them for references to peer or public recognition, as will be discussed in Chapter Three in reference to Bourdieu’s “principle of legitimation” (1998: 70). With these references, I matched my transcribed interviews with the “words of the day”, coded them along with my supplementary field notes and began to write up these categories (to be introduced in Chapter Three) as distinct elements of what I identified as the logic of the subfield of online journalism (referred to in this study as the *proximity paradigm*).

Within these categories, I noticed that the concept of legitimacy was being raised in some form or another by my interviewees. There are a lot of questions to ask about this online space and its relationship to the field of journalism, but I focus on the notion of legitimacy, as will be defined in detail in the next chapter. What I saw in my research is that online news organizations were leveraging their resources in a variety of ways, exhibiting some of the shared values from the field of journalism (see Appendix VI). I will illustrate in my empirical chapters that the online news

organizations examined in this dissertation are operating in part according to the rules of the game (as identified by Bourdieu's *principles of legitimation*) and according to a new logic that has emerged in the ambiguous grey area that exists between the field of journalism and the blogosphere. It is within this contested space that this new and emerging logic is taking shape. The legitimacy of these online new organizations is contested because they occupy a position that overlaps both the field of journalism and the blogosphere.

In attempting to identify the logic of the subfield of online journalism, I came to the realization that this emerging logic was based on the accumulation of social capital (specifically the use of networking) and symbolic capital (affiliated prestige, status and reputation). Figure 2.5 references a scanned copy of my fieldwork notes from my interview with Steven Mufson, Deputy Editor of *The Washington Post's* Outlook section. They illustrate key themes that were mentioned during our two and half hour interview and subsequently contributed to my theoretical framework. These themes as highlighted in the figure below are: (i) exposure; (ii) access; (iii) status; (iv) competition; (v) skepticism.

Figure 2.5. From fieldwork to theory: Emerging themes from Steven Mufson’s interview



As a result of this sampling technique, I discovered that many of the themes listed above were repeated by a variety of my interviewees both from the chosen case studies and others in the field of journalism and the subfield of online journalism.

Although I interviewed many individuals at a variety of online news organizations, I conducted extensive in-depth analysis of three of them. This was achieved by conducting interviews at the organization (except for at *The Drudge Report*, as will be discussed later in this chapter), interviews with individuals previously affiliated with the organization and archival research. Figure 2.6 illustrates the hours of interviews conducted on my three case organizations. Formal interviews refer to the use of structured and semi-structured questions from the interview guides previously mentioned; informal interviews refer to interview questions that were

asked based on an observation or comment that I heard on site. These questions were spontaneous and more candid than the formal interview questions.

Figure 2.6. Duration of interviews on case study organizations

Case study online news organization:	Total hours of <u>formal</u> interviews with current and former employees:	Total hours of <u>informal</u> interviews with current and former employees
<i>Breitbart.com</i>	51 hours, 36 minutes, 49 seconds	11 hours, 19 minutes, 25 seconds
<i>The Drudge Report</i>	14 hours, 17 minutes, 35 seconds	3 hours, 12 minutes, 34 seconds
<i>The Huffington Post</i>	36 hours, 32 minutes, 29 seconds	5 hours, 40 minutes, 16 seconds
TOTAL	102 hours, 26 minutes, 53 seconds	20 hours, 12 minutes, 15 seconds

I was the sole investigator in this study and my findings are based on both first-hand experiences and accounts from former employees. As part of my theoretical sampling, I also interviewed individuals external to the three organizations that became my case studies, conducting what Eisenhardt refers to as “cross-case searching” (1989: 541). Given the interconnected nature of the news industry, many interviewees would cite other organizations during our interviews and I would follow-up by requesting access to them. As Eisenhardt explains,

Overall, the idea behind these cross-case searching tactics is to force investigators to go beyond initial impressions, especially through the use of structured and diverse lenses on the data. These tactics improve the likelihood of accurate and reliable theory, that is, a theory with a close fit with the data. Also, cross-case searching tactics enhance the probability that the investigators will capture the novel findings which may exist in the data (1989: 541).

I also gained an in-depth understanding of the various roles played by the different online news organizations within this space, understanding how they viewed each other, and whether any overlap existed between them. My aim was to focus on the mechanisms for gaining legitimacy in an emerging subfield. By investigating my three main cases as well as peripheral online news organizations, I sought to understand the dynamics of the subfield of online journalism, and investigate the relationships that exist within it, highlighting what takes place inside and outside of these organizations. Figure 2.7 outlines the hours of interviews conducted at case study and non-case study organizations.

Figure 2.7. Interviews conducted by category

Organizational Category	Total Duration			
	Number of Interviews		Total time	
	Formal	Informal	Formal Interviews	Informal Interviews
Case Study Organizations	78	26	102 hours, 26 minutes, 53 seconds	20 hours, 12 minutes, 15 seconds
Non-Case Study Organizations	42	21	52 hours, 11 minutes, 43 seconds	10 hours, 59 minutes, 41 seconds
Political Players	4	3	6 hours, 35 minutes, 58 seconds	58 minutes, 17 seconds
Field Experts	4	3	5 hours, 8 minutes, 50 seconds	51 minutes, 32 seconds
TOTAL	128	53	166 hours, 23 minutes, 24 seconds	33 hours, 1 minute, 45 seconds
COMBINED TOTAL	181 interviews		199 hours, 25 minutes, 9 seconds	

The following section will outline my justification for choosing *Breitbart.com*, *The Drudge Report* and *The Huffington Post* as my three case studies.

II. Case study selection

In “Building Theories from Case Study Research”, Eisenhardt argues that the selection of the case studies is a fundamental part of the methodological design. She writes: “The cases may be chosen to replicate previous cases or extend emergent theory, or they may be chosen to fill theoretical categories and provide examples of polar types” (1989: 537). Eisenhardt argues that the goal of case study research is to develop theory, not test it; therefore, “cases are selected because they are particularly suitable for illuminating and extending relationships and logic among constructs” (2007: 27). In the case of online journalism and its location as a subfield in the overarching field of journalism, examining and comparing multiples cases was

essential in order to understand how access is granted to peripheral players. Multiple cases, according to Eisenhardt, are chosen for theoretical reasons (2007) She writes,

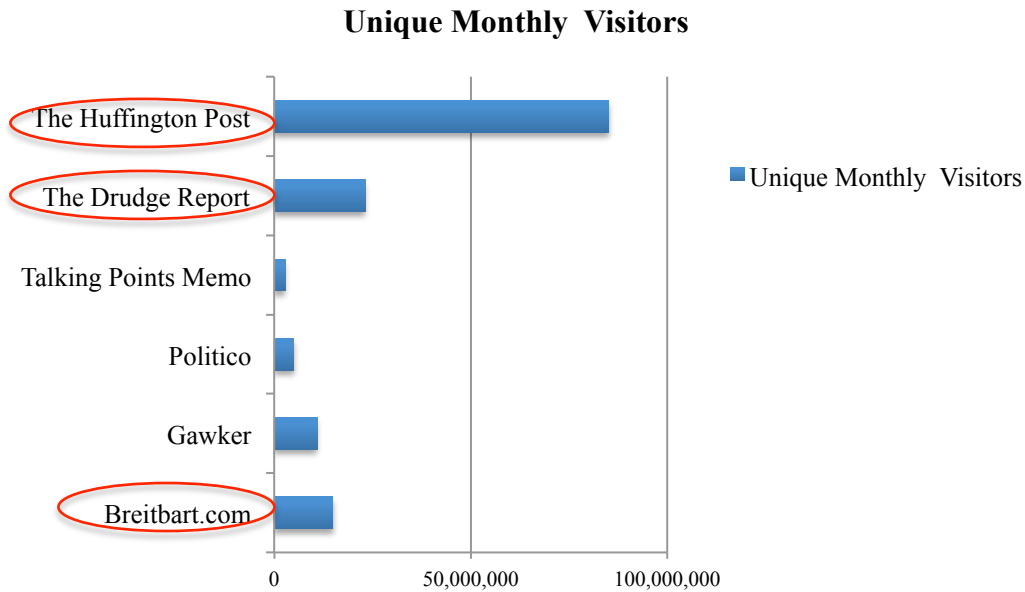
Multiple cases enable comparisons that clarify whether an emergent finding is simply idiosyncratic to a single case or consistently replicated by several cases (Eisenhardt, 1991) ... The choice is based less on the uniqueness of a given case, and more on the contribution to theory development within the set of cases. That is, multiple cases are chosen for theoretical reasons such as replication, extension of theory, contrary replication and elimination of alternative explanations (Yin, 1994) (2002: 27).

This section will systematically outline the reasons for which these multiple cases were selected. According to Eisenhardt, "... multiple-case studies typically provide a stronger base for theory building (Yin, 1994)" (2007: 27).

My selection of cases was based on a theoretical sampling. I focused initially on organizations that had achieved significant public recognition (Bourdieu 1998). I chose to measure this type of recognition in terms of unique monthly visitors to each site. In relying on quantitative data, such as statistics on visitor traffic, it is evident that the case studies I selected have a significant online presence given how many visitors frequent their site, compared to other online news organizations. Figure 2.8 illustrates the number of monthly visitors to each site. The term "unique monthly visitors" refers to the number of people who visited the site, and is a common method for measuring the popularity of a website.

The statistics listed below were compiled by *Quantcast*, an online monitoring site that measures the audience size of websites, and are based on average monitoring results from March 5 to September 29, 2013. Its statistics do not take into account "return visitors", i.e. those who return to the site more than once in a given day. According to the *Web Analytics Association*, a "unique visitor" is defined as:

The number of inferred individual people (filtered for spiders and robots), within a designated reporting time frame, with activity consisting of one or more visits to a site. Each individual is counted only once in the unique visitor measure for the reporting period (Burnby and Brown 2007: 9).

Figure 2.8. Statistics for success: unique monthly visitors (average March – September 2013)

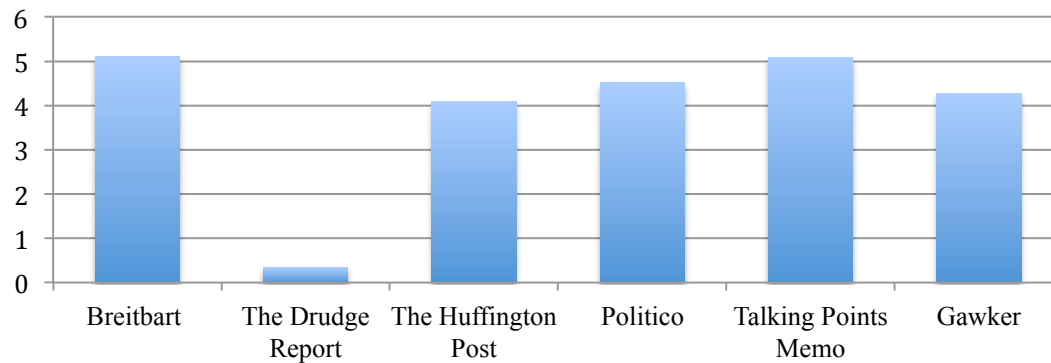
Source: www.quantcast.com/breitbart.com; www.quantcast.com/drudgereport.com; www.quantcast.com/gawker.com; www.quantcast.com/huffingtonpost.com; www.quantcast.com/politico.com; www.quantcast.com/talkingpointsmemo.com

Although Figure 2.8 illustrates that *Breitbart.com* possesses, in terms of my three case studies (circled in red), the lowest number of monthly visitors, Andrew Breitbart is included in this study as a result of his significant contribution to both *The Drudge Report* and *The Huffington Post*. Even if statistically, he does not appear to be as significant as the others, his inclusion is based on political grounds, as he occupies a position on the far-right of the spectrum. Chapters Four through Six illustrate how his work has contributed to the success of *The Drudge Report* and *The Huffington Post*. He is the only player in the subfield of online journalism to have worked with Matt Drudge and Arianna Huffington, investigating and reporting on key news stories for both websites.

Although the number of unique monthly visitors to a given website is significant in gauging status, it is also important to measure how long visitors stayed on the site. My study is examining the field of journalism and its subfield of online journalism from the perspective of the content creators as opposed to the news consumers; however, it is interesting to note that although *Breitbart.com* had the lowest number of unique monthly views in Figure 2.8, the site has the highest engagement metric, measured by the amount of time an individual spends on the website. Figure 2.9 cites the time spent by visitors (per day) on the three

organizations' websites. The online web information site, *Alexa.com*, refers to these statistics as “engagement metrics”, which calculate the “daily time (mm:ss) on site per visitor to the site” (www.alexacom/siteinfo/huffingtonpost.com).

Figure 2.9. Time spent (daily) on the websites of online news organizations (mm:ss)



Source: www.alexacom/siteinfo/breitbart.com, www.alexacom/siteinfo/thedrudge.com, www.alexacom/siteinfo/huffingtonpost.com, www.alexacom/siteinfo/politico.com, www.alexacom/siteinfo/talkingpointsmemo.com, www.alexacom/siteinfo/gawker.com

While *The Drudge Report* and *The Huffington Post* have more visitors to their site, *Breitbart.com* appears to have more engaging content than the other two case study organizations, suggesting perhaps that he is providing content that resonates with a given audience more so than content that appears on another website. There are numerous reasons that could explain why Breitbart's numbers are the highest, however, my study does not address how consumers engage with online content. Instead, I will focus on the factors that contribute to the legitimacy of online news organizations within the subfield of online journalism – noting that public recognition (Bourdieu 1998) measured by online traffic – is the first consideration of legitimacy. This will be explained in detail in Chapter Three. The other online news organizations cited in Figures 2.8 and 2.9 – *Gawker*, *Politico*, and *Talking Points Memo* – were not examined as part of this study, but were included as a point of comparison in order to illustrate the discrepancy between the number of monthly visitors to case study organizations and non-case study organizations.

Eisenhardt suggests that in a researcher's selection of cases for case study research, polarized organizations are an appropriate choice. Therefore, I selected *Breitbart.com*, *The Drudge Report*, and *The Huffington Post* because they offer a distinct political position within the industry. Figure 2.10 illustrates the polarized

positions that these organizations occupy in the American political landscape, which I have termed the *political media identity scale*. The three cases are highlighted in red.

Figure 2.10. The *political media identity scale*

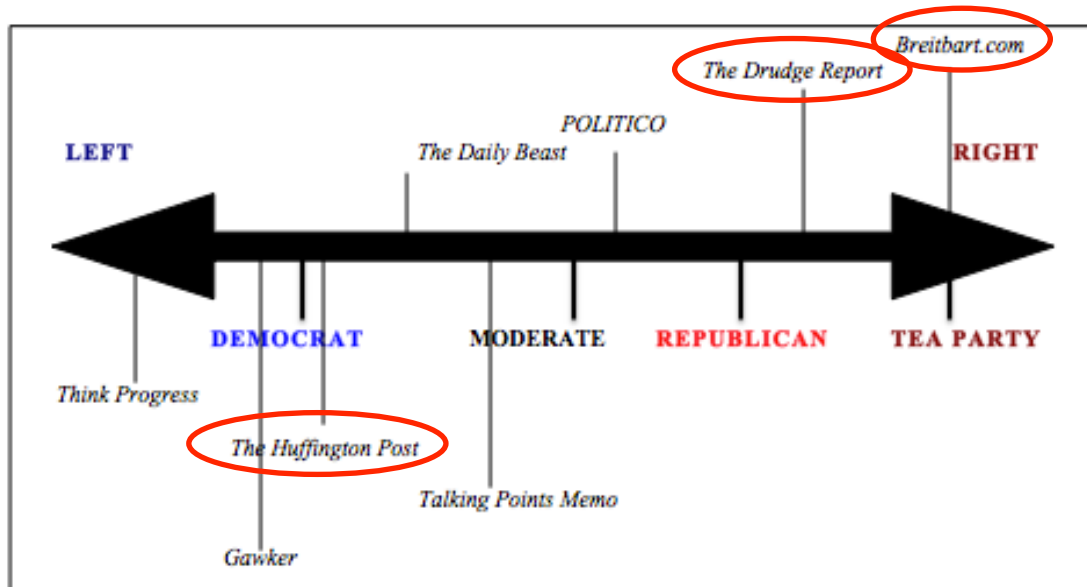


Figure 2.10 illustrates the political positioning of the three case studies examined in this study, along with their competitors. *The Huffington Post* is located slightly to the right of the “Democrat” category; *The Drudge Report* is positioned to the right of the “Republican” category; and *Breitbart.com* is positioned directly in line with the Tea Party movement, a far-right political movement. I positioned these three case studies on the political continuum in Figure 2.10 according to a number of factors, such as (i) their publication of politically-biased content in favor of either the Democratic Party, the Republican Party, or the Tea Party; (ii) attendance at events hosted by a political party and/or movement; and (iii) financial donations to a specific political party (see Appendix VII). The political affiliation of the three case studies will be examined at length in Chapters Four through Six.

I had initially selected *The Huffington Post* as a single topic; however, preliminary research on the online news organization cited significant connections to *The Drudge Report*. Upon further investigation, Andrew Breitbart’s name appeared and re-appeared as a third key player involved in both *The Huffington Post* and *The Drudge Report*. It occurred to me during my time in the field that these three organizations were part of the same setting: the subfield of online journalism. Eisenhardt explains,

The sampling of cases from the chosen population is unusual when building theory from case studies. Such research relies on theoretical sampling (i.e., cases are chosen for theoretical, not statistical, reasons, Glaser & Strauss, 1967). The cases may be chosen to replicate previous cases or extend emergent theory, or they may be chosen to fill theoretical categories and provide examples of polar types. While the cases may be chosen randomly, random selection is neither necessary, nor even preferable. As Pettigrew (1988) noted, given the limited number of cases which can usually be studied, it makes sense to choose cases such as extreme situations and polar types in which the process of interest is “transparently observable” (1989: 537).

As briefly mentioned above, I chose *Breitbart.com*, *The Drudge Report* and *The Huffington Post* as my three case studies based on their interconnectedness. This will be further discussed in sections IV-VI; however, given the strong ties (Burt 1980) that exist between these three sites, the unique inter-organizational relationships that they maintained in the early days of their organization’s conception cannot be overlooked in case study research.

Initial readings on the formation of various online news organizations led me to understand the interconnectedness that existed between Andrew Breitbart, Matt Drudge and Arianna Huffington during the early days of their journalistic careers. Based on my initial analyses, there existed a sense of what Ron Boschma refers to as “organizational proximity” and “institutional proximity” (2005) between these three players, which led me to investigate them further as case studies. According to Boschma’s article “Proximity and Innovation: A Critical Assessment”, there exists varying types of proximity which influence innovation and networks:

While geographical proximity is defined as spatial distance between actors, both in an absolute and relative meaning, organizational proximity is associated with the closeness of actors in organizational terms. On the one hand, organizational proximity covers the extent to which actors share the same space of relations (i.e. the way interaction and coordination between actors is organized). On the other hand, it incorporates the extent to which actors share the same reference and knowledge space, taking on board the cognitive dimension of organizational forms. Sometimes, they add a third form of proximity, institutional proximity, to account for the fact that interactions between players are influenced, shaped and constrained by the institutional environment (Kirat and Lung, 1999) (2005: 63).

The interconnected nature of these three organizations, with regard to institutional and organizational proximity, is one of the reasons I decided to examine how they managed to achieve legitimacy in a subfield of the field of online journalism. As I

discovered during my time in the field, while these organizations are industry competitors and politically polarized, they all relied on the accumulation of social capital and symbolic capital in order to initially establish themselves. This will be examined in detail in Chapters Four through Six.

III. Research design: A structured network emerges

My conceptual framework – *the proximity paradigm* – was generated from Eisenhardt’s case study research methodology and Boschma’s concepts of organizational and institutional proximity. In starting to investigate the subfield of online journalism, the constructs of organizational and institutional proximity allowed me to formulate the initial theory-building methodology, as suggested by Eisenhardt:

A priori specification of constructs can also help to shape the initial design of theory building research. Although this type of specification is not common in theory-building studies to date, it is valuable because it permits researchers to measure constructs more accurately. If these constructs prove important as the study progresses, then researchers have a firmer empirical grounding for the emergent theory (1989: 536).

I should note that I did not allow my initial constructs to bias my data collection process; I kept a diary of daily themes that emerged during my interviews in order to ensure that my initial constructs were not falsely shaping my findings:

Although early identification of the research question and possible constructs is helpful, it is equally important to recognize that both are tentative in this type of research. No construct is guaranteed a place in the resultant theory, no matter how well it is measured. Also, the research question may shift during the research (Eisenhardt 1989: 536).

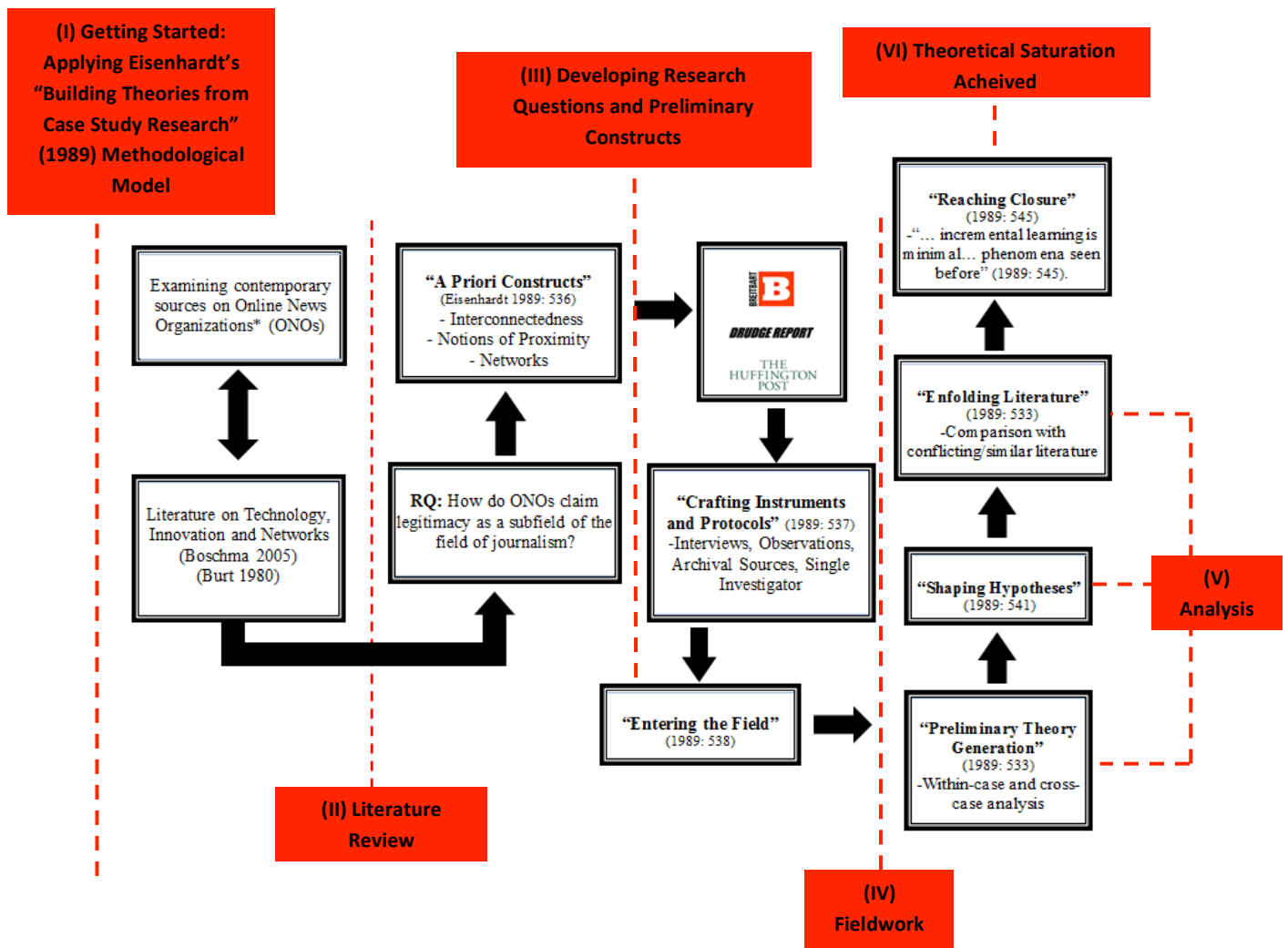
Onatu states that numerous scholars view case study research as “an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon in depth and within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident” (2013: 171). Given that at the outset of my research, I was unable to determine where to classify online news organizations, I sought an appropriate methodology to apply to my study: “a strategy to be preferred when circumstances and research problems are appropriate rather than an ideological commitment to be followed whatever the circumstances” (Platt 1992: 46). Prior to entering the field, I was unable to contextualize the prevalence of digitally native news organizations, thus leading me to adopt the case study research strategy: “The method relies on continuous comparison of data and theory beginning with data collection. It

emphasizes both the emergence of theoretical categories solely from evidence and an incremental approach to case selection and data gathering” (1989: 534). I asked myself: Are online news organizations part of the field of journalism? Do they comprise their own field or subfield of online journalism? Are they part of the blogosphere, or are they a combination of factors?

I decided to choose cases that as a collective form a highly connected environment, yet while they are politically polarized, they fill a unique category that is not part of traditional journalism, nor the blogosphere. As Eisenhardt argues, case study research is best applied to both polarized cases and new areas of research: “This research approach is especially appropriate in new topic areas” (1989: 532).

To begin, I identified several potentially important constructs from the literature on journalism, organizational theory and field theory, attempting to systematically shape my initial research design. These constructs were “interconnectedness”, “notions of proximity” and “networks”. In implementing this methodology, I was able to fully understand how the subfield of online journalism has evolved and how organizations position themselves. In order to increase confidence in my findings, I cross-verified my results across the data collecting practices employed (formal/informal interviews and archival research), in order to confirm the networked nature of the subfield of online journalism. The results of these findings will be explained in further details in Chapters Four through Six. As Eisenhardt states, “If these constructs prove important as the study progresses, then researchers have a firmer empirical grounding for the emergent theory” (1989: 536). Figure 2.11 outlines my methodology as applied to Eisenhardt’s case study research strategy.

Figure 2.11. Mapping my methodology as influenced by Eisenhardt (1989)



During my six months in the field, I explicitly measured the constructs that had been revealed in extant literature, specifically Narasimhan and Watson's conceptualizations of "transorganizational structures" and "field structuration" as discussed in their 2004 study on the evolution of fields. I was able to identify how different actors "join together in order to influence field evolution" (Narasimhan and Watson 2004: 60) by asking strategic interview questions that focused on networks and interorganizational structuring (see Figure 2.12).

Figure 2.12. Sample interview questions

“How do you see your role within this online space?”
“Is there a specific network that exists amongst online journalists or bloggers?”
“Are resources shared between organizations? If so, who and how?”
“How do you find sources for your stories? Are they individuals with your existing network?”
“What is the capacity to which the editorial and business departments interact?”
“Do you interact with the journalists at your organization? If so, how?”
“Who do you think are the most influential bloggers or online journalists today?”

In “Tournament Rituals in the Evolution of Fields: The Case of the Grammy Awards”, Narasimhan and Watson discuss the role of *transorganizational structures* in contributing to research on field evolution. Their research question is as follows: “Who are the relevant actors in a field, and how do some of those actors situate themselves in privileged positions” (2004: 60). They cite numerous scholars who have contributed to an understanding of *field structuration*. They argue,

The role of *transorganizational structures* that allow disparate institutional actors to join together in order to influence field evolution is also beginning to garner research attention. DiMaggio and Powell (1983) proposed that such structures allow a field to cohere by increasing interaction among a set of organizations, fostering the sharing of information-processing routines, engendering the formation of coalitions and patterns of domination, and heightening mutual awareness of being involved in a common enterprise. They termed this process *structuration* (2004: 60).

While Narasimhan and Watson’s study examines award ceremonies – such as the Grammy Awards for music – they contend that “award rituals are critical to field evolution since they are transorganizational structures embodying the interests of motivated social actors” (2004: 60). While I am researching a subfield of the field of journalism, this unique space (the subfield of online journalism) evolved as a result of “the interests of motivated social actors” (2004: 60). Although these social actors – as will be introduced in the following subsections – are politically polarized, they are still contributing to the evolution of the field, or as Narasimhan and Watson refer to it, acting as “institutional change agents” (2004: 59). The following subsections of this chapter will contextualize the selected case studies and situate their relationship to one another.

IV. Meet the cases: Introducing Andrew Breitbart

Andrew Breitbart occupies a unique space in the subfield of online journalism: no other space would be as forgiving to the discourse he produces. As the *New York Times* stated, it could be argued that the Internet was made for him:

Andrew Breitbart jacked into the Web early and never unplugged. As someone who worked on the *Drudge Report* and *The Huffington Post* in the early days and was busy building his own mini-empire of conservative opinion and infotainment at Breitbart.com, he understood in a fundamental way how discourse could be profoundly shaped by the pixels generated far outside the mainstream media he held in such low regard... Less watchdog than pit bull (and one who, without the technology of the 21st century, might have been just one more angry man shouting from a street corner), Mr. Breitbart altered the rules of civil discourse (Carr, April 13, 2012).

Eleven years before he started his own series of websites – *Breitbart.com*, *Breitbart.tv*, *BigHollywood.com*, *BigGovernment.com*, and *BigJournalism.com* – Breitbart emailed Matt Drudge at *The Drudge Report* because he was intrigued with what the latter was accomplishing online. As Breitbart explained in one of our interviews together: “I thought what he [Drudge] was doing was by far the coolest thing on the Internet. And I still do”. He began working as Drudge’s assistant in 1995, gathering news items and commenting on them with the same right-wing bias as Drudge. Breitbart was an active member of the Tea Party movement and was the keynote speaker at the Tea Party’s first National Convention in Nashville, Tennessee on February 2, 2010.

An outspoken conservative journalist, Breitbart eventually left Drudge to work on Arianna Huffington’s emerging right-wing website (at the time, Huffington was a registered Republican). Breitbart claimed that he had a stake in the founding of *The Huffington Post*, but left when he realized that Huffington was becoming a Democrat. In an article published in 2012 by *BuzzFeed*, an online website that combines news with a viral detection program, Jonah Peretti (*BuzzFeed*’s founder and another alleged *Huffington Post* founder) cites Breitbart’s attempt to remain loyal to Drudge and his political sensibilities as the reason why he did not continue working for the *Huffington Post*:

There were ... ideological tensions from the start.

“He was at war with himself,” said Peretti. “He wanted to be sure Drudge respected what he did and that he could also make this new venture.”

“He was pretty loyal to Drudge, and protective of Drudge – he was completely obsessed in the early days of *Huffington Post* with trying to make Drudge love him while still doing *Huffington Post*,” Peretti said... As *Huffington Post*’s other partners pulled the site in a more determinedly liberal direction, and as their relationships soured, Breitbart soon moved on (*BuzzFeed* Staff, March 2012).

Breitbart is candid about his distrust of the mainstream media, as he explained in a 2009 interview with the *Wall Street Journal*: “‘I just like the Internet’, he said. ‘I feel more natural in this environment, where I am part of the media and not a passive receptacle of the media’” (Taranto, October 2009). James Taranto’s article provides a skeptical interpretation of Breitbart’s journalistic vision and he views his opinion-based work as jeopardizing traditional journalism:

Even if one accepts Mr. Breitbart's critique of the mainstream media, nobody should root for their downfall or destruction. Their role—that of impartial watchdog and broker of information—is a vital one, whether or not they perform it well. While Breitbart-style opinionated journalism can provide healthy competition, it cannot substitute for straight news. As Mr. Breitbart himself says, in an unusually modest moment, "I'm not looking to slay the dragon . . . but I wanted to embarrass the dragon into being a more reasonable dragon" (Taranto, October 2009).

Breitbart’s work is rarely met without controversy, especially by the mainstream liberal media; he is the subject of numerous articles, books and a 2014 documentary. He has published articles in *The Wall Street Journal*, *The National Review Online*, *The Weekly Standard Online*, and *The Washington Times*. He has published two books: *Hollywood Interrupted: Insanity Chic in Babylon* (2004) and *Righteous Indignation: Excuse Me While I Save the World* (2011). Breitbart has also appeared as a guest commentator on FOX News and in the 2004 documentary, *Michael Moore Hates America*.

During my time with Breitbart, he remarked that he routinely received death threats based on his outspoken news postings; one morning when I was in his office, I overheard a telephone call with his lawyer concerning a recent post by a blogger with photographs of Breitbart’s home, his address and a link from Google maps. He assured me that this type of online behavior was not out of the ordinary.

V. The Matt Drudge persona

In a 2006 report on *ABC News*, Mark Halperin, the former *ABC News* Political Director, was quoted as listing Matt Drudge as the most influential man in American political journalism: "If Drudge has a siren up, people know it's something they have to look at," explained Halperin. Halperin is currently a senior political analyst for *TIME* Magazine and co-author of *Game Change, The Way to Win: Taking the White House in 2008*. In his 2006 interview with *ABC News*, Halperin noted, "Today, Matt Drudge can influence the news like Walter Cronkite did. If Drudge says something, it may not lead everybody instantly in the same direction, but it gets people thinking about what Matt Drudge wants them to think about" (*ABC News*, October 1, 2006). In *Vanity Fair* magazine's 2013 "New Establishment" list, Drudge was cited as "more influential than ever" (*Vanity Fair*, November 2013: 121). The "New Establishment" list ranks the "50 leading innovators [that] shake the foundations of their industries" (*Vanity Fair*, November 2013: 107), and ranked Drudge at number 15:

Once dubbed "the Rupert Murdoch or William Randolph Hearst of the digital age" by *Business Insider*'s Henry Blodget, Matt Drudge is more influential than ever. The two highest trafficked days in the conservative tabloid's 18-year history have come up in the past 12 months – Election Day 2012 and the final day of the manhunt for the second Boston Marathon bomber. Last year, Drudge surpassed one billion monthly page views for the first time (*Vanity Fair*, November 2013: 121).

According to industry insiders, Matt Drudge directs the political narrative in the U.S.: a level of influence that demands further examination. As *Vanity Fair* stated, "Drudge's headlines help set the agenda inside the Beltway" (Ibid: 121). One of President Bush's top political advisors, Mark McKinnon, admits to having checked *The Drudge Report* 30-40 times a day: "When there's a siren, that's a three-alarm news deal" (*ABC News*, October 1, 2006). McKinnon cites instances where information from White House meetings would appear on *The Drudge Report* shortly after the meeting ended. Throughout my fieldwork, many sources revealed that Republican operatives would continually feed stories and information to Drudge in an effort to have him publish the details before the information appeared in the mainstream press. Numerous sources (who wish to remain anonymous) described this as common practice during the Bush administration. As a reporter (TPM1) at *Think Progress* told me during our interview, "He wasn't necessarily in bed with the White House during the Bush years, but he sure knew how to stir things up". In *TIME*

Magazine's 2006 list of the most 100 Influential People of the Year, Drudge was ranked 64th. His profile read,

So Matt Drudge was right. Not about Bill Clinton's love child or John Kerry's affair, but he was right about this: "We are all newsmen now." Drudge hates the word blogger, yet his exclusive about the former President and intern Monica Lewinsky set out an animated-gif siren for an army of armchair pundits to follow. Today a flotilla of freelance fact checkers make life more difficult for the salaried employees of what has come to be known as the MSM, or mainstream media. With 10 million readers daily, Drudge, 39, has paved a generous path for the blogs; without his example, semipro scribes might not have unearthed "Rathergate." Of course, the price for such cyberscoops has been the coarsening of the evening news; Drudge has goaded traditional media into playing catch-up on sordid stories they once safely ignored (Cox, May 8, 2006: 32).

Along with acknowledgements from traditional media, such as *ABC News* and *TIME*, *The Drudge Report* is commonly listed as one of the most visited websites online. In a 2011 report published by the Project for Excellence in Journalism, researchers stated that before Google and Facebook, Matt Drudge was the leading influence for directing Internet traffic (Olmstead, Mitchell, Rosenstiel, May 9, 2011). The report reads, "*The Drudge Report* ranked as a driver of traffic to all but six of the top sites studied. And, more striking, it ranked second or third in more than half (12), outpacing Facebook" (Olmstead, Mitchell, Rosenstiel, May 9, 2011). Not only have researchers noted the Drudge trend of influence but, within the media industry, many organizations rely on the website for their own benefit. During my interviews, numerous news organizations such as *TheWashingtonPost.com* and *Politico* cited *The Drudge Report* as their largest driver of web traffic. This will be discussed further in Chapter Four.

While I did not interview Matt Drudge first hand, I did interview his former colleague, Andrew Breitbart. Breitbart assured me that Drudge would not be available for an interview, but that he could "fill in any blanks" that I had. I emailed Drudge through the contact address posted on his website; I sent him numerous emails over a period of six months and received no response. I did speak to individuals such as Jesse Lee and Howard Fineman, who again informed me that it was unlikely that Drudge would grant me an interview. I also critically analyzed Michael Isikoff's book *Uncovering Clinton*, where he chronicles his interactions with Drudge during the Clinton-Lewinsky scandal (see Appendix VIII).

I recognize that the content that I received about Drudge from Breitbart could

be viewed as biased; however, in the time I spent interviewing Breitbart on a variety of subjects, his candor and insight into the industry left me confident that he was not prone to dishonesty when discussing Drudge. In light of being unable to interview Drudge directly, I conducted a rigorous review of his book: *The Drudge Manifesto*, published in 2000. He states in the introduction:

The DRUDGE REPORT has been headline, tagline, and punchline since its debut: winter 1994.

Out of the gate, I was breaking and making news.

From a little corner in my Hollywood hovel, in the company of nothing more than my 486 Packard Bell computer, I became a player, consistently able to break big stories... Visitor logs for the *Drudge Report* website showed visits from all over: senate.gov, nasa.gov, nytimes.com, Disney.com, suck.com, house.gov, onion.com, doj.gov (2000: 31).

In addition to the archival research provided by his manifesto, I added a longitudinal dimension to my analysis of him by collecting any press coverage on him published between October 30, 2010 and October 1, 2013. I received and reviewed daily emails through “Google Alerts” that compiled all Drudge-related news stories from the previous day, using the search words “Matt Drudge” and “*The Drudge Report*” (see Figure 2.13). In total, I compiled and read 1,433 days of press coverage on Drudge.

Figure 2.13. Examples of press coverage of Matt Drudge collected by Google Alerts

Date	Google Alert Received
9/16/11	<p>Google Alerts <googlealerts-noreply@google.com> Unsubscribe 9/16/11 to me</p> <p>News 1 new result for Matt Drudge</p> <p>AOL Email Addresses Are Only For Cool People. No Seriously The Inquisitr According to Politico the accounts are being used and even faunted by David Axelrod. Matt Drudge, Arianna Huffington and Ann Coulter. The Arianna email makes sense since she's now part of the AOL family but apparently she was using it before the ... See all stories on this topic</p>
1/31/12	<p>Google Alerts <googlealerts-noreply@google.com> Unsubscribe 1/31/12 to me</p> <p>News 2 new results for Matt Drudge</p> <p>Rumours of Drudge bias are unfounded, the Report can't pretend Next Gingrich ... Telegraph.co.uk (blog) By Tim Stanley US politics Last updated: January 31st, 2012 Matt Drudge is the Howard Hughes of the Internet. Like Hughes, he lives in splendid isolation, communicating only through a small group of trusted friends. Like Hughes, his influence has ... See all stories on this topic</p> <p>Drudge 'all in' for Romney  OneNewsNow For many years, the Drudge Report has served as a clearinghouse for many conservatives about the news of the day. But according to the not-too-conservative Politico, Matt Drudge's news aggregation website leaves Gingrich 'looking like a dangerous ...' See all stories on this topic OneNewsNow</p> <p>Web 1 new result for Matt Drudge</p> <p>Who Got to Matt Drudge and Why? USA-wethepeople.com I was aghast the other night when I heard Ann Coulter say Mitt Romney was THE REAL CONSERVATIVE in the Presidential race for 2012. Now Drudge is on the ... usa-wethepeople.com/2012/.../who-got-to-matt-drudge-and-w...</p>
2/16/13	<p>Google Alerts <googlealerts-noreply@google.com> Unsubscribe 2/16/13 to me</p> <p>Web 1 new result for Matt Drudge</p> <p>Matt Drudge: Is CNN Moving Left? By Keeping Tabloid ... - Daily Paul Matt Drudge: Is CNN Moving Left? By Keeping Tabloid - Style Piers Morgan? Read more: http://www.mediaite.com/by/matt-drudge-asks-is-cnn-moving-le... www.dailypaul.com/.matt-drudge-asks-is-cnn-moving-left-b...</p> <p>Tip: Use quotes ("like this") around a set of words in your query to match them exactly. Learn more.</p> <p>Delete this alert Create another alert Manage your alerts</p>

The combination of examining his manifesto, conducting an analysis of daily media coverage and talking with Breitbart provided me with an understanding of the man that is Matt Drudge. I recognize that one of the limitations of my study was that I was unable to interview Drudge; I did the best that I could but I was unable to gain access to him. I did speak to prominent individuals in the field of journalism to get their views on Drudge and his influence in the industry. As previously mentioned, I made sure that I read every item published about Drudge in the press in order to understand what others were saying about him. In total, I conducted over 16 hours of interviews (both formal and informal) about Drudge. Similar to how I would ask interviewees for recommendations for additional interview subjects following our interview together, I applied a related technique to my data collection on Drudge. As soon as an individual was mentioned by an interviewee as being affiliated with Drudge, or if an article mentioned someone's name, I would investigate the background of this individual and if possible, I would interview him or her about Drudge. This led to an effective understanding of the networks that exist within the subfield of online journalism,

specifically in relation to Drudge. I will elaborate on my findings in Chapters Four through Six.

VI. The world according to Arianna Huffington

According to *Technorati*, an online website that tracks and ranks websites and blogs, *The Huffington Post* is the leading political news site. *Technorati* ranks websites based on the number of unique daily visitors to a website. Figure 2.14 illustrates that in 2012-3, *The Huffington Post* was the top political blog on the Internet.

Figure 2.14. *Technorati.com* political ranking, 2012 - 2013

Top 5 Politics blogs	
1	The Huffington Post Politics Authority: 911
2	Mediaite Politics Authority: 853
3	CNN Political Ticker Politics Authority: 851 ↓ -1
4	Breaking news and opinions Politics Authority: 842
5	Business Insider Politics Authority: 805

Source: Technorati, Top Political Blogs 2012-2013: <http://technorati.com/blogs/directory/politics/>

While *The Drudge Report* is often viewed as a mouthpiece for the Republican Party, *The Huffington Post* is deemed left-leaning according to many political insiders. Many Republicans cite the website as an outlet for their messaging given the influential nature of its platform. Michael Steel, the press secretary for John Boehner, Republican Party House Leader, told *Politico* in an interview in May 2009 that their party regularly sends press releases to the website. He said, “[We] engage with liberal websites like *The Huffington Post* – just because for no other reason than they drive a lot of cable coverage” (Calderone, May 22, 2009). I will be discussing the early days of *The Huffington Post* in greater detail in Chapter Four as the start of the website is illustrative of her use of the first tenet of the proximity paradigm.

Another reason for focusing on these organizations is that all three emerged as digitally native online news organizations in the early years of new media; they were online pioneers, channeling offline material online. *Breitbart.com* launched in 2006; *The Drudge Report* launched in 1997; *The Huffington Post* launched in 2005.

VII. Making contact, gaining access and understanding gatekeepers

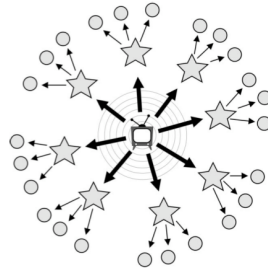
I began contacting individuals at the organizations where I wanted to conduct research several months before my fieldwork began. I officially started my fieldwork in Washington, D.C. in September 2011. I used the online media contact database, *Marketwire*, in order to gain official contact information for my interviewees. Prior to beginning my dissertation in October 2010, I worked as a publicist at a North American media relations firm, where I had access to *Marketwire*'s database through a corporate login code and password; I used this login information to access the database for initial contact information for my interviewees. I began by sending out introductory emails to every contact at *The Huffington Post*, in the hope of securing an interview with Arianna Huffington. Even though Huffington was a Cambridge alumna, a factor that I thought would help me secure an interview, she did not agree to take part in the research.

However, we did exchange numerous emails and she put me in touch with many senior editors at her organization. Howard Fineman, a former editor at *Newsweek*, had become the Washington Bureau Chief for *The Huffington Post* and allowed me to spend time at *The Huffington Post*'s D.C. office. Given the power lunch mentality of many Beltway insiders, the majority of my interviews took place over lunch at various famous eateries where politicians and pundits broke bread over Maryland crab cakes and sweet tea. While in Washington, D.C., I learned that showing how connected one was served to leverage one's status as a legitimate Washingtonian. With that in mind, I ensured that my last interview question was always, "do you know of anyone else here I can speak with who might be able to shed light on X?" Through this casual means of wrapping things up, I continually found myself directed to one interview subject after another. In expanding my sample frame, I employed a snowball sampling technique which effectively revealed networks and key players that were previously unknown to me, furthering my understanding of this evolving field and its contested subfield. With regard to conducting a case study methodology, Eisenhardt argues that, "investigators are trying to understand each case individually and in as much depth as is feasible" (1989: 539). Therefore inquiring about interviewing additional contacts at an organization is essential in order to holistically understand the organization. As Eisenhardt adds,

The goal is not to produce summary statistics about a set of observations. Thus, if a new data collection opportunity arises or if a new line of thinking emerges during the research, it makes sense to take advantage by altering data collection, if such an alteration is likely to better ground the theory or to provide new theoretical insight. This flexibility is not a license to be unsystematic. Rather, this flexibility is a controlled opportunism in which researchers take advantage of the uniqueness of a specific case and the emergence of new themes to improve resultant theory (1989: 539).

I managed to gain access to leading U.S. online news organizations as a result of understanding the manner in which the American media industry is inter-connected. I first recognized this trend when conducting a study in 2009 on *GQ*, *Vanity Fair* and *Vogue* and their ability to shape public opinion. This was based on six weeks of conducting formal and informal interviews at the *Condé Nast Inc.* headquarters in New York. I formally interviewed three key editors at *Condé Nast* (one from each case study, as listed above). These three editors continue to occupy a position of influence within the American media landscape; I was able to leverage my previous work with them in order to gain legitimacy as a researcher of substance when contacting organizations for my dissertation. Just as *Breitbart.com*, *The Drudge Report* and *The Huffington Post* rely on affiliations with those in positions of power in order to be granted legitimacy, so did I.

Watts and Dodd (2007) highlight Paul Lazarsfeld's 1944 study on the two-step flow theory that highlights the power of influencers in shaping the opinions of the masses: "Individuals were likely to influence other persons in their immediate environment" (2007: 445). In light of this, I decided to leverage my own network of sources within the American media landscape in order to gain access to further sources. In accordance with Lazarsfeld's findings of influence based on proximity, I managed to access over twenty prominent U.S. news organizations by citing affiliations with like-minded organizations within their "immediate environment". Lazarsfeld's study illustrated that information is absorbed by the masses through "influencers" within an individual's given community (1944). The star symbol in Figure 2.15 represents community leaders who disseminate the information from the media (illustrated by the television) to the circles that represent the masses.

Figure 2.15. Paul Lazarsfeld's two-step flow model of influence

Source: Dodds and Watts. "Influentials, Networks, and Public Opinion Formation". *Journal of Consumer Research*, Vol. 34, December 2007, p. 441

While Lazarsfeld argues that opinion leaders within a community have the capacity to spread information, Dodds and Watts view the process of opinion dissemination as stemming from a networked infrastructure, as opposed to the work of individuals. "The ability of an individual to trigger a cascade depends much more on the global structure of the influence network than on his or her personal degree of influence" (2007: 442). Given the highly networked infrastructure of the online media landscape in the U.S., I needed to penetrate this space in order to understand the nuances associated with this unique ecology. As a result, I relied on networks of relationships between editors in order not only to be given contact information, but to allow me to enter an organization under the auspice of a "contact from within": a type of endorsement from the industry. The following sections will discuss the three geographical locations where I contacted the fieldwork.

VIII. Washington, D.C.

During my fieldwork period in Washington, D.C., I lived in the U Street Corridor neighborhood, located in the north-west part of the city. The storied history of U Street harkens back to the days of the civil rights movement, when the community was comprised of a largely African-American population. Following the assassination of Martin Luther King Jr. in 1968, the neighborhood shifted and became associated with drug trafficking, prostitution and violence. In many of the restored row houses in the area, exposed brick walls remind dwellers of the racial tensions which have shaped this community, as patches of black soot from the 1968 Washington, D.C. riots still remain on the bricks: "Being mercurial, U Street stretched boundaries beyond its alphabetical confines. U Street became a neighborhood, a happening, a state of mind," wrote journalist Teresa Wiltz in *The Washington Post*.

“U Street has always been a quick-change artist. Old Jim Crow shaped its earliest existence, creating rigid rules of engagement, but also, perversely, carving out a niche where black folks could be. African Americans didn't have a place to go, so they made their own. And they owned it. U Street was it” (Wiltz, March 2006).

My first day in the field brought me to Arlington, Virginia. As I boarded the metro at 8:30 a.m. from the U Street Station, flocks of civil servants and political insiders sought refuge on the subway from the 45-degree Celsius temperatures outside. Clutching issues of *The Washington Post* and *Politico*, it was hard not to notice the number of lanyards and badges hanging from the necks of fellow subway riders as the majority of them exited at the Federal Triangle subway stop, filing onto the platform and bracing themselves for the heat. As the subway train raced along the Potomac, the number of commuters dissipated as the train exited the District.

I arrived in Arlington, Virginia, armed with a tape recorder, a note pad and a consent form. My first interview was conducted at *Politico*. The organization reports exclusively on political news from Washington. Dismissed often by non-Washingtonians as catering to the priorities of political insiders, *Politico* has managed to appeal to a larger audience by incorporating video interviews on its site, providing a more holistic approach to new media: with sources cited on blogs appearing in televised interviews. *Politico* shares an office in Virginia with *ABC News*; the two organizations also share a television studio. The newsroom at *Politico* is a combination of offices along the wall for members of the editorial board, and cubicles for all reporters in the middle of the room.

I spent two hours at *Politico* interviewing my contact at the organization, Senior Political Editor Jonathan Martin. My interview with Martin was indicative of the attitudes that I would face as an interviewer. I quickly learned that one of the unanticipated elements of interviewing well-known journalists in the field would involve encountering their egos. Ostrander refers to this as an issue experienced by many researchers when they interview elites: “Elites are used to being in charge, and they are used to having others defer to them. They are also used to being asked what they think and having what they think matter in other people's lives” (1993: 19). The Martin interview set the precedent for nearly all future interviews with elite

journalists; I learned that there would always be an unacknowledged power dynamic between myself (the interviewer) and them (the subjects).

The next day, I arrived at the Center for American Progress (CAP) to interview Dr. Alan Rosenblatt, a journalist and academic at *ThinkProgress.org*. The website is affiliated with the Center for American Progress, a liberal think tank and public policy research organization located near the White House. The first President and CEO of CAP was President Clinton's Chief of Staff, John Podesta. Following Barack Obama's 2008 Presidential victory, *TIME* magazine cited CAP as one of the more significant influencers in his camp. Relying on social capital and the incestuous political circles of Washington, D.C., Podesta rallied researchers, policymakers and lobbyists to create the Center for American Progress. As Michael Sherer reported in *TIME*:

Wealthy Democrats wanted to have ideological rabble-rousers like Rush Limbaugh and activist breeding grounds like the College Republicans to create a new generation of shock troops. But most of all, to have a real shot at regaining control of Washington, they wanted to plot an intellectual coup, spearheaded by an aggressive idea factory like the Heritage Foundation. Five years later, they have that, and a lot more, in the Center for American Progress (CAP), the most influential independent organization in Obama's nascent Washington. CAP was the brainchild of former Clinton White House chief of staff John Podesta, who dutifully worked wealthy dinner parties with a simple idea: He would create a new organization, a "think tank on steroids," to help progressive ideas regain power (Sherer, November 21, 2008).

Sources I interviewed at CAP informed me that it was common knowledge in the District that during the 2008 election, Podesta and CAP employees would provide Obama's campaign team with talking points and opposition research. Sherer's article cites smear campaign statistics developed by CAP:

"There was not a policy ad that Obama did that did not quote us," boasts Jennifer Palmieri, who does communications for the think tank, and its more politically active offshoot, the Center for American Progress Action Fund. Remember the claim that John McCain wanted to give \$4 billion in tax breaks to oil companies like Exxon? The Action Fund came up with that number. What about the dubious charge that McCain planned a 22% cut in Medicare? Most political ads cite journalists for their facts, the Obama campaign cited CAP research in nine different ads during the general election. More than five million households received mailers from unions that cited CAP in attacking McCain's policy plans (Sherer, November 21, 2008).

One of CAP's many mouthpieces is *ThinkProgress.org*, a political blog affiliated with the organization. According to my interview with Dr. Rosenblatt, the political blog generates 4.7 million unique visitors per day. The journalists who work at *ThinkProgress.org* are often former academics who teach an adjunct class at a local D.C. university in the evenings and work at CAP during the day. Dr. Rosenblatt fits this mold. An adjunct professor at Georgetown University, George Washington University, and American University, Rosenblatt is also the Associate Director for Online Advocacy at CAP and *ThinkProgress.org*, and an occasional writer for *The Huffington Post*. Rosenblatt reflected on his affiliation with Huffington, discussed his views on the intersection of public policy and new media, and introduced me to Faiz Shakir, then-Editor-in-Chief of *ThinkProgress.org*.

Due to Shakir's schedule, I was unable to interview him until two months later, when I returned to D.C. to conduct follow-up interviews. Shakir showed me the three floors of office space that *ThinkProgress.org* occupied in the CAP building. It was hard to differentiate between CAP offices and the news desks of *ThinkProgress.org*'s bloggers. Given his ties to the Democratic Party, I was not surprised when I read in *The Huffington Post* in May 2012 that Shakir had been poached from *ThinkProgress.org* to become House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi's director of New Media and Senior Advisor. As *The Huffington Post* noted:

Shakir is hardly the first blogger to leave that corner of the media universe for service in public office. But his departure from Think Progress nevertheless represents a major development for the site. He has been with Think Progress since 2005, during which time he helped build it into an outlet not just for progressive policy analysis but also for breaking, often oppositional, reporting (Stein, May 8, 2012).

In seeking to understand the overlapping relationships that exist between politics and media, I wanted to experience the power dynamics at the leading institution in the U.S.: The White House. I was granted permission to interview Jesse Lee, the Director of New Media for the White House. A former classmate at Georgetown, Joanna Rosholm, works as a press secretary for President Obama. She initiated my contact with Lee and agreed to provide me with a tour of the White House following my lunch with the Director.

Lee and I met for lunch at Potenza, a restaurant located one block north-east of the White House. I noticed that the restaurant catered to power lunches, with patrons served at such a speed that they could return to their nearby office within the hour. Political badges were strung across necks as fellow patrons eyed each movement of the revolving door, anxious to catch a glimpse of the next player. Badges were only removed if alcohol was consumed over lunch; a D.C. tradition I learned, as jokes were made between tables based on the removal of their badges. While Lee spent our entire lunch on his Blackberry, he still provided insightful answers to every question and never rushed me. I found myself trying to stay current during our interview as Lee cited political instances that had occurred that morning at the White House. Our rapport was not as fluid as I had experienced with previous interviewees; the clear differential of experience left much of the conversation at his end, as I was not familiar with many of the White House briefings that he was citing. A sense of insecurity and anxiety came to the fore during my interview with Lee, as I became overwhelmed by the manner in which my interview format shifted from an established format to an unfamiliar one.

Following my experience at the White House, I set out to interview one of the nation's leading media think tanks: The Project for Excellence in Journalism (PEJ). PEJ is a research organization based in Washington, D.C., whose research focuses predominantly on empirical methods for analyzing the press and content analyses of news reports. It is part of the Pew Research Center, which comprises seven organizations that focus on non-partisan social science research, and public opinion polling. In addition to the PEJ, the six other organizations that make up PEW include the Pew Research Center for the People and the Press, the Pew Internet and American Life Project, the Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life, the Pew Hispanic Center, the Pew Global Attitudes Project, and the Pew Social and Demographics Trend. PEJ's mandate is as follows:

To help both the journalists who produce the news and the citizens who consume it develop a better understanding of what the press is delivering, how the media are changing, and what forces are shaping those changes. We have emphasized empirical research in the belief that quantifying what is occurring in the press, rather than merely offering criticism, is a better approach to understanding (PEJ).

I interviewed Kenneth Olmstead, a senior researcher at PEJ. Our interview focused on PEJ's understanding and analysis of the "Matt Drudge Effect", discussed in great detail in Chapter Four. I wanted to gain an understanding of how one of the leading news analysis organizations in the U.S. viewed the evolving role of online journalism, and the perceived network between online news organizations.

One of the most interesting interviews I conducted while in Washington, D.C. was with Michael Isikoff, an investigative journalist for *NBC*. Isikoff is also the author of *Uncovering Clinton: A Reporter's Story*. This salacious book chronicles Isikoff's role in investigating the allegations that President Clinton was having an affair with White House intern Monica Lewinsky. During the scandal, Isikoff was working at *Newsweek*, which opted against printing the allegations, burying Isikoff's nine months' worth of research (Isikoff 1999). Hours after the magazine chose not to release the story, Drudge published it on his website. Many argue that this solidified Drudge's position as a journalist to watch: he had uncovered one of the biggest scandals that year. It is not surprising therefore, that Isikoff had little to say about Drudge.

Isikoff refused to conduct the interview in person; as a result, we resorted to a telephone interview. In a somewhat coincidental manner, our conversation was disconnected three times during our interview; this occurred repeatedly the moment I mentioned Drudge and the Clinton/Lewinsky scandal. After each disconnection, I would phone back, and wait to be connected again by Isikoff's secretary. Following my third attempt to call him back, Isikoff told me he did not have more time to talk and that "everything I need to say on Drudge is in my book".

While my interview with Isikoff did not proceed according to plan, it did provide me with a degree of understanding of the ruthless dynamics that exist between journalists: an element that I thought I already understood, but did not anticipate to this extent. While in D.C., I also conducted interviews at *Talking Points Memo*, interviewing David Kurtz, the managing editor of the website, and spending the day shadowing his daily responsibilities.

One of my more successful interviews in D.C. was with Howard Fineman, the Deputy Editor of *The Huffington Post's* Washington bureau. The series of interviews

were conducted at its headquarters, located on Pennsylvania Avenue, one block west of the White House, and over a series of lunches in the area. An elderly gentleman, Fineman provided great insight into the state of new media in the U.S., and how organizations were adapting in order to stay relevant. One of the reasons these interviews were successful was that the dialogue was natural and engaging; I felt that I was interviewing an old friend.

Bourdieu references this need for naturalness between interviewer and interviewee as a key element necessary for eliminating the often strict parameters of the format. “The more successful it is and the more it leads to an interchange that has every appearance of ‘naturalness,’ the more that work is destined to remain invisible” (1999: 612). This sense of invisibility is important when a researcher resembles an interloper in a given space: analyzing the goings-on, but still maintaining a sense of visible discretion.

In the context of a fieldwork experience characterized by accommodating and generous research subjects (apart from Isikoff), Washington, D.C. was the ideal starting point for me, as I left the capital feeling energized and anxious to arrive in New York. This sense of eagerness was soon diminished as I set out to interview subjects in a city known for its sense of identity and even stronger sense of belonging. As Mark Twain wrote in 1867, “Make your mark in New York and you are a made man. With a New York endorsement you may travel the country over, without fear – but without it you are speculating upon a dangerous issue” (Walker and Dane, 1940).

IX. New York

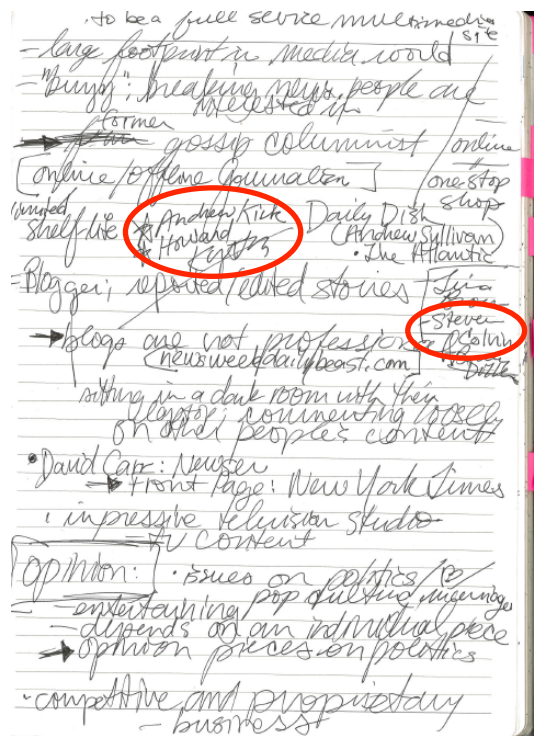
After an intense month of interviews in Washington, D.C., I moved to New York City, living in an apartment on the Upper West Side at the intersection of 110th Street and Broadway, three blocks south of Columbia University. My time in New York is best summarized as attempting to navigate a roadmap, written in a language that sounds like English but is only really understood by those who created it. An ability to interpret this was limited to a select few of individuals whose position was similar to that of a cartographer: drawing the lines of conduct, the intersections of access. The frenetic pace of New York quickly seeped into my fieldwork routine as my interview schedule became busier each day, travelling uptown, downtown and to Brooklyn. While in New York, I conducted interviews at the following organizations

and institutions: *The Huffington Post*, *The Daily Beast*, *TIME*, *Gawker*, *Vanity Fair*, *GQ*, *The New York Times*, *New York Magazine*, *ProPublica*, academics at Columbia University's School of Journalism, a professor in the Department of Sociology at Columbia, and the City of New York's Digital Office.

Living in New York allowed me to immerse myself in the media industry, learning firsthand the power dynamics that exist within this space. The following anecdote from my field notes characterizes this realization. I decided to contact Lloyd Grove as his name was frequently cited in top-tier publications. Grove was also the Editor-at-Large at *The Daily Beast*. He had written numerous articles about media culture in the U.S. that had been published in *The Washington Post*, *New York Magazine*, *Vanity Fair*, and *Harper's Bazaar*. I decided that in order to fully understand the field of journalism, I would have to interview Grove. Conducting interviews with individuals external to my case studies provided a longitudinal element that enriched my understanding of this nuanced industry.

I interviewed Grove at a diner on the Upper West Side; following our lunch, I was informed of three additional sources that I should contact. A former gossip columnist, Grove generously gave me the names of his most knowledgeable sources at *The Daily Beast*, in an attempt to fill in the blanks on the various business questions that he was unable to answer. Grove did not have their email addresses at his immediate disposal, but told me to use the same email format – lastname.firstname@thedailybeast.com – in order to contact the new sources. Figure 2.16 is a copy of the notes I took during my interview with Grove, highlighting the individuals he told me to contact.

Figure 2.16. Interview with Lloyd Grove



I left the interview feeling confident and returned home to send emails – referencing Grove – to the new set of subjects that he had provided. Following the series of interview solicitation emails that I sent I received an upsetting response from Andrew Kirk, a publicist at *The Daily Beast* (see Appendix IX). As stated earlier in this chapter, I worked as a publicist prior to beginning my PhD; as a result, I knew that publicists often dismiss requests to interview their client. It is for precisely this reason that I chose to contact my sources directly, bypassing the publicist entirely, and relying on the recommendations of Lloyd Grove as my motivator.

Yet I received the following email from Kirk on October 5, 2011 at 5:56 p.m. EST:

Gillian, I thought I was pretty clear that I would arrange the appropriate people for you to speak with. So I was rather surprised to see and hear that you have been contacting our editors on your own steam and it makes me question the motivation for this research - please advise.

I responded with the following email, sent on October 5, 2011 at 6:47 p.m. EST:

Dear Andrew, I apologize. I did not intend to go behind your back on this.

After I spoke with Mr. Grove yesterday, he listed other editors whom I should contact.

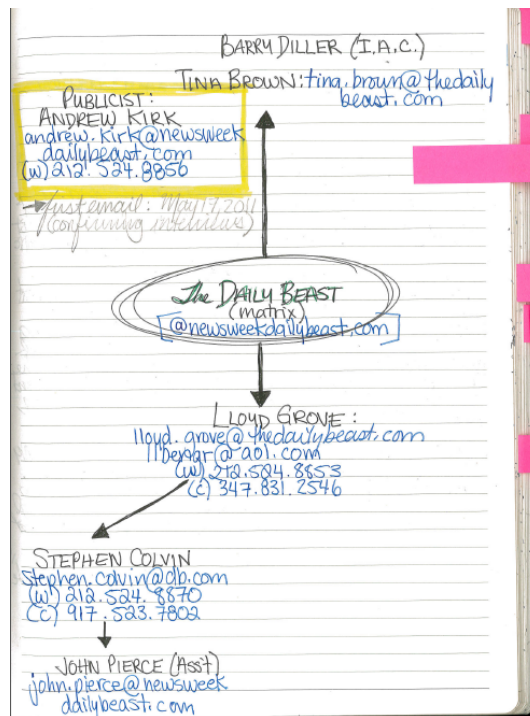
Kirk responded on October 5, 2011 at 7:03 p.m. EST:

It seems that's exactly what you did - as I told you, Tina is not available for you - what further information did you need from what you discussed with Lloyd Grove?

Since my initial email, sent in May 2011 to Tina Brown, Editor-in-Chief at *The Daily Beast* and subsequent editors, I had been concurrently establishing interview times with them, even while Kirk emailed me informing me that my interview requests could not be accommodated. Individual editors agreed to be interviewed while Kirk insisted that nobody was available. What happened next, I never anticipated.

Given my understanding from working in the industry of the hierarchy within a media organization, I discounted Kirk's emails: as the Editor-at-Large (Lloyd Grove), and the Chief Executive Officer (Stephen Colvin), both of whom had agreed to be interviewed, were more senior. My motivation for contacting editors in this way was simply that I understood the media landscape in which they were working and knew how to navigate the space to my advantage. Figure 2.17 illustrates the chart I created in order to understand the hierarchy at *The Daily Beast*.

Figure 2.17. Understanding the structure of *The Daily Beast*



In order to increase the likelihood of gaining access at *The Daily Beast*, I decided to adopt the role of a media publicist and leverage my previous experience in order to earn the trust of my interviewees. I did this by referencing key players in the field who had already been interviewed in order to illustrate that other organizations had agreed to be interviewed, knowing that given the competitive nature of this online space, they would want to duplicate their competitors' actions.

I maintain that the work I did to gain access to elite journalists was not performed in an unethical manner, but achieved by learning the skills necessary to participate in this space. I did underestimate, however, the role of the gatekeeper: a position that, in offline journalism, is often occupied by an editor. I was learning that within this online environment, those who hold the reins of power are often not those who wield the editor's pen.

Kirk began occupying a gatekeeping role. According to Carla Reeves, author of "A Difficult Negotiation: Fieldwork Relations with Gatekeepers", understanding the role of the gatekeeper is crucial when conducting qualitative research:

Central elements of access are gatekeepers. These people can help or hinder research depending upon their personal thoughts on the validity of the research

and its value, as well as their approach to the welfare of the people under their charge (2010: 317).

Having upset Kirk, I soon began to appreciate how inter-connected online news organizations are, especially in New York City. After receiving Kirk's email on October 5, 2011 at 7:03 p.m., I began to receive emails from editors at *The Huffington Post*, cancelling their interviews that were scheduled for the following day. I will highlight the relationship between Huffington and Tina Brown in the next chapter; needless to say, the occurrences were not coincidental given the speed at which the five scheduled (*Huffington Post*) interviewees claimed to "no longer [be] able to accommodate my request". I began to panic. I realized that I had strained my relationship with an allegedly influential gatekeeper (Kirk) and was about to lose interviews at a key organization that was supposed to be one of my case studies. I decided to call Lloyd Grove.

"Oh fuck, are you serious?" he responded when I told him that my interviewees at *The Huffington Post* had been cancelled, following my suspicious series of emails with Kirk. "I think you need to tell him [Kirk] that you are going to be a good little girl and play by the rules". Grove's mention of "the rules" illustrated that there is in fact an unspoken grammar within this online space. A distinct relationship exists between editors within and external to an organization, which I was quickly realizing was based on whom one knew and how one leveraged those connections. This realization became the basis of my argument that online media organizations succeed based on how much social capital they have at their disposal. This will be outlined in detail in Chapters Four, Five and Six.

In addition to the logistical difficulties that gatekeepers were imposing on me, there existed an interesting gender dynamic during my time in the field. Grove's comment about "be[ing] a good little girl" was not only patronizing, but also informative. I did not realize until I had returned from the field and started analyzing my interviews, that 77.5% of my interviewees were male (see Figure 2.18).

Figure 2.18. Interviewees by gender

Female	20 interviewees (22.5%)
Male	69 interviewees (77.5%)

Reeves' article on fieldwork discusses the pros and cons of conducting qualitative research as a female:

Researchers such as Gurney (1991) have suggested that being a female researcher in a male-dominated environment may aid not only formal but informal access because women are perceived as "warmer" and less threatening than men (Gurney 1991: 379). Thus, gatekeepers may be less likely to demand the same assurances and level of information from women researchers prior to gaining formal access (2010: 317).

While Reeves' argument that a female researcher's access to a site may be easier than her male colleagues that was not my experience at *The Daily Beast*.

The misunderstanding with Kirk managed to resolve itself following an email I sent to him requesting that we meet in person to discuss what had happened (see Appendix IX). According to Grove, the conflict had arisen internally when Kirk searched for me on the Internet, and found articles that I had written while interning as a journalist at *The National Post*, a Canadian newspaper. Grove claimed that *The Daily Beast* was skeptical of my motives, as they thought I was working as a journalist, investigating the daily occurrences of their organization. As Hammersley and Atkinson state, "Gatekeepers, sponsors, and the like (indeed, most of the people who act as hosts to the research) will operate in terms of expectations about the ethnographer's identity and intentions" (1983: 77).

The misunderstanding of my intended research project addresses a point which I will make in Chapter Five on what I have termed *meta-reporting*: journalists reporting on other journalists. *The Daily Beast* did not want an industry interloper analyzing their way of conducting business and reporting on stories. This concept was the basis for Matt Drudge's *Newsweek* scoop: the magazine was considering reporting that President Clinton was having an affair with Monica Lewinsky; but Drudge was reporting on the reporters at *Newsweek* and their story at the time, not the allegations. Given that Drudge's report on *Newsweek* managed, according to many insiders, to help him solidify a prominent position in the subfield of online journalism, I understood *The Daily Beast*'s skepticism.

When I finally arrived at *The Daily Beast* headquarters at the Frank Gehry-designed InterActiveCorp (IAC) building in Chelsea, I was anxious to meet Kirk in person. In his late twenties and a native of Scotland, I was surprised by Kirk's

unintimidating nature. I spent eight hours at *The Daily Beast*, with Kirk personally escorting me around the newsroom and introducing me to six editors; he also printed off proprietary figures and numbers used for advertising meetings and gave me a tour of the iconic building. He explained how the newsroom worked and allowed me to watch a taping of an on-air interview. Once he had become aware of my intentions, his role as a gatekeeper shifted from skeptic to negotiator. Over a series of weeks, we managed to negotiate the level of access with which Kirk was comfortable; in the process, I was able to understand the infrastructure of this unique space.

X. Los Angeles

I landed in Los Angeles on November 20, 2011. I had been granted access to “shadow” right-wing blogger Andrew Breitbart for ten days. Gaining access to Breitbart took three months of negotiations, with numerous emails and phone calls from Breitbart and his assistant, Alexander Marlow. Access was confirmed on September 14, 2011 with the following email from Marlow:

Hi Ms. Brooks,
 I'd love to set you up with Mr. Breitbart. How many days would you like to meet with Mr. Breitbart? Would you like to see him in action, at a speech, or anything like that?
 How much total time do you need from him?
 I can tell you now that's he's up for doing this, but may need a bit of time to confirm his schedule.

Breitbart's office was located in West Hollywood, near the affluent neighbourhood of Brentwood, at the base of the Santa Monica mountains; both Huffington and Breitbart own homes in the area. According to a 2011 article published in *The Los Angeles Times*, the median household income in Brentwood is \$112,927 (“Mapping L.A. Project”, December 18, 2011).

The traffic in Los Angeles was like nothing I had ever experienced before. While conducting my fieldwork, I lived in Redondo Beach, one of the three Beach Cities of Los Angeles, located 22 miles from West Hollywood. With the amount of traffic in the city, it took me almost two hours by car to reach Breitbart's office each day. My time interviewing Breitbart took place at his office and his family's home in Brentwood. From 9:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m., I spent every moment with Breitbart: including driving his children to soccer practice with him, sitting in on lunch meetings with prominent players in Hollywood, and even on calls with his lawyer. I had

unlimited access. He signed a consent form at our first meeting; from then on, my tape recorder was always on.

Breitbart's office consisted of two floors in an unassuming building off Sepulveda Boulevard, by the Santa Monica freeway. The first floor consisted of a small canteen area and large pool table; the top floor, which looked onto the pool table, consisted of six desks with Apple desktop computers. The office comprised six people; Larry Solov, one of Breitbart's editors, informed me that they had freelance journalists dispersed around the country. The small office space housed all five of Breitbart's websites: *BigGovernment.com*, *BigJournalism.com*, *BigHollywood.com*, *Breitbart.tv*, and *Bretibart.com*. I was given an empty desk on the second floor, along with the other editors, and spent my days observing the editors and their meetings, asking questions when I wanted to clarify a remark or a process I had witnessed. Formal interviews with each editor occurred in the open concept office space, while most of my interviews with Breitbart took place in his car, at the nearby *Starbucks* café, and at various restaurants located on Wilshire Boulevard.

The most interesting element of interviewing Breitbart was how willing he was to have someone shadow him for ten hours a day. I met his wife and children, as they were often at the office; I was brought to every meeting he attended, even ones with old friends, such as a former writer for *The Jimmy Kimmel Show*. He explained the importance of maintaining relationships in the city and how inter-connected politics and Hollywood had become following the Bush administration. I will discuss this further in Chapter Four.

Following Breitbart around Los Angeles helped me recognize the emphasis placed on maintaining (offline) relationships. I was experiencing media networking first hand, with someone deemed by many liberal journalists as a "disruptive force in the media" (Beam 2010: 36). In a March 2010 article in *Slate* magazine, journalist Christopher Beam discusses Breitbart's infamous audacity for challenging the status quo:

For Breitbart, bringing down the mainstream media isn't just a crusade. It's practically a civil rights issue - only more fun. He considers himself a journalist-slash-entertainer, an Edward R. Murrow by way of the Merry Pranksters. What makes him different is that he's offensive in every sense of the word. "My entire business model is to go on offense," he [Breitbart] said.

"They don't like our aggressiveness." He knows how he's seen by the liberal establishment. "They want to portray me as crazy, unhinged, unbalanced. OK, good, fine. Fuck you. Fuck you. Fuck you" (Beam 2010: 34).

Given the media industry's portrayal of Breitbart, I knew that in order to include him as one of my case studies, I would have to spend time with him, in his space, understanding his perspective. Over the course of our time together, he became a significant source of information given that he had worked with both Drudge and Huffington, the other two cases I would be examining.

Breitbart's blatant hostility towards the Democratic Party and liberal media formed the center of our interview dialogue. As an interviewer, I had to maintain complete neutrality and attempt to be perceived as sharing Breitbart's sentiments, based purely on composing myself as a neutral bystander. As Hammersley and Atkinson note:

Participants may be given a false impression [of the researcher]... This will often be a matter of researchers not mentioning their own views; but sometimes it may even involve them indicating agreement or acceptance despite their real beliefs (1983: 265).

I maintained a sense of neutrality by not reacting to many of the discriminatory and inappropriate comments that Breitbart would (often) yell during our interviews. I entered a mode of complacency whereby I often remained silent and let him rant. Hammersley and Atkinson refer to this process as "resisting over-identification" (1983: 115) with the subject:

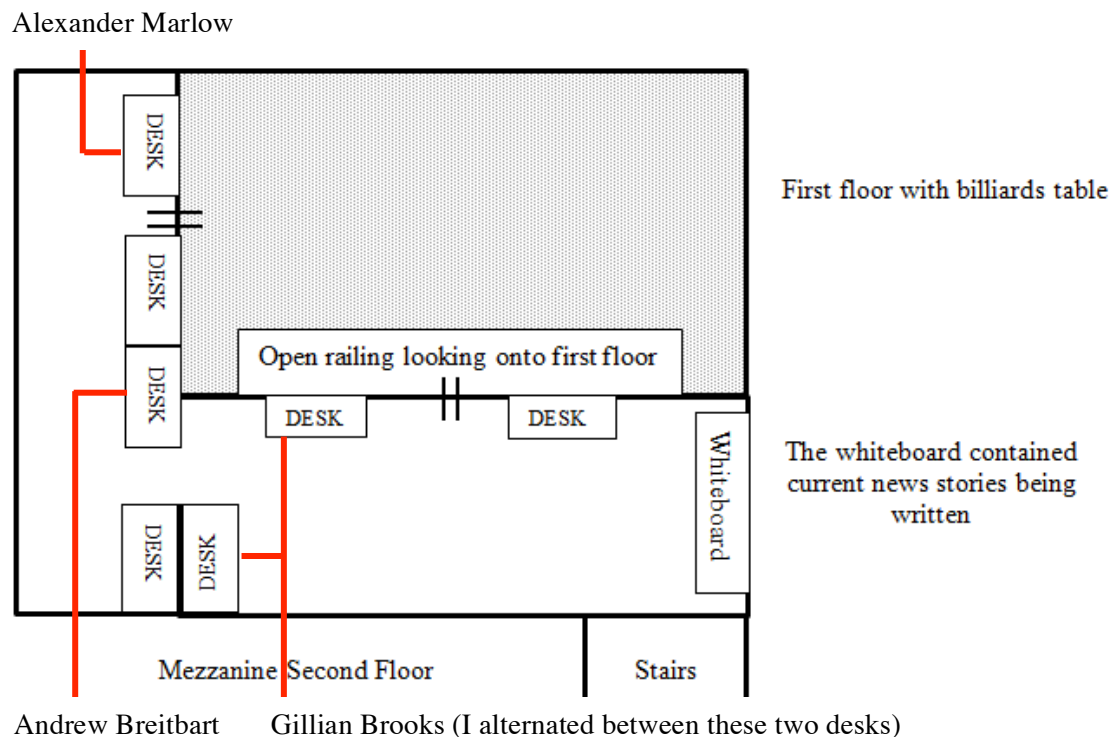
In so far as he or she resists over-identification or surrender to hosts, then it is likely that there will be a corresponding sense of betrayal, or at least divided loyalties... There can thus be no question of total commitment, 'surrender', or 'becoming'. There must always remain some part held back, some social and intellectual 'distance' (1983: 114-5).

Maintaining "intellectual distance" was challenging during my time with Breitbart; I had not experienced the need to separate myself to such a degree with other interviewees, yet my time spent in Los Angeles was my most insightful. My final interview with Breitbart took place on December 1, 2011; three months later on March 1, 2012, he died of a heart attack outside his home in Brentwood (Ng, *ABC News*, March 1, 2012). On April 20, 2012, *Breitbart.com* published the autopsy report, which stated that, "no prescription or illicit drugs were detected. The blood

alcohol was .04%, [and] no significant trauma was present and foul play is not suspected” (see Appendix X). He was 43 years old (Ng, *ABC News*, March 1, 2012).

The interviews I conducted with Breitbart were mostly done one-on-one; however, I often presented topics of discussion to the newsroom, and a conversation between editors would start to form. The unique set up of the office was more conducive to a group discussion than the newsroom at *The Huffington Post*. Peter Woods refers to this technique as a way to encourage interviewees to prompt one another: “‘Go on, tell him’, ‘What about when you ...?’ – using information not available to the researcher and in ways which turn out to be productive” (1979: 20). Due to the intimate nature of the office space and the perceived strong friendships existing between the then-six editors at *Breitbart.com*, supplementing my one-on-one interviews with a group discussion interview proved to be beneficial. Figure 2.19 is a diagram of the Breitbart office in Los Angeles.

Figure 2.19. Breitbart offices in Los Angeles



By way of comparison, my interviews in New York and Washington, D.C. lasted between one and two hours. My time with Breitbart was wholly different: I spent most of my day asking questions as I shadowed him; he preferred a less structured

interview format, so I adapted my previous interview formula to accommodate his request. Due to the thorough way in which I conducted my interviews, towards the end of my fieldwork I was not gathering any new information nor were any new networks being revealed; I had reached saturation (Guest, Bunce and Johnson 2006). I felt that I now understood the space to which I had devoted six intensive months of research.

XI. Methodological limitations

As previously discussed, I was unable to interview Matt Drudge as part of my research. He did not refuse my numerous interview requests; he never responded. This is a limitation in my work and while it was disappointing that I was unable to interview him, I did balance this lack of contact with him by interviewing other individuals who had either encountered Drudge, or had an anecdote about his role in the subfield of online journalism.

On November 17, 2015, I met with a Steve Bannon, the Executive Chairman of *Breitbart.com* and the host of the Sirius XM radio show, “Breitbart News Daily”. The day we met was a significant day for the company as they had launched *Breitbart Israel* that morning. I met with Bannon to discuss the relationship between Drudge and Breitbart and to see if Drudge was as reclusive as I had been led to believe during my fieldwork in 2011. Six weeks prior to my interview with Bannon, *Bloomberg Businessweek* wrote a cover story on him titled, “This Man Is The Most Dangerous Political Operative in America” (Green, October 8, 2015). In the article, Bannon is depicted as a confidante and strategist to those seeking power on the right. Green writes,

Bannon’s life is a succession of Gatsbyish reinventions that made him rich and landed him squarely in the middle of the 2016 presidential race: He’s been a naval officer, investment banker, minor Hollywood player, and political impresario. When former Disney chief Michael Ovitz’s empire was falling to pieces, Bannon sat Ovitz down in his living room and delivered the news that he was finished. When Sarah Palin was at the height of her fame, Bannon was whispering in her ear. When Donald Trump decided to blow up the Republican presidential field, Bannon encouraged his circus-like visit to the U.S.-Mexico border (*Bloomberg Businessweek*, October 8, 2015).

I joined Bannon in New York City for his morning radio talk show from 6am – 9am at the McGraw-Hill Building at 1221 Avenue of the Americas. I did not participate as part of the show, but sat in-studio listening to his interviews with various callers,

including Governor Mike Huckabee, Senator Rand Paul and political commentator, Dinesh D'Souza. Following the show, Bannon confirmed that I would never be able to speak to Drudge. He elaborated by informing me that Drudge had attended Breitbart's funeral in Los Angeles on March 6, 2012 and prior to that, had not been seen in public since the White House Correspondent's Dinner in Washington, D.C. on April 26, 2003. This confirms that given that Drudge had been absent from the public eye for nearly 10 years, I was not going to be granted an interview. The four hours I spent with Bannon in November 2015 confirmed this methodological limitation. He also discussed Drudge's influential role in Breitbart.com, specifically stating: "Andrew worked for five years for Drudge for free. He was Drudge's apprentice and he wanted to make him proud by starting his own site". Breitbart and Drudge's relationship will be discussed further in my empirical chapters.

Another methodological limitation in this study is that the nature of conducting qualitative research is expensive and time-consuming. My data sample consisted of a narrow population of relevant actors as opposed to random sampling; this was an additional methodological limitation. In interviewing media players, the size of the sample is contingent on the availability of these individuals. Therefore maintaining contact with this relatively small number of participants was essential as they were invaluable to my research.

XII. Ethics

The power dynamic fostered during my fieldwork between researcher and informant stemmed from the insider-outsider atmosphere perpetuated throughout media industries. A sense of knowing more information than one does is a common trend in newsrooms, as journalists attempt to navigate their position according to the hierarchy of editors.

An ethical issue that I confronted concerned issues around the disclosure of information. Writers and editors who agreed to be interviewed were putting their careers at risk as a result of my interpretation of their comments (Smith 2007). In an industry that is currently undergoing an identity crisis (Bogaerts & Carpentier 2013, Broersma & Peters 2013, and Deuze 2005), many of these organizations were putting themselves in a compromising position by having me ask questions about them, and how they saw themselves within this space. My intention was never to expose my

interviewees to any risk; I merely wanted to gain an understanding of how these individuals see what they do as being part of the field of journalism. Due to the incestuous nature of the subfield of online journalism, with writers and editors moving from one website to another, I was careful not to reiterate any views expressed by interviewees about other individuals in the field. While these views were useful in my analysis, during my interviews with subjects, I did not verbalize the noticeably strong sentiments continually expressed by various interviewees about key players within this space.

The next chapter will outline my conceptual framework in order to explain how online news organizations become a legitimate member of the subfield of online journalism.

Chapter 3: Developing a conceptual framework

In analyzing my field data, I discovered that the three case study organizations examined in this study, all achieved a degree of legitimacy in a similar way. They managed to achieve legitimacy (as will be demonstrated in my empirical chapters) within the unique subfield of online journalism: a space comprised of its own values that extends the conventional boundaries of journalism. While these online news sites may be successful in terms of their daily traffic (as illustrated in the previous chapter), within the overarching field of journalism, they need to demonstrate some of the internal values of the field of journalism (referred to by Bourdieu as “the principles of legitimation”) in order to become part of the subfield of online journalism. In demonstrating the internal values of the field, the online news organization in question is recognized as being able to play the game, having illustrated an understanding of the rules. This will be explained further in this chapter as I outline the conceptual framework for this study.

This chapter will first outline the marked differences between the field of journalism and the subfield of online journalism, key concepts that are referenced throughout this dissertation. In order to further situate my research question, the next section (II) of this chapter will discuss Bourdieu’s *principles of legitimation* and its influence on my conceptual development. The third section will outline my conceptual framework: *the proximity paradigm* (section III). The conceptual framework will provide greater insight into how my study fills a gap that has yet to be researched by media sociologists: outlining the factors required for an online news organization to gain legitimacy in the subfield of online journalism. The final section of this chapter (IV) will outline how chapters four through six illustrate how through the accumulation of three specific resources, the three online news organizations examined in this study, garner social capital from their distinct networks and convert it to symbolic capital as a means of gaining legitimacy in the subfield of online journalism.

Definitions of legitimacy vary according to scholars, but at the core of the definition is a consensus that legitimacy is the perception of approval of an organization’s actions based on stakeholders’ evaluations (Rao 1994; Ruef and Scott 1998; Lawrence 1998; Deephouse and Carter 2005; Elsbach 2006). Stakeholders rely on institutionalized standards to assess and compare organizations (Rindova and

Fombrun 1999). Figure 3.0 outlines the varying definitions of legitimacy as addressed by leading organizational theorists.

Figure 3.0. Defining “legitimacy”

David Deephouse and Suzanne Carter (2005)	“...a central element of legitimacy, as currently understood, is meeting and adhering to the expectations of a social system’s norms, values, rules and meanings (2005: 331).
Brayden King and David Whetten (2008)	“Legitimacy is a perception that organizations conform with taken-for-granted standards... Organizations are seen as having legitimacy when they comply with the minimum standards of a particular social identity prototype – a prototypical x-type organization” (2008: 192).
John W. Meyer and W. Richard Scott (1983)	“Organizational legitimacy refers to ... the extent to which the array of established cultural accounts provide explanations for an organization’s existence” (1983: 201).
Hayagreeva Rao (1994)	“Legitimacy is an intangible asset that determines the ability or organizations to garner capital and personnel and thereby influences the survival of organizations (1994: 29).
Mark Suchman (1995)	“Legitimacy is an anchor-point of a vastly expanded theoretical apparatus addressing the normative and cognitive forces that constrain, construct and empower organizational actors” (1995: 571).

Source: King, Brayden G. and David A. Whetten. “Rethinking the Relationship Between Reputation and Legitimacy: A Social Actor Conceptualization”. *Corporate Reputation Review*. 2008. Volume 11, Number 3. p. 192; Suchman, Mark. “Managing legitimacy: strategic and institutional approaches”. *Academy of Management Review*. 1995. Volume 20. p. 57; Deephouse, David L. and Suzanne M. Carter. “An Examination of Differences Between Organizational Legitimacy and Organizational Reputation”. *Journal of Management Studies*. 2005. Volume 45, Number 2. p. 331; Rao, Hayagreeva. “The Social Construction of Reputation: Certification Contests, Legitimation, and the Survival of Organizations in the American Automobile Industry: 1895-1912”. *Strategic Management Journal*. 1994. Volume 15. p. 29; Meyer, John W. and W. Scott Richard. “Centralization and the legitimacy problems of local government”. In J.W. Meyer and W.R. Scott (Eds.). *Organizational Environments: Rituals and Rationality*. 1983. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage. p. 201

In drawing on the definitions cited in Figure 3.0 and for the sake of this study, my definition of “legitimacy” – with regard to journalism – will be based on a hierarchical, evaluative definition referring to the recognition by those in positions of power that the organization merits inclusion in their system (i.e. the subfield of online journalism, which exists as part of the field of journalism). In this chapter, I will be introducing this study’s conceptual framework; the proximity paradigm highlights the importance of accruing degrees of social capital and symbolic capital in order for nascent organizations seeking legitimacy to become part (as a subfield) of an established field. In referring to Anheier, Gerhards and Romo’s operational model of capital (see Figure 3.1), indicators of social capital and symbolic cultural capital (highlighted in red) are listed as “membership” and “genre hierarchies” (1995).

Figure 3.1. An operational model of forms of capital and social structure in cultural fields (Anheier, Gerhards, Romo, 1995)

Forms of Capital	Basic Distinction	Major Currency	Degree of Segmentation	Degree of Hierarchy	Indicators
Economic	Monetary success versus failure	Money	Weak	Strong	Economic status
Social	Member versus nonmember	Social contacts and connections	Strong	Weak	Membership
Cultural	Recognition versus indifference	Prestige	Strong	Strong	Reputation, Education
Symbolic Cultural	Art versus non-art	Legitimation	Strong	Strong	Genre hierarchies

Source: Anheier, Helmut K., Jurgen Gerhards, and Frank P. Romo. "Forms of Capital and Social Structure in Cultural Fields: Examining Bourdieu's Social Topography". *American Journal of Sociology*. Vol. 100, No. 4, 1995, p.867

In applying the terminology presented in Figure 3.1 to the discourse on traditional journalism and digital media, the influence of social and symbolic capital cannot be overlooked. The authors define social capital as “the sum of the actual and potential resources that can be mobilized through membership in social networks of actors and organizations” (1995: 862). Symbolic cultural capital refers to “the capacity to define and legitimize cultural, moral and artistic values, standards and styles. High-culture genres and writers of literary criticism may have more high degrees of symbolic capital, whereas writers in other genres, such as folk art, may enjoy little” (Anheier, Gerhards and Romo 1995: 862).

According to Anheier, Gerhards and Romo, the basic distinction for social capital is “member versus non-member” (1995) and the indicator is “membership” (1995). In relation to this study, social capital determines whether you are a “member versus [a] non-member” of the subfield of online journalism. As identified during my data collection, online news organizations are seeking “membership”. With regard to symbolic cultural capital, the basic distinction is “art versus non-art” (1995) and the indicator is “genre hierarchies” (1995). In applying Anheier, Gerhards and Romo’s operational model to this study, symbolic cultural capital identifies the difference between journalism versus non-journalism (similar to “art versus non-art”) and according to them the indicator is a genre hierarchy, ranking journalism according to a hierarchy (similar to ranking art as a hierarchy as stated in Anheier, Gerhards and Romo’s model). The accumulation of social capital and its subsequent conversion to symbolic capital will be examined throughout this dissertation.

I. The field of journalism vs. the subfield of online journalism

Many online news organizations are striving for an identity in the field of journalism, as stated during an interview with an anonymous political reporter on October 5, 2011 at *The Huffington Post*: “Early on we [*The Huffington Post*] understood that journalism was changing in terms of its consumption and its format. It was shifting and the industry needed to capitalize on that. We did, but some didn’t. That’s the difference. But that doesn’t make us part of their system. We are still outsiders to those who dismiss anything [done] online. We may never break in.” (HPF11). The interviewee is referring to the “system” of traditional journalism.

Entrance into the field of journalism is difficult given the elite network fostered by those in dominant positions. I will argue that the process required for entry is hierarchical: the field of journalism is more established than the subfield of online journalism, which resulted from an overlap between traditional journalism and blogging. The standards espoused by those in dominant positions in the field of journalism are based on what has traditionally been accomplished by those internal to this exclusive space. As Bourdieu states:

The fact that journalists – who in any case have much in common, profession of course, but also social origin and education – meet one another daily in debates that always feature the same cast of characters. All of which produces the closure that I mentioned earlier... (1998: 25).

Karen Sanders minimizes the elitist manner in which the journalistic community considers new players seeking entry. She argues that journalism can and should be an occupation available to anyone:

Professional status requires command of a specific area of knowledge which partly determines entry into the profession. Lawyers must know the law. But what body of knowledge is required of a journalist? Journalism, it is said, is more akin to a craft or trade, learned by doing. It should be open to all those who show the right aptitudes, usually summarized as a nose for news, a plausible manner and an ability to write and deliver concise, accurate copy to deadline (2003: 3).

While Sanders’ utopian interpretation of how a given individual can enter the journalism industry focuses on possessing the required skills, an individual needs to accumulate additional factors (as will be discussed in Chapters Four through Six) in order to be considered a legitimate player in the subfield of online journalism.

Throughout this dissertation, I will refer to both the field of journalism and the subfield of online journalism. It is important to identify the marked differences

between these two ecologies. The field of journalism, for example, is composed of legitimate news organizations, such as *The New York Times*. As Bourdieu states, “Journalism is a microcosm with its own laws, defined both by its position in the world at large and by the attractions and repulsions to which it is subject from other such microcosms” (1998: 39). This field is already established; the players that comprise this space are aware of their position within it. There exist players of status within this space that occupy a gatekeeping role. While they may not outwardly state who is allowed to enter, they do demonstrate a type of approval (of a given online news organization) through a variety of measures, such as acknowledging, citing or supporting the organization in question. According to Rindova et al., high-status actors “tend to garner a disproportionate amount of attention within their organizational field ... [They] are believed to be well-informed and have evaluated the organization positively” (2005: 1038). Based on my time in the field, I have determined that the high-status actors in the field of journalism comprise the following types as outlined in Figure 3.2.

Figure 3.2. Types of high-status individuals in the field of journalism

Type	Definition	Example
Cultural Intermediary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An individual or organization that is <i>culturally</i>* significant, easily identifiable and often referenced 	<i>The New York Times</i> <i>Vanity Fair</i> <i>Newsweek</i>
Prominent Player	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An individual or organization that is well-known based on having received significant press coverage His/her evaluation of a given event carries more weight than others Broad external status (based on close ties to a prestigious or elite institution, individual or event) 	President Obama The Tea Party
Credentialed Individual	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A signal of success within the media landscape (often achieved through an accreditation or award) Broad external status (based on previous exceptional task performance) 	The Pulitzer A White House Press Pass

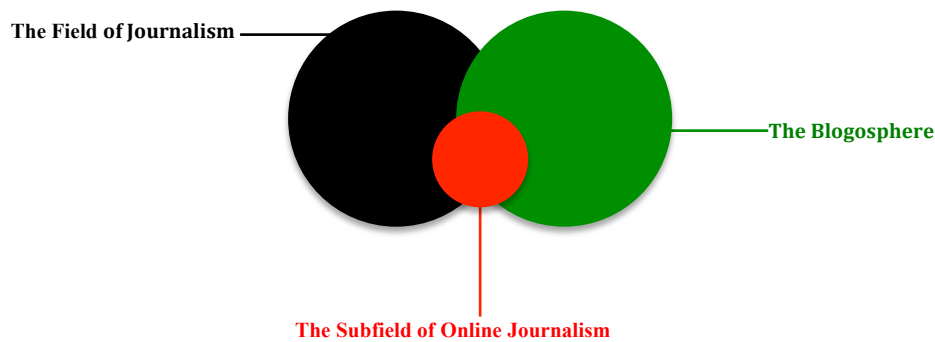
*The concept of culture used in this definition is based on whether the individual or organization has shown a tendency of being “in the know” – specifically having “their finger on the pulse of society”, as stated during my interview with David Friend of *Vanity Fair*.

These high-status actors are interpreters of the field of journalism, interpreting (whether consciously or not) and determining whether the acts performed by the online news organization in-question merits entry: “Interpreters in the field come to be justified in existing as the only people capable of accounting for the work and the

recognition of value that it enjoys” (Bourdieu: 1993: 74-75). This will be outlined later in this section.

I will argue that a subfield of online journalism has emerged, which is beyond the genre boundaries of the field of journalism. It is in a category of its own, composed of its own set of values (some of which are borrowed from the logic of the field of journalism), which I have identified by conducting case study research on three online news organizations that are (a) politically polarized, (b) digital natives, (c) commercially successful and (d) historically inter-connected. During my fieldwork, I identified three shared values that structure the subfield of online journalism: a unique environment that overlaps with both the field of journalism and the blogosphere (see Figure 3.3).

Figure 3.3. The field of journalism vs. the subfield of online journalism



In Figure 3.3, the subfield of online journalism is situated at the intersection between the field of journalism, on the one hand, and the blogosphere, on the other. It is within this interstitial space that the friction occurs and the borders start to be re-negotiated. The boundary of the circle representing the field of journalism is a barrier to entry. The subfield of online journalism is situated largely within the field of journalism, in so far as some of the journalistic values are similar, and yet it also overlaps with the blogosphere, given that the subfield of online journalism and the blogosphere share the same digital infrastructure and similar practices in some respects. It is at this intersection between traditional journalism and the blogosphere that this new subfield and questions of legitimacy have emerged. Contenders must demonstrate the “principles of legitimation” (Bourdieu 1998) in order to enter this contested space. Once past this point, online news organizations that have demonstrated the logic of the subfield of online journalism (referred to as the proximity paradigm) become part

of the subfield of online journalism. They are not full members of the field of journalism, but exist as a subfield. Figure 3.4 outlines the features of the field of journalism, the subfield of online journalism and the blogosphere.

Figure 3.4. Identifying the field of journalism, the subfield of online journalism and the blogosphere

THE FIELD OF JOURNALISM	THE SUBFIELD OF ONLINE JOURNALISM	THE BLOGOSPHERE
Professional standards exist (Witschge & Nygren 2009: 29)	“A mixed media culture” (Kovach and Rosenstiel 1999)	“A mixed media culture” (Kovach and Rosenstiel 1999)
Award recognition possible: The Pulitzer	Award recognition possible: The Pulitzer*	An increased focus on niche topics
Ethical standards imposed	Greater access to (stories, sources, and the ability to publish)	Greater access to (stories, sources, and the ability to publish)
Content considered for the Pulitzer must “adhere to the highest journalistic principles” (according to the Pulitzer Prize selection criteria)**	Content considered for the Pulitzer must “adhere to the highest journalistic principles” (according to the Pulitzer Prize selection criteria)**	Chronologically-ordered posts
“Affirm[s] the values of objectivity” (Bourdieu 1994: 5)	Content is “more interpretive” (McNair 2000), based on the reporter’s bias/interpretation of the event	
“Original business was in pre-Internet media” (Miel & Faris 2008: 3).	Referred to as “web-native media” (Miel & Faris 2008)	
Influenced by commercial and economic constraints (Bourdieu 1997: 62)	Collaborative format encouraged →referred to as “produsage” (Bruns & Jacobs 2006: 6) Networked media era (Russell 2013)	

**The Huffington Post* was awarded a Pulitzer Prize for Journalism in 2012.

**Until 2008, the Pulitzer Prize for Journalism was restricted to print journalism.

Bogaerts and Carpentier state that “journalism, like any social field, gains its’ meaning through discursive processes” (2013: 62). Every online news organization that I visited as part of my research was struggling with how best to categorize their work and situate themselves within this evolving news landscape. As an analyst, I listened to and reflected on the practical accounts of the online newsagents who maintain a presence within this online space and sought to situate their interpretation of their position in relation to other positions within the field, in order to formulate a thorough understanding of the subfield online journalism. This intersection is an interesting space in that online news organizations produce a similar product to traditional journalists in terms of breaking news, reporting on current affairs, relying on sources, etc., and yet they are dissimilar with regard to notions of access, as raised in Chapter One. Online news organizations are closer to the blogosphere in terms of occupying an exclusively digital space. It is as a result of this dichotomy that a subfield has formed – specifically providing a structured space for digitally native news organizations to exist. These organizations occupy a distinctive position in that

they exhibit characteristics that exist in both the traditional field of journalism and the blogosphere. As Bourdieu states:

Fields present themselves synchronically as structured spaces of positions (or posts) whose properties depend on their position within these spaces and which can be analysed independently of the characteristics of their occupants (which are partly determined by them) (1993a: 72).

The organizations examined in this dissertation, and introduced in Chapter Two, are located within the subfield of online journalism; this study chronicles how they acquired similar resources in order to become part of this subfield.

The following anecdote provides a context for this struggle to exist as part of the overarching field of journalism. As Drudge explained in his manifesto, “Because I have success, it doesn’t mean I’m part of the mainstream. I’m an outsider” (Drudge 2000: 3). Doug Harbrecht, former President of the National Press Club, remarked during an introduction to his interview with Drudge that he is in fact “a newsmaker”:

So why is Matt Drudge here? He's on the cutting edge of a revolution in our business and everyone in our business knows it. And like it or not, he's a newsmaker... And while many of his [Drudge's] colleagues are loathe to admit it, *The Drudge Report* has become a tip sheet for journalists ... But his critics say he embodies the most dangerous aspects of online, where a wacky conspiracy theory can move the stock market and people with impure hearts and hidden agendas can injure reputations and spread lies at will. So, Matt, know this: You may be, as the *New York Times* recently dubbed you, the nation's reigning mischief-maker; you may get it first sometimes, you may even get it right sometimes, your story of success is certainly compelling. But there aren't many in this hollowed room who consider you a journalist (Alterman 2013).

Harbrecht’s comment that Drudge is a newsmaker, but not a journalist, is illustrative of this ongoing identity crisis (Bogaerts & Carpentier 2013, Broersma & Peters 2013, and Deuze 2005) that is plaguing the media industry. While an organization may have commercial success, the established field of journalism may think otherwise. Even for the most radical journalists, such as Matt Drudge, they care about gaining recognition for their work. Drudge used various strategies to gain legitimacy as part of the subfield of online journalism and these will be identified in subsequent chapters.

Given that journalism maintains its power dynamic through “self-reinforcement”, new players seeking entry need to reinforce the internal values of the space in order to be able to compete for a place in it. This includes conducting journalism in a manner that addresses the stakes highlighted by Bourdieu: “The

scoop, the ‘exclusive’, professional reputations, and so on” (1998: 41). Maintaining relationships with individuals in positions of power was one of the strategies used by the three online news organizations examined in this study in order to accumulate the social capital that led to their legitimacy. This strategy is directly related to Bourdieu’s emphasis on relationships as a fundamental element of social capital:

The reproduction of social capital presupposes an unceasing effort of sociability, a continuous series of exchanges in which recognition is endlessly affirmed and reaffirmed... Because the social capital accruing from a relationship is that much greater to the extent that the person who is the object of it is richly endowed with capital (mainly social, but also cultural and even economic capital), the possessors of an inherited social capital, symbolized by a great name, are able to transform all circumstantial relationships into lasting connections (1986: 52).

The next section will outline Bourdieu’s *principles of legitimation* and their influence on my conceptual framework.

II. Bourdieu’s *principles of legitimation*

A journalist is a journalist because another journalist describes him or her as such. As Bourdieu states, “a ‘good historian’ is someone good historians call a good historian. The whole business is circular by definition” (1998: 57). For the field of journalism, the standards that define whether an organization is part of their industry are based on the principles of legitimation (peer and public recognition), as raised by Bourdieu. Recognition by someone who is considered legitimate grants legitimacy. For example, *The New York Times* (an established member of the field of journalism) can grant legitimacy because it is a legitimate news organization: having won 112 Pulitzer Prizes (Rainey and Garrison, April 17, 2012) and been recognized by the industry as the national “newspaper of record”, according to *Encyclopaedia Britannica*.

In “The Rules of the Journalistic Field: Pierre Bourdieu’s Contribution to the Sociology of the Media”, Philippe Marlière cites Bourdieu’s measurement of influence within the journalistic field, noting that the member must combine both economic strength and high symbolic capital in order to be considered influential (1998). In addition, to achieve dominance within the field, the member must be capable of “distorting the space around itself” and imposing its own views on the

field” (Marlière 1998: 223). For Bourdieu, *Le Monde* occupies this position in the French press (1997: 48). As Tim Markham states,

For Bourdieu, the continued existence of a coherent journalistic field depends on *illusio*, the collective sense amongst all actors that a game defined according to a universalized set of principles is worth playing (2011: 32).

In order to sustain the principles of the game, the actors within the field retain their central role by imposing (at least a minimum) standard for entry, which is judged according to two principles of legitimation referred to by Bourdieu as peer recognition and public recognition (1998: 70). His text – *On Television and Journalism* – set the foundation for how evaluations of media fields should be conducted, emphasizing an embodiment of the internal values of the field of journalism through an identification of the principles of legitimation (1998: 70). Bourdieu’s principles of legitimation refer to (i) “peer recognition” and (ii) “recognition by the public at large” (1998: 70). Peer recognition is afforded to individuals “who internalize most completely the internal ‘values’ or principles of the field” (1998: 70), whereas public recognition refers to recognition by the public, “which is measured by numbers of readers, listeners, or viewers, and therefore, in the final analysis, by sales and profits” (1998: 70).

Within the subfield of online journalism, however, the values that comprise this space are referred to in this dissertation as “the proximity paradigm”. While the digital natives examined in this study are seeking legitimacy in the subfield of online journalism, they were first recognized as candidates for the subfield based on their online popularity, measured according to daily traffic (i.e. public recognition). Public and peer recognition are values that comprise the field of journalism (Bourdieu 1998) and therefore given the overlap between the field and subfield, illustrating one or both of these values was achieved by my three case study organizations in order for them to display a degree of legitimacy.

One’s position within the field determines the positioning of subsequent players (Bourdieu 1993a). Bourdieu states, “in order for a field to function, there have to be stakes and people prepared to play the game” (1993a: 72). Therefore, when a new player (i.e. an online news organization) emerges within an established field, such as the field of journalism, those players who already occupy high status with the field (i.e. the incumbents) determine a new player’s entry into “the game” according to pre-existing practices and values, such as uncovering an exclusive news story. As

Bourdieu notes, “all production is oriented toward preserving established values ... it is the *structure* of the journalistic field that determines the intensity and orientation of its mechanisms...” (1998: 73).

The concept of “preserving established values” illustrates why traditional journalists are dismissive of online journalists; they fear that online journalism does not abide by the traditional tenets of the profession (Peters and Broersma 2013). In 1986, the International Federation of Journalists (IFJ) published an international declaration “proclaimed as a standard of professional conduct for journalists engaged in gathering, transmitting, disseminating and commenting on news and information in describing events” (*International Federation of Journalists*, March 14, 2003). Figure 3.5 outlines these standards.

Figure 3.5. The IFJ Declaration of Principles on the Conduct of Journalists

- (i) Respect for truth and for the right of the public to truth is the first duty of the journalist.
- (ii) In pursuance of his duty, the journalist shall at all times defend the principles of freedom in the honest collection and publication of news, and of the right to fair comment and criticism.
- (iii) The journalist shall report only in accordance with facts of which he/she knows the origin. The journalist shall not suppress essential information or falsify documents.
- (iv) The journalist shall only use fair methods to obtain news, photographs and documents.
- (v) The journalist shall do the utmost to rectify any published information which is found to be harmfully inaccurate.
- (vi) The journalist shall observe professional secrecy regarding the source of the information observed in confidence.
- (vii) The journalist shall be alert to the danger of discrimination being furthered by media, and shall do the utmost to avoid facilitating such discriminations based on, among other things, race, sex, sexual orientation, language, religion, political or other opinions, and national and social origins.
- (viii) The journalist shall regard as grave professional offenses the following: plagiarism; malicious misinterpretation; calumny; libel; slander; unfounded accusations; acceptance of a bribe in any form in consideration of either publication or suppression.
- (ix) Journalists worthy of the name shall deem it their duty to observe faithfully the principles stated above. Within the general law of each country the journalist shall recognize in matters of professional matters the jurisdiction of colleagues only, to the exclusion of any kind of interference by governments or others.

Source: “IFJ Declaration of Principles on the Conduct of Journalists”. *International Federation of Journalists*. March 14, 2003. <http://www.ifj.org/en/articles/ifj-declaration-of-principles-on-the-conduct-of-journalists> Accessed: September 10, 2013

Although many online news organizations conduct journalism in a manner that aligns with the criteria addressed in Figure 3.5, given the unique nature of this field, abiding by a code of conduct does not guarantee legitimacy in the eyes of established players. These key players who occupy a position of status are often of a distinct pedigree and therefore skeptical of newcomers infiltrating their closely-knit network. Bourdieu

notes that the state of the field and the subsequent accumulation of necessary capital are based on distinct strategies and struggles:

The structure of the field is a *state* of the power relations among the agents or institutions engaged in the struggle, or, to put it another way, a state of the distribution of specific capital which has been accumulated in the course of previous struggles and which orients subsequent strategies. This structure, which governs the strategies aimed at transforming it, is itself always at stake (1993a: 73).

I argue here that a structured approach exists for those online news organizations that seek to be recognized by those in dominant positions within the field. As revealed during my time in the field (and outlined in the following chapters) online news organizations need to illustrate both public and peer recognition in order to gain initial entry into the field, thus signalling that they value the logic of the field of journalism. The online news organization is then able to enter the field, but only as a member of the subfield of online journalism, which is composed of its own values that extend from Bourdieu's principles of legitimation and are referred to as the proximity paradigm. The next section of this chapter is based on my understanding of the subfield of online journalism and will discuss how nascent players gain entry into an established field by employing what I have termed: the *proximity paradigm*.

III – Introducing the proximity paradigm

The conceptual framework that will be employed in this dissertation is called the *proximity paradigm*. It refers to the process of gaining legitimacy that I have identified in studying my three cases studies. The proximity paradigm borrows from Bourdieu's concept of the principles of legitimation, as will be illustrated in this section.

As briefly introduced in the previous subsection, online news organizations seeking legitimacy employ the elements of the *proximity paradigm* (which represent values internal to the subfield of online journalism). They gain these resources by relying on the accumulation of social capital and symbolic capital, as will be discussed in this study. The conversion of social capital into symbolic capital relies on the organization seeking legitimacy to build a network rich in social capital (strong ties to individuals of status) and then borrow the reputation, distinction and/or prestige (i.e. symbolic capital) affiliated with that individual, allowing the online news organization in-question to gain a similar degree of prestige as the high status player.

This form of conversion is possible based on the formation of a strategic network, with online news organizations situating themselves in proximity to those who can provide them with the capital they need to participate in this exchange. This form of conversion will be explained later in this study with regard to the *associative resources of return transaction model*.

I have chosen the term “proximity paradigm” because online news organizations seeking to be considered part of the subfield of online journalism become contenders through the employment of internal values of the field, illustrating that symbolically – through an understanding of the space – they are in a *proximate* position to the field. This is achieved predominantly through an accumulation of social capital, as will be illustrated in detail in Chapters Four through Six. I developed the framework by bridging the work of Bourdieu and his understanding of the journalistic field, Rodney Benson’s interpretation of his work, theoretical findings related to legitimacy as discussed by organizational theorists such as Rindova, King and Whetten and by analyzing comments that were reiterated during my time in the field.

Bourdieu references a degree of proximity that players establish in order to accrue degrees of social capital:

These relationships may exist only in the practical state, in material and/or symbolic exchanges which help to maintain them... Being based on indissolubly material and symbolic exchanges, the establishment and maintenance of which pre-suppose reacknowledgment of proximity, they are also partially irreducible to objective relations of proximity in physical (geographical) space or even in economical and social space (1986: 51).

Ron Boschma, author of “Proximity and Innovation: A Critical Assessment”, argues that in addition to geographical proximity, there are other types of proximity that should be measured. Boschma’s research focuses on innovation growth and he maintains that a firm’s geographical proximity is only one dimension required for innovation to prosper. He presents five types of proximity to determine whether geographical proximity is still an important role for innovation “given the fact that other dimensions of proximity can also fulfill that role” (2005: 62). Figure 3.6 outlines these five types of proximity.

Figure 3.6. Types of proximity

TYPE	DEFINITION
Cognitive	“Firms search in close proximity to their existing knowledge base, which provides opportunities and sets constraints for further improvement... Thus, cognitive proximity facilitates effective communication” (Boschma 2010: 63).
Organizational	“Organizational proximity is believed to be beneficial for learning and innovation. New knowledge creation goes along with uncertainty and opportunism... Organizational arrangements (such as networks) are not only mechanisms that coordinate transactions, but also they are vehicles that enable the transfer and exchange of information and knowledge in a world full of uncertainty (Cooke and Morgan, 1998)... Gilly and Torre (2000) refer to ‘the same space of relations’ based on effective ‘interactions of various nature’ on the one hand. On the other hand, it includes similarity in which actors are connected by sharing the same reference space and knowledge” (Boschma 2010: 64-65).
Social	“Social proximity is defined here in terms of socially embedded relations between agents at the micro-level. Relations between actors are socially embedded when they involve trust based on friendship, kinship and experience... The notion of social proximity originates from the embeddedness literature (Polanyi, 1944; Granovetter, 1985)...the literature indicates that economic relations are to some extent always embedded in a social context” (Boschma 2010: 66).
Institutional	“Whereas social proximity has been defined in terms of socially embedded relations between agents at the micro-level (based on friendship, kinship and past experience), institutional proximity will be associated with the institutional framework at the macro-level... Institutional structures may provide a basis on which some forms of organizational arrangements better develop than other forms (Boschma 2010: 68).
Geographical	“... geographical proximity is defined in a very restricted manner. It refers to the spatial or physical distance between economic actors, both in its absolute and relative meaning... In addition, Freel (2003) claimed that there exists an inverse relationship between geographical and cognitive proximity. Only when the requisite knowledge differs considerably from the internal knowledge base of firms can geographical proximity then play a role in bridging this gap” (Boschma 2010: 70).

Source: Boschma, Ron A. “Proximity and Innovation: A Critical Assessment”. *Regional Studies*. Vol. 39. pp. 63-70

Boschma’s five types of proximity, briefly introduced in Chapter One, also influenced my conceptualization of the paradigm. With cognitive proximity highlighting effective communication based on proximity to an existing knowledge base; organizational proximity referring to actors being connected by sharing the same reference space; social proximity referring to an actor’s socially embedded relations based on trust; institutional proximity relating to the institutional framework that has formed; and, geographical proximity, referring to the physical distance between actors. The proximity paradigm comprises a set of criteria based on an online news organization’s existing knowledge of the shared values that exist within the journalism industry, who exist according to the same reference space (digitally native online news organizations) within a larger institutionalized framework (part of the field of journalism), with active presences in three important US cities (Los Angeles for Hollywood, New York for media and Washington, D.C. for politics). In citing

work conducted in the 1990s at the French School of Proximity Dynamics, Boschma states that, “in the school’s view, proximity meant a lot more than just geography” (2005: 63).

The first element of the proximity paradigm is termed (*affiliated*) *status*, referring to an online news organization’s strategic positioning of itself to individuals of status. In numerous cases, these individuals often have significant degrees of social capital, such as access to elite individuals, networks and/or status-granting opportunities. The use of gaining social capital through relationships with individuals of status will be examined in detail in Chapter Four.

The second tenet is the notion of (*gaining a*) “*scoop*”: a concept discussed by Bourdieu in *On Television and Journalism*. He refers to it as an exclusive story that journalists yearn to uncover in order to gain an edge over their competitors: “The obsession with ‘scoops’ and the unquestioned bias in favor of the news that is the newest and hardest to get” (1998: 6). Given the degree of competition – for readers, advertisers, etc. – that exists between offline and online journalists, I knew that the use of “the scoop” would constitute an essential element with which to achieve legitimate status. Chapter Five will address this further in relation to the use of social capital and access to exclusive information.

The final tenet of the paradigm is (*the use of*) *sources*. Throughout my review of existing literature and in analyzing interviews from my fieldwork, journalists’ use of sources was continually discussed and highlighted as an essential element required for work to be considered part of the profession:

Responsible journalism can be achieved by means of objectivity, factual accuracy, and the verification of information. Objectivity and factual accuracy become ritualized as justifications for the truth-value of the information which the reporter transmits. The newsman’s relationship to information is thus one of detachment and neutrality, and his relationship to news sources is straightforward – sources simply provide the reporter with news to be reported (Johnstone, Slawski, and Bowman, 1972: 523).

Couldry, Fenton and Phillips echo this statement in their discussions of the use of sources by online journalists. As Phillips writes, “The relationship between journalists and their sources is central to any claim that the news media may make to a role within a Habermasian ‘public sphere’” (2010: 87). I will be discussing the use of sources by the three cases in relation to the accumulation of social capital and its subsequent conversion to symbolic capital in Chapter Six.

The field of journalism is a unique space where illustrating one's recognition (of the rules of the game) is an important factor for signalling an understanding of and commitment to its logic. As Bourdieu states,

The new players have to pay an entry fee which consists in recognition of the value of the game (selection and co-option always pay great attention to the indices of commitment to the game, investment in it) and in (practical) knowledge of the principles of the functioning of the game (1993a: 73-74).

A variety of factors can determine an individual's status within a field. In journalism, these include abiding by a professional code of ethics and/or having the status to affirm another player's position in the field by "picking-up" their story, as highlighted by Bourdieu:

Like the literary field or the artistic field, then, the journalistic field is the site of a specific, and specifically cultural, model that is imposed on journalists through a system of overlapping constraints and the controls that each of these brings to bear on the others. It is respect for these constraints and controls (sometimes termed a code of ethics) that establishes reputations of professional morality. In fact, outside perhaps the 'pick-ups' (when one's work is picked up by another journalist), the value and meaning of which depend on the positions within the field of those who do the taking up and those who benefit from it, there are relatively few indisputable positive sanctions (1998: 70-71).

The proximity paradigm represents the logic of the subfield of online journalism. Whatever recognition the online news organizations have gained in the eyes of established players (see Figure 3.7) is due to their use of social capital and their success in getting "scoops" (among other things) – in other words, the very elements of the proximity paradigm. Once peer recognition was achieved, along with public recognition, *Breitbart.com*, *The Drudge Report* and *The Huffington Post* had gained a partial degree of legitimacy within the field of journalism, but only as a member of its subfield. Figure 3.7 illustrates how the online news organizations in this study achieved both peer and public recognition. Public recognition is measured according to commercial success (readers, page views, profits, etc.), whereas peer recognition is measured by exhibiting the internal values of the field of journalism (Bourdieu 1998). These values include: a news scoop, having a story picked up, receiving an industry award, official accreditation, etc. The public recognition column refers to unique monthly visitors to the site. The peer recognition column includes the categories of "high-status individuals" introduced earlier in this chapter in Figure 3.2. The

“confirming incidents” column in Figure 3.7 lists the incidents that confirmed the online news organization’s peer recognition by individuals or organizations of status.

Figure 3.7. Achieving peer and public recognition

Online News Organization	Peer Recognition		Public Recognition*
	Confirming Incident	High-Status Category	
<i>Breitbart.com</i>	Keynote speaker at the first Tea Party Convention	“Prominent Player”	14,953,356
	Dismantled well-known non-profit organization (ACORN)	“Prominent Player”	
	Uncovered political scandal of high-status Senator (Anthony Weiner)	“Prominent Player”	
<i>The Drudge Report</i>	First online journalist to receive a White House Press Pass	“Credentialed Individual”	23,133,252
	“Scooped” well-known news magazine (<i>Newsweek</i>)	“Cultural Intermediary”	
	Uncovered political scandal of U.S. President (Clinton/Lewinsky)	“Prominent Player”	
<i>The Huffington Post</i>	Pulitzer Prize received	“Credentialed Individual”	85,042,144
	Recognition by President Obama at news conference	“Prominent Player”	
	Positive news coverage in high-status publications (<i>Vanity Fair</i> and <i>Vogue</i>)	“Cultural Intermediary”	

*Unique monthly visitors (March – September 2013) Source: www.quantcast.com/breitbart.com; www.quantcast.com/drudgereport.com www.quantcast.com/huffingtonpost.com

Figure 3.7 identifies specific incidents where the online news organizations examined in this study, illustrate their understanding of the values of the field of journalism by either behaving or producing content that would encourage their likelihood of being recognized by high-status individuals, thus validating their candidacy to enter the field. This validation can occur in a number of ways, such as having their story

“picked-up” by editors at top newspapers (*The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, etc.); television producers booking individuals cited in their stories on their programs (i.e. Monica Lewinsky, James O’Keefe, Nora Ephron, etc.); or receiving rewards and accreditation from the industry, such as the Pulitzer Prize for Journalism (*The Huffington Post*), receiving the first White House press pass for an online journalist (*The Drudge Report*), or prestigious speaking engagements (*Breitbart.com*). As John Harris, co-founder of *Politico* stated with regard to the influence of Matt Drudge, “The power of it comes from the community of people that read it: operatives, bookers, reporters, producers and politicians” (Carr 2011: 2). Harris’ quote illustrates that the potential reach of an online news organization is dependent on individuals who occupy a position of status to recognize it as important, and subsequently deserving of further judgment, as part of a subfield of the field. This will be discussed in detail in Chapters Four through Six.

In *On Television and Journalism*, Bourdieu cites a case whereby French judges appeared on television in order to increase their position in the judicial field; he referred to their actions as “short-circuit[ing] internal hierarchies” (1998: 56). The French judges “made use of television to change the power relations inside their field” (1998: 56) gaining recognition in a manner that few had considered. Online news organizations seeking legitimacy in the subfield of online journalism employ a similar tactic by relying on the accumulation of social capital and symbolic capital as mechanisms for acquiring the tenets of the *proximity paradigm*; this will be demonstrated throughout my empirical chapters. The online news organizations “short-circuit internal hierarchies” by leveraging “internal values” (Bourdieu 1998: 56), such as the use of the “scoop” (as will be discussed in Chapter Five), to illustrate their understanding of the principles required to compete in this space: be it economic or symbolic competition. As Bourdieu states:

Economic competition between networks or newspapers for viewers, readers, or for marketshare, takes place concretely in the form of a contest between journalists. This contest has its own, specific stakes – the scoop, the “exclusive”, professional reputations, and so on. This kind of competition is neither experienced nor thought of as a struggle purely for economic gain, even though it remains subject to pressures deriving from the position the news medium itself occupies within a larger set of economic and symbolic power relations (1998: 41).

The online news organization seeking legitimacy gains a “scoop” through its network rich in social capital, as will be explained in my empirical chapters.

With the proliferation of online media and concurrent struggles faced by print media, the former is slowly beginning to occupy a substantial position as a news medium “within a large set of economic and symbolic power relations” (Bourdieu 1998: 41); yet within the field of journalism itself, online news organizations struggle to identify their position within this evolving ecology. Bourdieu argues that relativity plays an important role in a field, determining the status of a given medium at a given time: “What counts in a field is relative weight, relative impact. A newspaper can remain absolutely the same, not lose a single reader, yet be profoundly altered because its relative importance in the field has changed” (1998: 42).

This dissertation contends that the field of journalism is changing. Existing literature on online journalism has paid insufficient attention to the importance of social capital and the use of an organization’s network; the proximity paradigm will attempt to correct this deficiency. This next section will outline the remainder of this study.

IV – Structuring the study

The following chapters will highlight the role of social capital as a collective asset used by the three online news organizations examined in this dissertation to gain legitimacy in the subfield of online journalism. These online news organizations acquired social capital through a variety of strategies, and then leveraged their acquisition by converting it into symbolic capital. The manner in which they acquired social capital is best understood in employing the proximity paradigm. Chapter Four will discuss the use of social capital by organizations seeking recognition through (the use of affiliated) status, the first tenet of the proximity paradigm. Chapter Five will apply (the use of) the scoop (the second tenet) as a strategy used to acquire social capital. Finally, Chapter Six will address the influence of social capital through the use of sources. These three empirical chapters will each address the theme of social capital being converted into symbolic capital, a key finding discovered during my time in the field. All three case studies (*Breitbart.com*, *The Drudge Report* and *The Huffington Post*) will be analyzed in each chapter, revealing a network theory of social capital that has contributed to the legitimation of these organizations as part of the subfield of online journalism.

In my empirical chapters, I will illustrate that there exists a distinct logic to the subfield of online journalism and that this logic is composed of the characteristics

defining the proximity paradigm: (i) (affiliated) status, (ii) the “scoop” and (iii) sources. By satisfying these conditions, these online news organizations (*Breitbart.com*, *The Drudge Report* and *The Huffington Post*) attained legitimacy in the subfield of online journalism. Studies conducted on online journalism reference one or more of these defining factors when discussing how offline news organizations transition online; yet no research has examined how news organizations with no offline equivalent attempt to exist within their own subfield, as part of the larger field of journalism.

My findings reveal, as will be explained in the coming chapters, that these three online news organizations positioned themselves in close proximity to established players (politicians, celebrities, etc.) in order to accumulate social capital and then convert it by borrowing the established player’s reputation as part of their own. In the process, these online news organizations relinquished their autonomy for the sake of legitimacy, regularly publishing stories that benefitted the individuals within their network, in exchange for social capital. A reciprocal formula developed, as will be outlined later in the next chapter. According to numerous scholars such as Robert Putnam and Wayne E. Baker, reciprocity and social capital are related. As Robert Putnam states, “reciprocity is the engine of social capital” (2000: 134).

Angela Phillips notes that historically, traditional news organizations would conduct themselves in a similar reciprocal manner, not to gain recognition, but to maintain their status, catering to the sensibilities of their stakeholders for fear of losing support – be it financial or otherwise. She writes,

Information that is publicly available on the web is being “cannibalized” and re-angled with minimal verification. Journalists are being used simply to re-order copy or, in the case of large public reports, to look through and pull out the information which is most likely to “hit the political spot” for their own newspaper... The requirements of democracy and commercial survival seem to be pointing in the same direction, indicating a need for reporters to be allowed to move back towards a more autonomous place within the field. Until that happens, one is forced to conclude that the overall effect of the Internet on journalism is to provide a diminishing range of the same old sources albeit in newer bottles (2010: 99, 101).

Phillips’ notion of “hitting the political spot” aligns with the argument that catering to the specific sentiment of a news organization is a common occurrence online. She concludes that the Internet is compromising the degree to which an online news organization can be autonomous. While this may be the case, my study hopes to

illustrate that online news organizations seeking recognition – specifically those examined in this dissertation – are unable to maintain complete autonomy as a result of the reliance on their network, which has been strategically shaped by them through an accumulation of social and symbolic capital. This next chapter will examine the first tenet of the proximity paradigm: (affiliated) *status*. The three cases examined in this study strategically infiltrated a network comprised of players of status in order to gain recognition; this will be explained in detail in the following sections. As Bourdieu states, “The existence of a network is not a natural given” (1986: 248). He continues, adding that in establishing a distinct network, one can use and re-use their relationship with this group in a variety of ways. He explains,

It is the product of an endless effort at institution... The network of relationships is the product of investment strategies, individual or collective, consciously or unconsciously aimed at establishing or reproducing social relationships that are directly usable in the short or long term, i.e., at transforming contingent relations, such as those of neighbourhood, the workplace, or even kinship, into relationships that are at once necessary and elective, implying durable obligations subjectively felt (feelings of gratitude, respect, friendship, etc.) or institutionally guaranteed (rights) (1986: 248).

The manner in which online news organizations hone their network in order to acquire degrees of social and symbolic capital will be discussed in the next chapter in relation to the first tenet of the proximity paradigm.

Chapter 4: Gaining status through affiliation

I - Status affiliations and social capital

Alain Accardo, a French sociologist influenced by Bourdieu, notes that in order to exist within a distinct field, a player must be visible not only physically, but also socially, “which means *for others*, to be recognized by others, to acquire importance, *visibility*” (1997: 51; translated by Entwistle and Rocamora, 2006: 74). According to the three case studies examined, in order for them to have gained legitimacy in the subfield of online journalism, they positioned themselves in proximity to individuals of status in order to “acquire visibility” (Accardo 1997: 51). These organizations sought recognition in order to demonstrate an “internal value or principle of the field” (Bourdieu 1998: 70), illustrating their understanding of and potential membership in the field. Within the continually evolving field of journalism, a structured space of social positions, occupied by agents and organizations, exists: with few individuals understanding the factors that determine the conditions under which players can participate.

The capacity to which some online news organizations gain entry into the subfield of journalism is dependent on their network of affiliation and whether those associated with the organization possess the distinct capacity to garner *associative resources of return*. Associative resources of return refer to an investment of resources (financial and non-financial) by individuals who seek to gain a stake in the organization that they are affiliated with. In the subfield of online journalism, the return that these organizations secure is non-financial; it is an associative transaction that privileges social and symbolic capital. An online news organization gets wealthier the more associative resources of return they have at their disposal, and subsequently their recognition in the subfield and their perceived legitimacy increases. Once an organization has accrued affiliations with key players in the field, they must maintain the relationship by completing the transaction, i.e. returning the favour by publishing a news story in a manner that benefits the source. This is how the associative resources of return work; it is an exchange of social capital for positive news coverage, access to elite players, and/or membership in a desired network. I will begin by providing relevant background on each case (sections II-IV), followed by evidence (within each section) illustrating their use of the first tenet of the proximity paradigm. The remaining section of this chapter (section V) will elaborate on how the

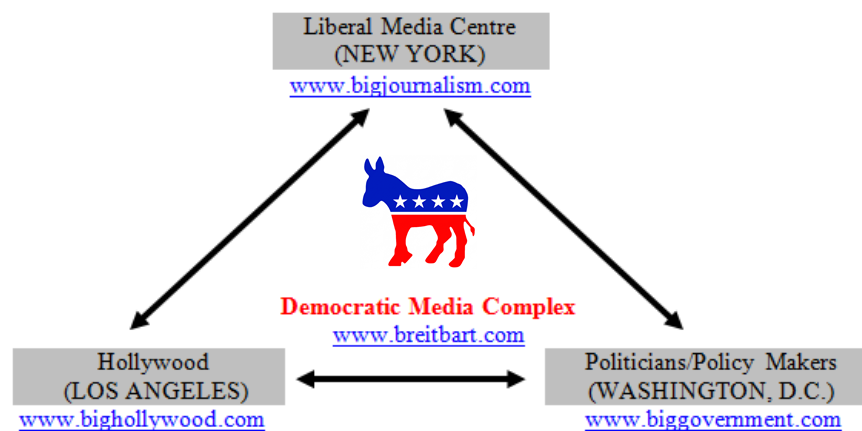
three case study organizations achieved legitimacy by employing the proximity paradigm.

II – Andrew Breitbart and the Democratic Media Complex

This chapter will illustrate how the three organizations in this study value connections to social networks as much, if not more, than financial connections. As Andrew Breitbart stated in one of our interviews, “who you know is how you stay in business online”.

Breitbart coined the term the “Democratic Media Complex” (DMC) in order to address – according to him – the liberal bias that exists in the U.S. media landscape. “I am so sick of the media dictating the terms of the narrative in this country,” stated Breitbart in one of our interviews. “Someone needs to fight the powers that make this political divide”. Breitbart believed that in order to fight against the DMC, he had to be equipped with the resources necessary to combat key players in Los Angeles, New York, and Washington. The DMC is based in part on President Eisenhower's notion of the Military Industrial Complex, referring to political and economic relationships between legislators, national armed forces, and the defense industry that supports them. When the term was first uttered during Eisenhower’s Farewell Address to the Nation in January 1961, he envisioned a type of iron triangle, fueled by lobbyists, political influencers, and bureaucrats (January 17, 1961). In order to “lead an insurgency against the DMC”, as Breitbart refers to it, he established his series of websites that challenge the three pillars mentioned above (see Figure 4.0).

Figure 4.0. “The Democratic Media Complex” and Andrew Breitbart’s websites



His first counter-DMC website, titled *Breitbart.com*, was established in 2006; followed by *BigHollywood* (2008), *BigGovernment* (2009) and *BigJournalism* (2010). These three sites were created in order to occupy a space in the new media landscape that challenged the ideals set forth, primarily, by *The Huffington Post*. Within this politically tethered space, Breitbart and Huffington are reliant on each other's content and existence in order to thrive in the subfield of online journalism. A sense of competition emerges as both players survey the content that appears on the other's site. Bourdieu argues that this is a common practice in the field of journalism, specifically amongst those players competing with one another:

Another effect of competition in the field... is the permanent surveillance (which can turn into mutual espionage) to which journalists subject their competitors' activities. The object is to profit from competitors' failures by avoiding their mistakes, and to counter their successes by trying to borrow the *supposed* instruments of that success (1998: 72).

In our interviews, Breitbart cited Huffington as one of his motivations for creating *BigHollywood*, arguing that it was her use of the Hollywood elite that granted her the social capital she needed in the early days of her website. "*Big Hollywood* was my first site due to my understanding that one of the secret sauces of Arianna was her foot in Hollywood", he explains in one of our interviews:

She saw the social and political underpinnings and how a once deeply patriotic and conspicuously pro-American industry became subverted by the far left to attack conservative ideals and to push moral relativism, amorality, secularism, and Marxism as the new norm.

During my time in Los Angeles, I met Breitbart's wife and three children. They lived in a beautiful home in Brentwood, the same neighbourhood where Huffington has a home. Breitbart would reveal during our time together driving around Los Angeles in his Land Rover that he tried to distance himself from the social network in the city because of the predominantly liberal players that occupy the space. He referenced an occurrence where one of his sons was invited to attend the Bar Mitzvah of the son of Steven Levitan, the creator, writer and producer of the American television series *Modern Family*. The entire Breitbart family was also invited to the event, except for Andrew. According to Breitbart, Levitan is a registered Democrat and "could not be seen with me". This anecdote illustrates that within Breitbart's network, the company one keeps is a priority that many maintain regardless of the situation.

In his book *Righteous Indignation*, he echoed a similar feeling of being ostracized in Hollywood because of his conservative values:

My assessment didn't make me popular where I live and raise my young family. Angelenos, especially of the West Los Angeles variety, especially those who work in the entertainment industry, don't take too kindly to dissent—if you are a conservative that is (2011: 6).

Breitbart adds that the maintenance of relationships in Hollywood is based on the aspirational nature of Hollywood and a need for newcomers (actors, producers, directors) to fit into this landscape in a manner that appears as though they have belonged in it all along. “Most people in Hollywood are ‘fly over country’ people. They are the amorphous middle-class who shop at Wal-Mart and come from an allegedly dreary existence. They are red state people,” explains Breitbart. “They come to Hollywood and they want to escape from that, they suddenly have money and are shopping on Rodeo Drive and driving Land Rovers.” Breitbart remarks that once these actors, producers and directors arrive in Los Angeles, they convert to the ideals espoused by those who maintain power in Hollywood. He adds, “speaking truth to power is the worst thing to do in Los Angeles”.

According to Breitbart, who is not included in this leftist space, “It is a rigged game. As long as you espouse the ideals of Democrats, you are the protected class,” he explained during one of our interviews. On Day 3 of my interview with Breitbart, we went to lunch at Smith House, a restaurant located in West Hollywood, known for hosting unofficial meetings between Hollywood agents, movie producers and heads of studios. We had lunch with Paul Raft, a former comedy writer for *The Jimmy Kimmel Show*, and a close friend of Breitbart. The two had “been friends since college”. Raft had recently applied for the position of Head Writer at *The Jimmy Kimmel Show*, but had been told a month earlier that he would not be receiving a promotion, and was subsequently fired from the show. According to Raft, Kimmel, an outspoken Democrat, was “furious” upon being informed that Raft had attended a Republican Party fundraising dinner in Los Angeles. Raft explained, “You need to be liberal in this town; there is segregation in Hollywood and if you don't fit in, you're out”. Raft quoted a visibly angry Kimmel telling him, “How could you have been so fucking stupid to go to one of those things?”

According to Breitbart and Raft, affirming a political point of view in Hollywood is “part of the package” when becoming a member of the Hollywood

system. They spoke about talent agencies in Los Angeles meeting with new actors and producers, handing them a binder of political information, and saying, “Pick a political cause from *this* list”. Breitbart places Huffington at the helm of this system: “Hollywood needs a tacit political leader, and that is Arianna”, he explained during one of our interviews. According to Breitbart’s interpretation of the Democratic Media Complex, Huffington is the spokesperson for this space. As he told me one afternoon in Los Angeles, “If I were on the Left, I would have a show on HBO, and I would have been on the cover of *Rolling Stone* [magazine]”.

The first tenet of the proximity paradigm refers to the individuals affiliating themselves with players of status in order to become legitimate. They subsequently create a network rich in social capital that allows them to convert said social capital into symbolic capital, thus gaining legitimacy in the subfield of online journalism. For Breitbart, although he is on the periphery of the social network in Hollywood, he still maintains an informal presence in this space having created the DMC and surrounding himself with players of status from the opposite end of the political spectrum.

Understanding Breitbart’s echo-chamber

By nature of living in Brentwood, having his office headquartered in Los Angeles, and interacting with individuals rich in social capital – as evidenced in the Paul Raft and Stevan Levitan anecdotes – Breitbart has garnered degrees of social capital by creating an echo-chamber where he has become a leader against the Left. A hero amongst Tea Party supporters, Breitbart has leveraged his network of followers and has emerged as a spokesperson for them, as will be demonstrated later in this section.

Conducting journalism within the confines of the Tea Party’s anti-establishment political values can be compared to writing in an echo-chamber. Defined as “a bounded, enclosed media space that has the potential to both magnify messages delivered within it and insulate it from rebuttal” (Jamieson and Cappella 2008: 76), an echo-chamber is the structured space where Breitbart has managed to network with like-minded individuals, accruing social capital and emerging as a legitimate news source for the far-right. This concept is echoed by Peter Dreier and Christopher Martin:

What is clear is that the right-wing has been more effective at utilizing cable TV, the blogosphere, and the new social media than its progressive counterparts. There are relatively new liberal faces like MoveOn, MediaMatters for America, the Daily Kos, Rachel Maddow, Keith Olberman, Jon Stewart, Stephen Colbert, and the HuffingtonPost, which have helped build support for progressive movements and legislation... There are no progressives with the political reach of Beck, Limbaugh, or Breitbart, especially in terms of injecting their ideas into the mainstream media and political debate (Waldman 2010) (Dreier and Martin 2011: 24).

Breitbart is able to “inject ideas into the mainstream media and political debate” because he is recognized as a legitimate news source in the eyes of the far Right, specifically within the “conservative echo chamber”. This echo chamber is his network. He affiliates himself with individuals of status on both the Left and the Right. On the Left, he seeks to dismantle their status due to his overt bias against them, while on the Right, he affiliates himself with individuals of status that are part of his conservative echo chamber. The Democrats and liberal organizations that Breitbart has dismantled will be discussed in Chapters Five and Six respectively; however, he managed to become a legitimate player in the subfield of online journalism by publicly dismantling Democrats of status and thus, being perceived as legitimate by those on the far-right.

In addition to the formal and informal qualitative interviews that I conducted with Breitbart, I also relied on a longitudinal data set of press articles about him to gain a greater understanding of how fellow journalists report on him. A 2010 article in *Wired* magazine noted – as I have – of Breitbart’s tendency to strategically position himself in geographical proximity to individuals of status. Journalist Noah Shachtman writes,

Andrew Breitbart has been waiting 45 minutes for a filet mignon. He drums his fingers on the table in this plush Italian restaurant off Times Square, a place where the media types he regularly trashes used to flaunt their expense accounts – back when they still had them. Breitbart looks around for a waiter and launches into a stem-winder about collusion between Hollywood and the press – the “subtle and not-so-subtle use of propaganda to make a center-right nation move to the left” (Shachtman, *Wired* 2010).

The article continues chronicling Breitbart’s New York visit, commenting on his interactions with various media players around the city, citing his network:

Later that evening, Breitbart arrives at the offices of Fox News on Sixth Avenue. Host Sean Hannity greets him with a fist-bump and calls him “bruthah.” Doug Schoen, Bill Clinton’s former pollster waves hello. Then the

three of them walk into a cavernous television studio covered in stars and stripes... The taping ends with the small talk and handshakes. Afterward, Breitbart heads downstairs to visit Greg Gutfeld, who hosts the Fox overnight show *Red Eye*. Then they meet up with Felix Dennis, the high-flying founder of *Maxim* magazine, and spend the rest of the evening at a midtown club drinking Cristal (Shachtman, *Wired* 2010).

Breitbart has crafted a unique network: lambasting liberal players of status while socializing with conservative players of status. He received what Bourdieu terms as “peer recognition” (within the confines of his established echo-chamber) when he was invited to present the keynote address at the first Tea Party Convention, thus validating his role as part of the subfield of online journalism, based on his strategic conversion of social capital from his network to the prestigious keynote presentation that granted him symbolic capital.

III - Matt Drudge arrives uninvited and stays

While Breitbart garnered social capital by affiliating himself with players of status on both sides of the political spectrum, Matt Drudge became a legitimate player in the subfield of online journalism by first identifying the interconnected nature of the field of journalism and second, by infiltrating it in a discrete manner that was overlooked by many. For Drudge, the strategy is simple: he builds a network comprised of media players rich in social capital and then leverages his relationship with them for news stories, often betraying their trust for the sake of a big scoop, as will explained in detail in Chapter Four. However, these scoops would not be possible if he had not built a network with the journalists that he eventually uses.

In his self-titled book *Drudge Manifesto*, Drudge demonstrates his understanding of the network that is nurtured within the field of journalism:

Reporters marry sources who work for clients who employ bureau chiefs
 Who dine with agents who wine the lawyers who date the editors
 Who have sex with the reporters who share the beachhouses
 With the sources who are married to the bureau chiefs
 Who hire the reporters who are married
 To the lawyers who date
 The columnists
 That dish
 Stars
 Who dine
 With the editors
 Who have sex with

The sources after meeting
 With lawyers who lobby Congress
 To protect a president who is friends with
 The bureau chiefs who hire the reporters who
 Have sex with the editors who blast the internet websites... (2000: 77)

While Drudge did not grant any of the numerous interview requests that I sent him, my data set comprised his book (*Drudge Manifesto*), press written about him and interviews with individuals in the field who had either worked with him (Breitbart) or were influenced in some capacity by him. The next two chapters will discuss his influence; however, this chapter will examine his ability to leverage his social network and gain access to individuals of status in order to acquire the social capital needed to gain access to further individuals of status. In understanding the networked nature of the field of journalism and subsequently gaining access to the key players who structure this space, Drudge became indirectly affiliated with them, garnering the social capital necessary to become the first online journalist to be granted a prestigious White House press pass, symbolizing Drudge's degree of symbolic capital and his status within the subfield of online journalism.

While Drudge is relentlessly criticized in the press (see Figure 4.1), it appears that he is also envied for his ability to get stories from other journalists

Figure 4.1. Matt Drudge from the perspective of the press

ORGANIZATION/PERSON	QUOTE
<i>The New York Times</i>	"The country's reigning mischief-maker."
<i>The Washington Post</i>	"Matt Drudge is the buzz of the media-industrial complex."
<i>Playboy Magazine</i>	"Matt Drudge is journalism's bad boy, Clinton's worst nightmare, the guy who scoops the big-time media."
Rush Limbaugh	"Matt Drudge is the man who is to the Internet, what I am to broadcasting."
Camille Paglia	"Matt Drudge is the kind of bold, entrepreneurial, free-wheeling, information-oriented outsider we need."
<i>Brill's Content</i>	"Matt Drudge is the most controversial reporter in America since Woodward and Bernstein."
(Former) President Bill Clinton	"Sludge."

Source: "Even More Matt Drudge". *The Drudge Report*. Online. Accessed: September 2015. http://antipas.net/cool_drudge3.htm

In a 1998 interview with Doug Harbrecht, the then-President of the National Press Club in Washington, D.C., Drudge was asked about his ability to leverage his network of journalists for news items. He writes in *Drudge Manifesto*:

I have fun with what I do. A lot of it's smiles. A lot of it's "Look, Ma, I can dance." A lot of it's preempting other newspapers. I cover politicians the way

the – I cover media people the way they cover politicians. I’m reporting Jeff Gerth may be breaking something in a couple of weeks, for example. That’s fun stuff. That’s a new paradigm. It’s where the media is unchecked. It’s where they’re not the only game in town, where the media now is a guy with a 486 out in Hollywood (2000: 200).

Drudge started fostering his social network when he took a job in Hollywood at the gift shop at CBS (Drudge 2000). He strategically started befriending the various players who worked on the CBS lot:

Living large under Lou Dorfman’s logo, the infamous EYE, I folded T-shirts in their gift shop, dusted off *60-Minutes* coffee mugs, dined daily in the commissary, indulged in after-hours conversations with the ghost of Bill Paley. It was during one of these chats that he reminded me the first step in good reporting – good snooping. Inspired, I went out of my way to service executive suits, listening carefully to whispered conversation, intercepting the occasional memo. Stalking the newsroom (2000: 27).

The first half of his book chronicles his rise from the gift shop to the White House and the various individuals of status that he encountered in Los Angeles, New York and Washington, D.C. In networking with players of status, he was able to uncover breaking news stories that mattered to those in positions of power, garnering recognition as a required read for those who wanted to stay informed from an insider’s perspective. Although Drudge himself was not an insider, he networked with them, accruing their social capital for his editorial gain. He writes,

From a little corner in my Hollywood hovel, in the company of nothing more than my 486 Packard Bell computer, I become a player, consistently able to break big stories... Visitor logs for the Drudge Report website showed visits from all over: senate.gov, nasa.gov, nytimes.com, Disney.com, suck.com, house.gov, onion.com, doj.com (2000: 31).

The status of the individuals reading *The Drudge Report* provides Drudge with the peer recognition required for legitimacy. John Harris, co-founder of *Politico*, notes that Drudge’s success is due to a community of high status individuals who use his site to navigate their own political biases. “It’s a real achievement”, says Harris:

I covered the Clinton White House in 1997 and 1998 and I would never have conceived that he [Drudge] would be an important player in the landscape 12 years later. He does one thing and he does it particularly well. The power of it comes from the community of people that read it: operatives, bookers, reporters, producers and politicians (Carr 2011: 2).

As Harris argues, the success of Drudge comes from affiliations he has maintained with those in positions of power: specifically, with a political bias in favour of the

Republican Party. Drudge understood that in order to navigate a field as well-established as the field of journalism, he had to take note of who had traditionally been the key players within it. He then affiliated himself with them, as will be illustrated in the following subsection.

Drudge's network of (journalistic) riches

In a quote cited previously from the *Drudge Manifesto*, Drudge cites himself as a “player”. He identifies himself as being part of the media industry, having become part of this system by affiliating himself with individuals of status and leveraging their social capital in order to build a network for himself rich in symbolic capital, as evidenced when he received the prestigious White House press pass. Receiving this significant accreditation granted Drudge the legitimacy he was seeking. He writes,

... I am the first internet reporter granted access to the hallowed halls of eop.gov.
My heart races when I reach the other side of the fence.
I'm in! (2000: 38).

Jesse Lee, Director of Progressive Media and Online Response at The White House, cites the 2004 election, in addition to the Clinton-Lewinsky scandal (to be discussed in the Chapter Five), as the defining moment in Drudge's emergence as a key player in the news cycle. As he explained during our interview in Washington, D.C:

There was a time during the 2004 campaign where Drudge was at his peak. It wasn't only about traffic; he was the media-center of the universe. If something was up on *Drudge*, then it must be big and if we [The White House Press Office] don't have someone covering that story, then we will be behind. It just sort of happened. It was a self-perpetuating thing: the more people read it, the more it had to be true. It started with the Monica Lewinsky stuff and there were other stories along those lines that were kind of shady, and he got exclusives to them. Once he became influential, people wanted to give him exclusives.

According to the *Drudge Manifesto*, the major stories that he broke came from his network of sources. The use of sources (the third tenet of the proximity paradigm) will be discussed at length in Chapter Five; however, the following excerpt from the *Drudge Manifesto*, emphasizes Drudge's network and how he used it to uncover significant news events that led him to acquire the symbolic capital he needed to become a legitimate player in the subfield of online journalism:

The Drudge Report, first to name the vice-presidential nominee in '96. A source close to Dole called from a houseboat anchored off San Diego. First to report Jerry Seinfeld would ask for a million dollars a week or he would walk. A show source came into the gift shop at Studio Center with a tape of Seinfeld ranting in his office. A new cable network is forming? I was first to report the unholy alliance between Microsoft and NBC. A Saturday Night Live director overheard network honcho Bob Wright in the elevator and scurried back up to his office to e-mail. Buchanan is surging and would likely win New Hampshire. John Sununu picked for the Crossfire chair. Dan Rather will be told in the morning that his co-anchor is being dropped. My So-Called Life will not be returning in the Fall. Clinton will take his Paula Jones fight to the Supreme Court... First. First. First (2000: 31).

These news items, reported first by Drudge, indicate that the investigative nature of traditional journalism has shifted and a new paradigm has emerged whereby journalists – specifically those online – garner a network of individuals of status and rely on them for access to both stories and sources. As Drudge states,

I continue to be the only individual on the net making a name for himself, and net news is starting to make such an impact – on and off the net – I'm asked to appear in all kinds of niched and corporate LegacyMedia outlets...

A photoshoot for a Vanity Fair profile...

An interview for a Nightline profile...

A phone conversation with Columbia Journalism Review Publisher Joan Konner... (2000: 54-55).

The next section of this Chapter will examine how similar to both Breitbart and Drudge, Arianna Huffington relied on a network of individuals of status to secure a degree of social capital to be recognized as a legitimate player in the subfield of online journalism.

IV - Arianna Huffington carves her own space

The online news organization that achieves the greatest success with regard to affiliating oneself with individuals of status is *The Huffington Post*. As one anonymous interviewee stated during our interview, “Just saying you know Arianna carries a lot of weight. I mean she’s Arianna fucking Huffington!” (HPM7). Huffington was not always an insider and has not always been rich in social capital; however, she managed to leverage her social contacts for online gain when it came to launching her website.

Huffington’s middle-class upbringing in Athens was focused on working to be successful, with her mother relocating to London so that Huffington could prepare for entrance examinations to the University of Cambridge (Grigoriadis 2011: 41). While

studying at Cambridge, she excelled academically and became an expert debater and the President of the Cambridge Debating Society (2011: 41). Following graduation, Huffington published a series of feminist books: one entitled *The Female Woman*, the other, a biography of Maria Callas (2011: 43).

In the early 1980s, at the age of 30, Huffington moved from London to New York, seeking an established role amongst Manhattan's social elite. She claims that she earned the title of "socialite", a designation that the press disseminated in such publications as *W* and *Town & Country*. Accustomed to "lunches at Le Cirque, dances at the Metropolitan Museum, weekends in the Hamptons, and intimate black-tie dinners for 36" (2011: 43), Huffington had carved out a niche role for herself as a social plutocrat. After marrying Texas oil heir, Michael Huffington, in the mid-1980s, the two relocated to Santa Barbara, California, where Michael ran against congresswoman and Democratic incumbent, Dianne Feinstein (2011: 45). Critics of Huffington argue that she used her husband's campaign to gain leverage amongst California's political and social elite. As one anonymous interviewee stated in New York, "Whatever you think of her, she has worked to get to where she is today" (HPF23).

Having conquered both the east and west coasts of the U.S. by positioning herself as a connector amongst the country's elite, Huffington shifted her focus away from political wife and socialite and became a gubernatorial candidate for the Democratic Party (Grigoriadis 2011). Her marriage to Michael ended in divorce, with him publicly stating that he was a bisexual (Grigoriadis 2011). With a failed marriage and a new political affiliation, Huffington set her strategic sights on befriending the wives of rich and powerful men. Her strategy was subtly confirmed – through a smirk or nodding of the head – by many of my anonymous interviewees. As Breitbart stated in one of our interviews, "This befriending was one of her tricks [to gain insider access]". Her initiative in affiliating herself with those occupying positions of status comprises one of the main elements of the proximity paradigm; and epitomizes how those seeking to gain legitimacy (in the field of journalism) seek to align themselves with key players whom they can use to their advantage. "She is the ultimate networker, constantly connecting people. I mean not connecting me [with anyone]," explained HPM9, a technology reporter at *The Huffington Post*'s New York office. "But connecting the ones that makes sense. You know – the ones that work with her. Not for her, but with her".

Huffington's inner circle includes Wendi Murdoch (former wife of Rupert Murdoch, American media mogul and CEO of NewsCorp); Kathy Freston (wife of Tom Freston, American entertainment industry executive); Kelly Meyer (wife of Rob Meyer, American entertainment executive); Grace Hightower (wife of actor Robert DeNiro); Elaine Wynn (ex-wife of Steve Wynn, American business magnate); and Willow Bay (wife of Bob Iger, Chairman and Chief Executive of the Walt Disney Company). Her relationships with these women will be analyzed in Chapter Five.

Individuals who have worked with Huffington cite David Geffen as her closest friend and confidant. This fact was confirmed during one of my interviews in Los Angeles. As one interviewee (HPM22) stated: "Yup, everyone knows David [Geffen]. When I used to work there [at *The Huffington Post*] he would always make his presence known whenever he was in the building. Those two [Huffington and Geffen] are like this," crossing his index and middle finger to indicate closeness.

Geffen, one of the richest people in the entertainment industry, has an estimated net worth of \$4.6bn (Rubin: September 2011). He is a record executive, film producer, theatrical producer and philanthropist; and also a leading fundraiser for the Democratic Party. During President Obama's 2008 campaign, he singlehandedly raised \$1.3m in a star-studded Beverly Hills fundraiser (Rubin: September 2011). Huffington and Geffen often accompany each other to social and political events, presenting a united front of media prowess and influence.

Huffington has emerged as a cult leader due to the persona she maintains in public, a brand endorsed by a combination of key political and social players, with whom she has affiliated herself in order to maintain a distinct position within the landscape of the American media elite. She understood the field as a network of players and associated herself with those who possessed the status she needed to become a part of it. As Bourdieu states, "the existence of a network of connections is not a natural given ... It is the product of an endless effort at institution" (1986: 249).

Huffington relied on the values of those in positions of power in order to gain a reputation as someone who could assist these elite players in achieving what they wanted. In this regard, she has been termed "a connector" (Rubin: September 2011) by numerous media outlets. A journalist at the *New Republic* called her "Sammy Glick, a hustler", adding, "She has a narcotic relationship to power" (Rubin: September 2011). During my time with Breitbart, he consistently remarked on Huffington's ability to "work the room". According to him, when members of the

liberal elite would decline to come over for “baklava in the kitchen” because she was a registered Republican, she realized that becoming a Democrat would be highly instructive to her plans. “You know she used to be a Republican,” whispered an anonymous *Huffington Post* politics reporter during one of our interviews in New York. “Can you imagine? Coming from the other side and starting this!” He motioned to his surroundings in the newsroom. “I mean, it’s undeniable – she is *the* ultimate change agent. Look what she did for Obama. I mean, their timing was right and all, but seriously, she helped him all the way to the White House” (HPM7).

Hollywood was disenchanted with the Bush administration and confident that Kerry would win in 2004. The loss presented Huffington with an opportune moment to benefit professionally, as she presented her website as “a liberal *Drudge*”. She recognized that she needed to move from the periphery to the nucleus in order to gain the status she wanted. HPM7 confirmed this strategy in our interview: “Everyone knew Drudge and what he could do for a [political] campaign. But she [Huffington] did something different. She really understood the California electorate at the time and she knew what she wanted [to do] professionally. So she made it happen, and everyone won out in the end”.

Breaking bread: A discussion of Huffington’s Brentwood brunch

In examining the origins of *The Huffington Post*, many individuals whom I interviewed pointed to John Kerry’s unsuccessful Presidential candidacy as of pivotal importance in helping mobilize America’s liberal elite at an intimate gathering at Huffington’s estate in Brentwood, California in 2004. While Drudge gained prominent recognition via the Clinton-Lewinsky scandal in 1998, thus crafting the image of a Washington whistleblower, *The Huffington Post* attained notoriety by positioning itself initially as Drudge’s unofficial Democratic doppelganger.

The details surrounding the infamous “power brunch” at Huffington’s home are representative of the symbiotic relationship between Washington and Hollywood, as referenced by Breitbart’s DMC. Following President George W. Bush’s victory over Senator John Kerry in November 2004, Huffington rallied key players of the Democratic Media Complex in order to “win back the White House” (Cohen, 2011). As opposed to drawing predominantly on members of Congress or local politicians, Huffington opted to bring together celebrities who possessed distinct social capital – whether through their reputations, public visibility or membership in a desired

network – and the ability to mobilize other like-minded members of the Hollywood elite. She knew that she needed to invest time in fostering relationships with these individuals of status, and provide them with a resource they could not deny. They would both be indebted to one another in an unofficial relationship of reciprocity: as will be explained in this section through *the associative resources of return transaction model*. As HPM7 explained,

Listen, being in the company of L.A.'s movers and shakers isn't a bad move if you want to get something done. Arianna knew this and still knows it. Why else do you think she still keeps a house in Brentwood and a place here in Soho? She gets the game and she has moved from being on the bench to being the quarterback. It's the ultimate new media American dream. And she's not even ours (referring to Huffington's Greek background).

Huffington's strategy, as briefly acknowledged by HPM7, is echoed in Bourdieu's analysis of the use of social capital:

In other words, the network of relationships is the product of investment strategies, individual or collective, consciously or unconsciously aimed at establishing or reproducing social relationships that are directly usable in the short or long term, i.e., at transforming contingent relations, such as those of neighborhood, the workplace, or even kinship, into relationships that are at once necessary and elective, implying durable obligations subjectively felt (feelings of gratitude, respect, friendship, etc.) or institutionally guaranteed (rights) (1986: 249).

When this study began in October 2010, Huffington had become a brand of her own. During my time in the field August 2011 – January 2012, there was limited popular press chronicling her use of social capital. I found one article from a 2005 issue of *Vanity Fair* that discussed Huffington's "gold-plated Rolodex" (Andrews December 2005). This Rolodex occupies an important place in the associative resources of return transaction model, as will be discussed in detail later in this section. Given that my three case studies are frequently cited in the popular press, it was important for me to include relevant articles written about them as part of my longitudinal data set. The December 2005 *Vanity Fair* article titled "Arianna Calling!" aligns with anecdotes from Breitbart regarding Huffington's Brentwood Brunch. The article reads,

A woman who has become famous for her gold-plated Rolodex, Huffington put out the calls to her friends last spring, asking them to contribute to her site. And because they "adore Arianna," or owe her a favor, or "could not resist her," about 300 of them said yes, including Pulitzer Prize winners Norman Mailer and David Mamet, political comedians Al Franken and Bill Maher, and the writer Nora Ephron. Walter Cronkite also signed on, as did Deepak Chopra and Huffington's Hollywood friends—Warren Beatty, Rob Reiner,

John Cusack, Mike Nichols, Norman Lear, and Gwyneth Paltrow. From Huffington's political circle came Gary Hart, New Jersey politician Jon Corzine, former California governor Jerry Brown, and the activist Tom Hayden, among others. Robert F. Kennedy Jr. said yes, as did the Democratic power broker Vernon Jordan and a host of political columnists, mainly liberals but a few from the right, including Tony Blankley, the Washington Times columnist who used to be Newt Gingrich's press secretary (Andrews, *Vanity Fair*, December 2005).

An additional article published in *Vanity Fair* in February 2011, also cited Huffington's impressive networking capabilities and the early days of her website:

... He showed his proposal for the "liberal Drudge" both to Thorne—who had just sold *Body & Soul* magazine to Martha Stewart's company for \$6 million and had the Kerry campaign's e-mail list—and to Huffington, his friend with the Hollywood connections... They agreed that the website should highlight Huffington's personality more effectively than her then-existing website at 'ariannaonline.com.'" They spoke about getting "scoops" and "exclusives" from their contacts in the media and the Democratic Party and recommended that "luminaries and public figures should be invited to blog on the planned liberal website" (Cohen, *Vanity Fair*, February 2011).

It is important to note that the fact that a cultural magazine such as *Vanity Fair* is commenting on Huffington's social capital over a period of six years (from 2005 to 2011), signals that she is part of the elite media network in the United States. As David Friend, Creative Director at *Vanity Fair* stated in my interview with him, "they [the magazine] lead the cultural conversation in this country"; therefore, if Huffington is featured in their magazine, she is being recognized as being part of "the conversation". In referring to Bourdieu's principles of legitimation, a validation by *Vanity Fair* would be considered "peer recognition".

The two anecdotes referenced above align with my interview with Breitbart, who had previously worked with Huffington on her first website: ariannaonline.com. According to Breitbart (and supported by stories published in *Vanity Fair*) Huffington gathered a varied group of liberal influencers, including comedian Larry David; Hollywood mogul David Geffen; movie producer Brian Grazer; screenwriter Aaron Sorkin; television producer Norman Lear; actress Meg Ryan; actor Tom Hanks; and his wife Rita Wilson, to her house in Brentwood (Cohen 2011).

James Boyce, a political consultant invited to the brunch, is currently suing Huffington, arguing that he, along with Peter Daou (another political consultant), have founder's rights to *The Huffington Post*. As Boyce explained during my

interview with him, the Hollywood elite assembled in Huffington's living room had campaigned relentlessly for Kerry during the election and viewed *The Huffington Post* as "a tool for the Democratic Party". Boyce continued stating, "She created a network of influencers in the lead-up to the launch [of *The Huffington Post* in 2005], positioning herself as the key connector between the east and west coasts". Huffington created the first news site that drew on the social, political and cultural capitals of America's liberal elite. With blog posts by Alec Baldwin, Nora Ephron, and Bobby Kennedy Jr., Huffington was able to leverage the "big name" nature of the site in order to increase her readership, referred to by Bourdieu as public recognition: a key principle of legitimation in the field of journalism.

Constructing and maintaining ties with players of status has been at the core of Huffington's work. As an anonymous social media reporter at *The Huffington Post* told me during my interview with him in New York, "She has the kind of network you could only dream of having. You should see who comes in here [the office]" (HPM14).

In conducting a social network analysis of Arianna Huffington's contacts, I have mapped the players who have contributed to her network in Figure 4.2. The figure is divided into five distinct categories: navy blue, red, orange, green, and purple, all connecting to an offline relationship with Huffington.

Figure 4.2. A social network analysis of the world of Arianna Huffington



In the purple category, Huffington is linked to Howard Fineman, the Deputy Director of *The Huffington Post*'s Washington, D.C. bureau. Fineman was formerly an editor at *Newsweek* during the 1990s. The green category marks a significant change in the media ownership landscape. *Newsweek* partnered with *The Daily Beast* when it launched in 2008. Tina Brown, the former editor of *Vanity Fair*, became the Editor-in-Chief of *The Daily Beast*.

During an informal interview with a general assignment reporter at *The Daily Beast*, DBF7 turned to me as we walked past the in-house television studio where Brown was prepping for a news segment, and asked: "So you said that you were at

The Huffington Post yesterday?” I nodded, continuing to glance at Brown through the studio window. “Well, there’s another woman (referring to Brown) who knows how to work the room. The two obviously took lessons from each other” (DBF7).

Brown, a graduate of the University of Oxford, is a friend of Huffington; the two are members of numerous executive boards, along with Barry Diller’s wife, fashion designer, Diane von Furstenberg. Diller is the Chairman of InterActive Corporation (IAC), which owns, among many media companies, *The Daily Beast*. The headquarters for *The Daily Beast* is located in the Frank Gehry designed IAC building in Manhattan’s Chelsea neighborhood.

The red category outlines the acquisition of *The Huffington Post* by America Online (AOL) for \$315 million in 2010. The navy blue category refers to the early days of *The Huffington Post*, when founders James Boyce and Peter Daou met at Huffington’s Brentwood mansion for the infamous inaugural brunch featuring Hollywood’s liberal elite. Boyce and Daou met while working on Senator John Kerry’s 2004 Presidential Campaign. Boyce was the Chief Media Strategist, having covered six Democratic presidential campaigns, while Daou was Kerry’s Online Communications Director. According to my interview with Boyce, Daou was the first person ever to occupy an Online Communications position for a presidential campaign.

Kerry’s Press Secretary on the campaign was David Wade, a former student of Josh Marshall, Editor-in-Chief and founder of *Talking Points Memo* (TPM). Prior to founding TPM, Marshall was a history professor at Brown University. Marshall became a pioneer of political blogging when, as noted earlier, he was the only journalist (offline or online) to report on Senator Trent Lott’s racist remarks at an event in Washington, drawing attention to the need to have bloggers at news events.

The orange category is based on anecdotal evidence from the interviews that I conducted. The affiliation of *The Huffington Post* to MSNBC is based on usage. According to Boyce, who worked at MSNBC from 2007 to 2008, the television news network would use *The Huffington Post* as its personal Rolodex. As Boyce explained in our interview:

[At MSNBC] if they needed to book anybody, all they did was go on The Huffington Post and see who was writing about a specific issue and book them. I sat there and watched the bookers, and they’d be like “oh, we need someone on ‘torture’”, and they would go and see who was blogging about it; that was how they would get guests and that’s how they still do [get guests].

MSNBC is owned by NBC Universal; which is majority owned by Comcast (51%), and minority owned by General Electric (49%).

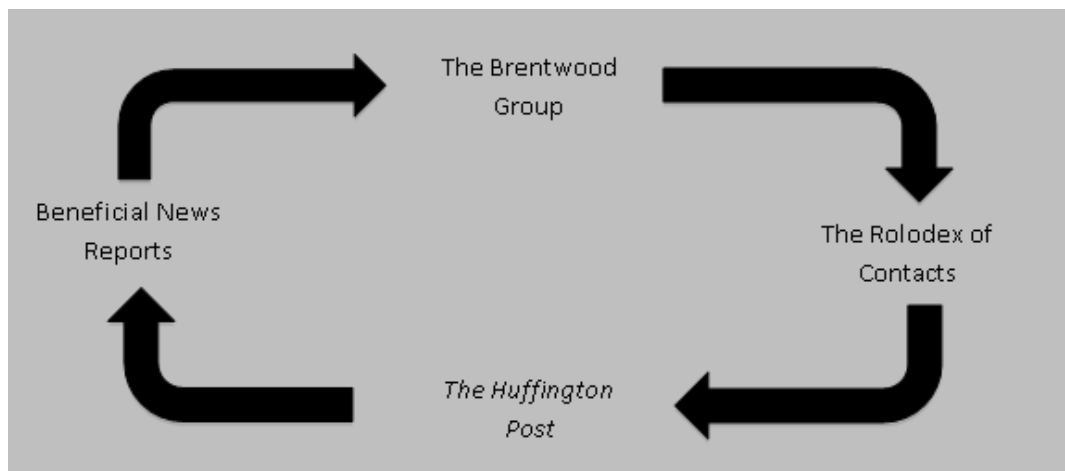
The context in which Huffington organized the Brentwood brunch cannot be dismissed. Breitbart explained during our interviews that Huffington yearned for acceptance by the American media elite, and that she provided them with a call for action by identifying that the emergence of a Democratic online media empire would not only mitigate their frustration over Kerry's loss, but allow her to become part of the exclusive group that she had been monitoring from the outside. By befriending the wives of media executives, she affiliated herself strategically with the elite circle she felt she needed to become part of in order to accrue the social capital necessary to present herself as a contender within the subfield. This is best understood in employing the *associative resources of return transaction model*.

The associative resources of return transaction model works in examining how Huffington used the Brentwood Group to gain access to the Democratic Party through her use of Democratic-supporting celebrities posting stories on *The Huffington Post*. I use the term the "Brentwood Group" to refer to the members of Hollywood's liberal elite who came to the inaugural *Huffington Post* breakfast meeting at Huffington's home in Brentwood, California on the morning following the 2004 U.S. Presidential Election. Huffington continues to participate successfully in *the associative resources of return transaction model* because she continually praises the Democratic Party through the stories she posts on her site that benefit their political positions.

The degree to which some online news organizations prosper over others is dependent on their network of affiliation, and on whether those associated with the organization possess the distinct capacity to garner associative resources of return: meaning the investment of resources (financial and non-financial) by individuals who seek to gain a stake in the organization with which they are affiliating themselves. In the field of online journalism, the return that these organizations secure is non-financial; it is an associative transaction that privileges social capital. An online news organization gets richer the more associative resources of return it has at its disposal, and subsequently its perceived legitimacy increases. Once an organization has accrued affiliations with certain individuals, it must maintain the relationship by completing the transaction, e.g. returning the favour by publishing news stories that benefit the individual(s). This is how the associative resources of return transaction model works; it is an exchange of social capital for positive news coverage.

Figure 4.3 illustrates this model, highlighting the symbiotic relationship between Huffington as a seeker of social capital, and the Brentwood Group as the provider. The Brentwood Group provided Huffington with the resources necessary for her to launch her website in May 2005. These resources included the names of influential people in Hollywood, New York and Washington, D.C., who would support her new media initiative. The support would not only be financial, but would allow Huffington access to the Rolodex of key members of the Democratic Media Complex, as illustrated in Figure 4.3.

Figure 4.3. The *associative resources of return transactional model*



Once Huffington launched her site, she relied on many of these key players to write exclusive stories and comment on news items that benefitted them; this will be examined further in the next chapter. She used their names and the social capital affiliated with them; and in return, gained exclusive news information for her site, separating herself from competitors. As Breitbart stated in one of our interviews, “she became the mouthpiece for the Democratic Party”. The Hollywood elites who attended the Huffington brunch were not only household names to many Americans, but each possessed an arsenal of social capital that is now affiliated with *The Huffington Post*. As Boyce stated during my phone interview with him in Boston: “Everyone who mattered to her was there and there was enough power in that room to set Washington on fire”. Huffington strategically engineered an editorial business model that prioritized social relationships for editorial gain, thus providing her with the social capital she needed for legitimation.

V - Applying the proximity paradigm

My research supports Manuel Castells' argument that media networks do not "exist in a vacuum" (2009: 93), and their success is dependent on non-media networks: "The solidification and expansion of the global business media network is dependent on numerous other connections to non-media networks, which in turn also leverage their connections with media organizations" (2009: 93). Based on my findings, the three online news organizations examined in this study gained a degree of legitimacy based on the use of their network - i.e. relationships with individuals of status in politics and media.

What this means for the proximity paradigm is that if an online journalist is attempting to legitimize his/her organization within the subfield of online journalism, he/she needs to build a network rich in social capital by affiliating themselves with individuals of status and subsequently converting their acquired social capital into symbolic capital. Anheier et al.'s operationalization of social and symbolic capital posits that the currency for symbolic cultural capital is legitimation, whereas social capital's currency is rooted in social contacts and connections (1995). With regard to *The Drudge Report*, Drudge strategically positioned himself in proximity to individuals of status in order to gain insider information that he could then publish on his website, thus becoming destination reading for those in positions of power. Similarly, Breitbart positioned himself in proximity to the Hollywood elite, managing to gain recognition by key stakeholders within his conservative echo-chamber network by reporting on individuals of status on the Left and thereby appeasing the political sensibilities of those on the far Right. As a result, he became a legitimate player in the subfield of online journalism. Huffington, on the other hand, acquired the social capital affiliated with the Brentwood group (a group of individuals of status) by employing the associative resources of return transaction model in order to become a legitimate organization within the subfield of online journalism.

The next chapter will examine the second tenet of the proximity paradigm to discuss how the use of the scoop led to the legitimation of the three case studies examined in this dissertation as members of the subfield of online journalism.

Chapter 5: Gaining the “scoop” through social capital

In order to gain entry into a field and subsequently retain a position of power within this “competitive space organized around a common set of resources and practices” (Couldry 2010: 139), social agents need to accrue the resources necessary to be able to participate. Understanding this professional space and the power dynamics that exist within it is essential to analyzing how new players compete for positions. Benson and Neveu’s definition of the field highlights its confines:

[The field] is the site of actions and reactions performed by social agents endowed with permanent dispositions, partly acquired in their experience of these social fields. The agents react to these relations of forces, to these structures; they construct them, perceive them, form an idea of them, represent them to themselves, and so on (2005: 30).

The acquisition of common resources and practices that occur in the field of journalism will be examined as I set out to explore how those external to this space become part of a subfield within it. Benson and Neveu note:

Within the field of journalism, there is permanent competition to appropriate readership, of course, but also to appropriate what is thought to secure readership, in other words, the earliest access to news, the ‘scoop,’ exclusive information, and also distinctive rarity, ‘big names,’ and so on (2005: 44).

Of the items listed above, three comprise key tenets of the proximity paradigm. Benson and Neveu reference “big names,” “exclusive information,” and “the scoop,” as examples of how to secure readership. Influenced by Bourdieu, Benson and Neveu’s reference to “the scoop” emerges from *On Television and Journalism*. Bourdieu highlights the importance of “the scoop” as the ultimate pressure faced by journalists:

They’re [journalists] interested in the extraordinary, in anything that breaks from the routine. The daily papers are under pressure to offer a daily dose of the extra-daily, and that’s not easy ... This pressure explains the attention they give to extraordinary occurrences, usual unusual events like fires, floods, or murders. But the extra-ordinary is also, and especially, what isn’t ordinary for other newspapers. It’s what differs from the ordinary and what differs from what other newspapers say. The pressure is dreadful – the pressure to get a “scoop”. People are ready to do almost anything to be the first to see and present something (1998: 20).

Whereas Chapter Four examined the first tenet of the proximity paradigm – affiliation with individuals of status - this chapter will focus on the second tenet, the “scoop” (i.e. access to exclusive information), as a central means by which the three online

news organizations examined in this study gained legitimacy; I will be focusing specifically on their use of social capital in pursuit of the scoop. As Bourdieu highlights:

Journalists, on the whole, are interested in the exception, which means whatever is exceptional *for them*. Something that might be perfectly ordinary for someone else can be extraordinary for them and vice versa. They're interested in the extraordinary, in anything that breaks the routine... But the extra-ordinary is also, and especially, what isn't ordinary for other newspapers. It's what differs from the ordinary and what differs from what other newspapers say. The pressure is dreadful – the pressure to get a “scoop”. People are ready to do almost anything to be the first to see and present something (1998: 20).

This suggests that journalists will go to any length to get an exclusive. Gaining a “scoop” is a valued commodity – or as Bourdieu refers to it, “an internal value” - in the field of journalism (1998: 70). There is a race for information; those who gain access to an exclusive news story emerge as victors in the competition between journalists:

This kind of competition is neither experienced nor thought of as a struggle purely for economic gain, even though it remains subject to pressures deriving from the position the news medium itself occupies within a larger set of economic and symbolic power relations (Bourdieu 1998: 41).

The first section (I) of this chapter will address how the structure of the web has led to a more advocacy-driven model of journalism that privileges the reporting techniques and stories published by *Breitbart.com*, *The Drudge Report* and *The Huffington Post*. Given that all three online news organizations are partisan, and operate according to a model that prioritizes their political party, they have become advocates for the causes addressed in the stories that they publish. The main sections of this chapter (sections II – IV) illustrate how the three online news organizations examined in this dissertation leveraged their network – rich in social capital – in order to gain exclusive news stories (i.e. a “scoop”) that contribute to their partisan content. The final section (V) will revisit the associative resources of return transaction model as it relates to the second tenet of the proximity paradigm.

I – Advocacy journalism emerges online

Within many online media organizations, executives often cater to the interests of their shareholders (as illustrated through the associative resources of return transaction model), and subsequently their readership, as opposed to reporting

on news in a manner that is unbiased and provides readers with both sides of the story. According to my interview with Alan Rosenblatt, a journalist at *ThinkProgress.org* and a contributor to *The Huffington Post*, online media executives have to prioritize the creation of a hybrid model of traditional and advocacy journalism. As Rosenblatt explained in our interview in Washington, D.C.,

I think what we are going to find is a rise in original reporters, real reporters organizing themselves into small, niche news collecting organizations. They may be using blogs; they may be using interest groups; they may be using for-profit or non-profit websites. There are going to be more niche-oriented stuff with professional reporters, working to try to work more angles. They are going to be making less money and they are going to be relying on free or cheap stringers, bloggers, and citizens across the country, providing insight and news from direct observation.

He perceives this shift in journalists resorting to more “niche” reporting as catering to a unique demand amongst readers for strong, investigative, opinion-infused reporting which highlights research, conducted by both the reporter and the reader. Rosenblatt comments on this shift:

The editorial ability – being able to pull all that information together from many resources and coalescing them into stories that are coherent – there is going to be a demand for that or else there is just going to be a lot of noise out there. The big challenge is how do you pay for it? There are going to be some interesting revenue models.

The technological infrastructure of the internet allows for a unique editorial style to emerge, whereby online news organizations not only provide their readers with content, but also assist them in navigating the field of online news based on the perspective which they want them to adopt. As Rosenblatt sees it:

I think part of the problem is that mainstream news and their traditional tenets of steering clear of advocacy, and of never quoting their competitors or linking to their competitors – I think that those two elements are two of the biggest reasons why they are losing market share, because the internet is fundamentally about linking out. Mainstream media has resisted doing that to the point of, ‘you come to our website and we will only tell you what we want you to know’. They are afraid that if they send you to another website, then they lose the market.

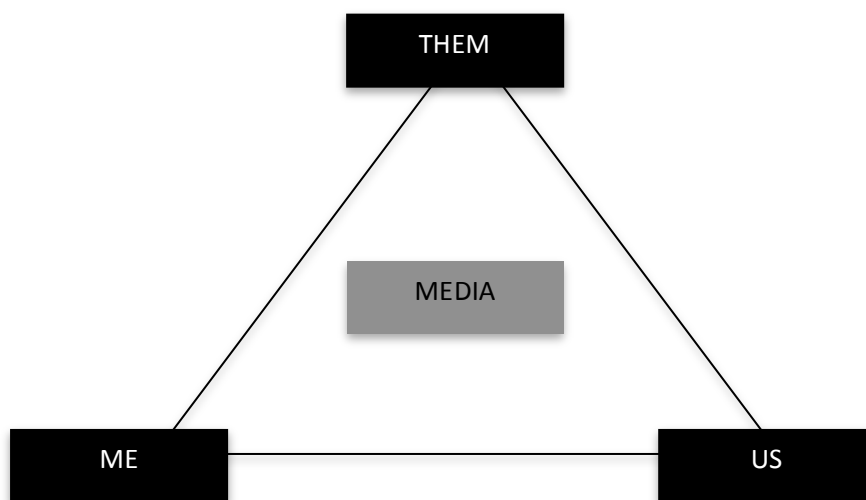
In order to maintain market share, according to insight from my interview with Rosenblatt, online news organizations must have a stronger understanding of their readership than offline media companies. Their readers rely on online news as a “one-stop shop” for their content of the day, and seek a site which helps orient them to like-

minded links. Rosenblatt sees online news sites acting as both news provider and curator:

I believe that if I am going to be a successful website, I want people to come to me first. I know they are going to go to many places, that is what Google lets them do, but I want them to come to me first, because (i) I have the stories and good articles they want to read, (ii) I am going to help them find and recommend to them the best of the best of what is out there on other websites, so that they don't have to waste their time searching and looking until they may find something. They are going to come to me for my curation as well as my original reporting.

In our interview, Rosenblatt explained that he created a framework to explain how he views online media. He termed it “The Them’ae’us” (see Figure 5.0) in reference to Plato’s *The Timaeus*, an account of the formation of the universe. Rosenblatt’s homage to Plato outlines his view of the formation of the universe of online news: a three-pronged system that emphasizes gaps in the field.

Figure 5.0. “The Them’ae’us”



According to Rosenblatt, the category “THEM” refers to the traditional media, i.e. *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post* and *CNN*; in other words, the mainstream press. “US” refers to interest groups; and, based on Rosenblatt’s experience in online media, the rise of interest group media. During our interview, he cited two organizations as representative of this: *The American Progress Action Fund* and *ThinkProgress.org*:

American Progress Action Fund looks like a news magazine and it is the publication of our think tank and policy experts, [whereas] ThinkProgress.org is a blog, but is owned, underwritten, and staffed by members of staff from the

think tank. The organization uses the resources of the American Progress Action Fund and it is built into the blog itself. It is the professionalization of blogs, but not to the point where they move into mainstream media. They are not part of the media industry; they are part of the interest group industry, so there is a perspective and a partisanship to a certain tilt.

Rosenblatt recognizes that in traditional media, while there may be a degree of discrete political bias, the newspaper is still deemed an objective source for readers, unlike online media:

There may be tilts on newspaper blogs, but they are still couched within that objective media, although they are op-eds, they are still deemed as being part of that news media organization.

The gap between “US” and “THEM” media is that of “ME” media, which, according to Rosenblatt, is where the original content lies:

“ME” media are the original bloggers, individuals who wanted to fill in that gap that the mainstream press had abandoned when they stopped doing fact-checking, and started doing “he said, she said” kind of stuff. The “me” media were bloggers who came in and published themselves using these blog formats as totally self-driven amateurs and figuring out ways to make money off of it. The challenge was that very few of them had the resources to truly fill the gap. They did the best they could and they did really well, but there were limits.

In bridging the gap between the three types of media defined by Rosenblatt, successful online news organizations, such as *The Huffington Post*, *The Drudge Report*, and *Breitbart.com*, emerge as a result of their ability to leverage their resources to such an extent that they are able to provide content that aligns with three distinct areas: (i) traditional media; (ii) motivations of interest groups; and (iii) original content, as referenced in “Them’ae’us”. One of these resources is their ability to gain access to an exclusive news story (also known as a “scoop”). The next section will examine Breitbart’s use of social capital in gaining access to an exclusive news story, thus legitimizing his position in the subfield of online journalism.

II – Breitbart’s use of the scoop

As previously discussed, all three of the online news organizations examined in this dissertation relied on varying forms of networking in order to achieve legitimacy. While Huffington and Drudge gained recognition from both peers and the public, Breitbart began to do the same by following up and reporting on sources sent to him by his readers. They sought him out and provided him with sources for stories because he positioned himself as an outspoken critic of the left. After breaking a key

political story, based on an exclusive tip from one of his readers, he became recognized as a legitimate player in the field.

Breitbart began his career with Drudge in 1995, during the early days of *The Drudge Report*: joining him in working to expose left-wing media bias. He hails Drudge for starting the “war” against the DMC:

Matt Drudge and the *Drudge Report* were met with relentless attacks from the mainstream media class and the political left during the Clinton years—not because Matt was an aggregator of news stories or a conservative muckraker, but because he created a new front in the long-standing culture war—the Internet. History will look upon Matt Drudge as the Internet’s true media visionary. Millions of so-called bloggers write, report, upload their stories online, and influence the national and international political landscape because of the advent of the very liberating and democratic World Wide Web (2011).

Given Breitbart’s thorough understanding of the online media landscape, he was recruited by Arianna Huffington in 1997 to help her establish a personal website, *Arianna Online*. When Breitbart began working for Huffington, their political biases aligned, as Arianna was a registered Republican at the time. Together, they worked out of her home in Los Angeles, with Breitbart earning an annual salary of \$20,000, as revealed during my interview with him. His responsibilities included hiring and managing Huffington’s employees, and monitoring the front page of her website 24 hours a day. According to Breitbart, Huffington switched to the Democratic side for reasons of “political expediency”.

Breitbart revealed stories about being at Huffington’s home during her Republican days, where she would invite influential players from the American media elite over for dinner parties, and rarely would anyone attend. Breitbart argues that she is “manipulatively smart”: she recognized that in order to become part of the establishment she had to become their instrument. “She needed access to elite air and needed to be close to the power structure,” he explains. “[At that time] she wanted insider status”.

Although he did not convert to the Democratic party, Breitbart did attend the 2004 brunch at her home. He reflects on the meeting of the liberal media power players: “Being in the proximity of the leftists was so compromising to my ideals”. Breitbart had a 25% ownership in *The Huffington Post*: he worked on the site until its launch in May 2005. According to Huffington, while they differed politically, the site would not have been conceived without Breitbart’s input. “He was very involved at

the beginning of *The Huffington Post*”, she said in an interview with Michael Calderone of *The Huffington Post*. “After a few months, it became clear that our political differences, in terms of how we’re seeing the world, were going to make it very hard to continue working closely together. But, it was an amicable break-up, and the company later bought back his stock” (Calderone 2012). Breitbart continued as a contributor to *The Huffington Post* until March 2010.

Having fostered a network of individuals of status and becoming a key player within the conservative echo-chamber, Breitbart continued to attempt to dismantle the DMC and all affiliated players. He writes in *Righeous Indignation*,

As long as I’m in confession mode, I’ll admit I am also addicted to breaking news stories—big, medium, and small. I don’t care whether you call me a journalist, a reporter, a muckraker, or a rabble-rouser, just give me the goods. Let’s get the story out there,” There is no greater high than watching cable news or listening to talk radio and seeing stories that five minutes before were in Microsoft Word format now playing themselves out, sometimes with major consequence, on the world stage (2011: 7).

Breitbart positioned himself as an outspoken critic of the left, encouraging like-minded individuals to reach out to him with exclusive news items in order to gain legitimacy initially amongst the extreme right, and later from mainstream media.

Breitbart’s unique position grants him access to exclusive information from his readers who would rather provide him with a news tip than approach *The Washington Post*. He acts as an official conduit between sources and the mainstream media; this is especially the case when one of his stories (initially pitched by one of his readers) is “picked-up” (an internal value to the field of journalism according to Bourdieu) by the mainstream press. The act of having a story “picked-up” by another media organization illustrates legitimation as referenced previously by Bourdieu in *On Television and Journalism*; this is demonstrated in the following example.

“Weinergate”: The Anthony Weiner scandal

On May 28, 2011, a sexually explicit photo of Senator Weiner was posted on *BigJournalism*. Weiner is a former U.S. Representative (Democrat), who served New York’s 9th congressional district from January 1999 to June 2011. He resigned on June 21, 2011 following a sexting scandal uncovered by Breitbart.

The sexually explicit photograph was obtained using Weiner's public Twitter account; at the time he had 40,000 followers. The photo of Weiner's erect penis, concealed by boxer briefs, was sent to Gennette Cordova, a 21-year old female university student from Seattle, Washington. Cordova had been one of Weiner's Twitter followers at the time. The link to the photo was removed shortly after being posted; however, a screenshot of the original message, taken by a user identified as "Dan Wolfe" (@PatriotUSA76), was tweeted to Breitbart shortly after the incident. *BigJournalism* posted the story on May 28, 2011 one day after the photo was initially posted on Twitter. Reflecting on the incident, Breitbart stated during a press conference on June 16, 2011:

Friday of Memorial Day [weekend], I get this tweet sent to me. The person who first saw the tweet "PatriotUSA76" – a person I have no idea who it is – wanted me to see it. I happened to see it. I chose to investigate. It took us about four hours with an editorial team to finally realize that we had the story down solid (*BreitbartNews*, June 16, 2012).

In a new chapter of *Righteous Indignation*, published posthumously in April 2012, Breitbart provided insight on the moment when he received the infamous tweet:

The [re-tweeted] message included a link to an image, which I immediately clicked. While sipping wine, I looked at the image at first with mild confusion. *What am I looking at?* I wondered. I picked up the iPad and turned it in different directions to try to make out what the image was. It took about ten seconds for me to get it, at which point I had a mild 'Eureka' moment: *Aha! I know exactly what that is!* ... The next twenty-four hours — even though it was Saturday of a Memorial Day weekend — were going to be critical. We knew that the organized left was going to wage war, and by the time I woke up the next day, after launching the story, I realized that the Democrat-Media Complex was playing for keeps (*Breitbart News*, April 15, 2013).

Breitbart's reference to "the organized left" and the DMC illustrates his constant battle with liberal media and his reliance on devoted readers in his network to provide him with news tips. He does not operate according to the same networking strategies of Huffington (networking with players of status) or Drudge (networking with news organizations); Breitbart networks with his readers, given the unique position he occupies as an anti-DMC icon:

In the Friday night flurry to find out as much as we could about Weiner, the recipient of the tweet, archives of images, and records of other online communications, I had forgotten a most blatant missing puzzle piece. Nine days beforehand, we had received an e-mail tip from a gentleman in Texas who claimed to have compromising photographs and communications

between a single mother in Texas and Congressman Weiner. We had followed up via Pollak, who was skeptical but did not dismiss the tip entirely. We were not particularly interested in Weiner's private life, nor did we have any reason to believe the pictures would be real (*Breitbart News*, April 15, 2013).

When the allegations first appeared online, Weiner denied them, arguing that the image could have been manipulated: "We don't know where the photograph came from. We don't know for sure what's on it, we don't know for sure if it's been manipulated, if it was taken out of one place and dropped in something else", he explained to the press on June 1, 2011. Weiner argued that he must have been a victim of a political plot, led by political opponents or conservative media. While he did not have the FBI investigate the incident further, he did hire a private security firm to look into what he termed "a prank". Liberal bloggers blamed Breitbart, accusing him of planting the photo and accompanying tweet. In *Righteous Indignation*, Breitbart cites Markos Moulitsas, founder of *The Daily Kos*, as charging him with the crime (see Figure 5.1):

Without bothering to investigate the veracity of our allegations, the Kos post simply declared: "Breitbart to use SEX SMEAR on Rep. Anthony Weiner". The post was later updated to accuse me of faking the photograph. (Kos, months earlier, led the charge on another Saturday morning when he tried to blame me for the shooting of Rep. Gabrielle Giffords by the insane Jared Loughner. Within these battles against prominent Internet lefties, there are no repercussions when their side lies, cheats, and attacks. How could Kos get away with publishing a declaration of war, without having the facts, even after having been proven so egregiously wrong in trying to connect a political enemy to the despicable behavior of a lone, crazed gunman? As Dennis Prager often says, being a liberal means never having to say you're sorry.) (Ibid).

Figure 5.1. *The Daily Kos* v. Andrew Breitbart

The image shows a screenshot of a post on the Daily Kos website. At the top, the 'DAILY KOS' logo is displayed in orange, with a stylized American flag icon and the word 'NEW!' to its right. Below the logo is a navigation bar with links for 'PEOPLE', 'GROUPS', 'DIARIES', 'TAGS', 'LABOR', 'COMICS', 'ELECTIONS', 'ECON', and 'RADIO'. The post is by a user named 'MinistryOfTruth', who is identified as a 'Daily Kos member'. The post title is 'Brietbart to use SEX SMEAR on Rep. Anthony Weiner. UPDATEX2: "Easily Debunked FRAUD"= EPIC FAIL'. The post is dated 'SAT MAY 28, 2011 AT 11:49 AM PDT'. Below the title, there are social media sharing options for 'Like', 'Tweet', 'Email', and 'Comments' (578 Comments / 0 New).

On [BigGovernment.com](#), known serial liar and corporate hack Andrew Breitbart and friends have cooked up another Shirley Sherrod style attack on a Democrat, this time NY House Rep Anthony Weiner.

Source: MinistryofTruth. "Breitbart to use SEX SMEAR on Rep. Anthony Weiner". *The Daily Kos*. May 28, 2011. <http://www.dailykos.com/story/2011/05/28/979547/-Brietbart-to-use-SEX-SMEAR-on-Rep-Anthony-Weiner-UPDATEX2-Easily-Debunked-FRAUD-EPIC-FAIL#> Accessed: June 20, 2013

The *Daily Kos* article in Figure 5.1 above continued as follows:

Andrew Breitbart's sole purpose of existence is to get rich by smearing the enemies of the Republican Party and the special interests whom they serve. If Andrew Breitbart told me that it was raining outside I would open a window to verify it for myself. I don't trust him any farther than I can throw Sarah Palin's \$150,000 wardrobe (*The Daily Kos*, May 28, 2011).

This conflict between *The Daily Kos* and *Breitbart.com* illustrates the level of distrust circulating online. It is for precisely this reason that Breitbart relies on sources in order to acquire the information he needs to position himself as an opponent of the status quo.

Similar to the way in which the Clinton-Lewinsky scandal defined Drudge's position as a legitimate journalist (as will be discussed in detail in this chapter), the Weiner scandal helped solidify Breitbart's position in this space. At the June 16, 2011 press conference in New York, Weiner admitted that (a) he had sent the photo; and (b) that his account had not been hacked. Breitbart also appeared at the press conference, demanding an apology from Weiner (see Figure 5.2):

Figure 5.2. Andrew Breitbart “wants an apology from Weiner”



Source: Breitbart News. “Flashback: One Year Ago, Weiner’s Resignation”. June 16, 2012. *Breitbart.com* <http://www.breitbart.com/Big-Government/2012/06/16/flashback-one-year-ago-the-weiner-resignation> Accessed November 20, 2013

Appearing in front of a media scrum, Breitbart stated:

I want to hear the truth. I want to hear the truth from Congressman Weiner. Quite frankly I would like an apology for him being complicit in a “blame the messenger” strategy.

I am accused of being the hacker against a Congressman. He said nothing. He allowed for that to go on. His minions perpetuated that false, malicious meme and then he went on CNN to attack me. I feel he was complicit.

Everything that I have said so far has come to be true. The media says, “Breitbart lies, Breitbart lies, Breitbart lies, Breitbart lies”. Give me one example of a provable lie. One. One. Journalists, one. Journalists, put your reputation on the line here: one provable lie.

I would like an apology from him for allowing his political protectors – this was his strategy – to blame me. Blame me for hacking. “Oh don’t worry, Breitbart’s our regular whipping boy, we can accuse him of anything” and the press will not hold those journalists to account no matter what they say. And so, I am here for some vindication (*Breitbart News*, June 16, 2012).

On June 6, 2011, *BigJournalism* reported that Weiner had sent a series of other photos, more sexually graphic than the first one released. Breitbart says that his discovery of Weiner’s actions resulted from a three month monitoring of politicians’ Twitter accounts: specifically, Weiner’s account. Breitbart’s team created two false accounts of underage women to solicit communication with Weiner and the women he was contacting. As a result of Breitbart’s investigation, Weiner admitted to sending photographs of a sexual nature to women via Twitter, Facebook and text message. He resigned on June 21, 2011.

On June 16, 2012, *Breitbart.com* posted a story titled “One Year Ago, Weiner’s Resignation”. The article hails Breitbart, who passed away on March 1, 2012, as having fought the ultimate battle against the DMC by dismantling a Democratic Congressman:

The Anthony Weiner episode was one of Andrew Breitbart's greatest victories, though not because his reportage and public pressure led a Congressman to resign. For even though Weiner's seat was taken by a Republican in blue New York, the bigger target for Andrew was culture. The entrenched media tried to bury this story--first by ignoring it, second by taking Weiner at his word, then by smearing Breitbart and his editorial team.

And Andrew won. An independent Los Angeles-based web editor scooped the national media, with its (comparatively) unlimited resources, and withstood their bile and mockery. Something in the balance of power changed forever when they called him to the same stage Weiner would soon occupy. Even though they hated him and would never accept him, the mainstream press could not silence him, and they had to treat him as an equal when his report was proven true beyond a doubt.

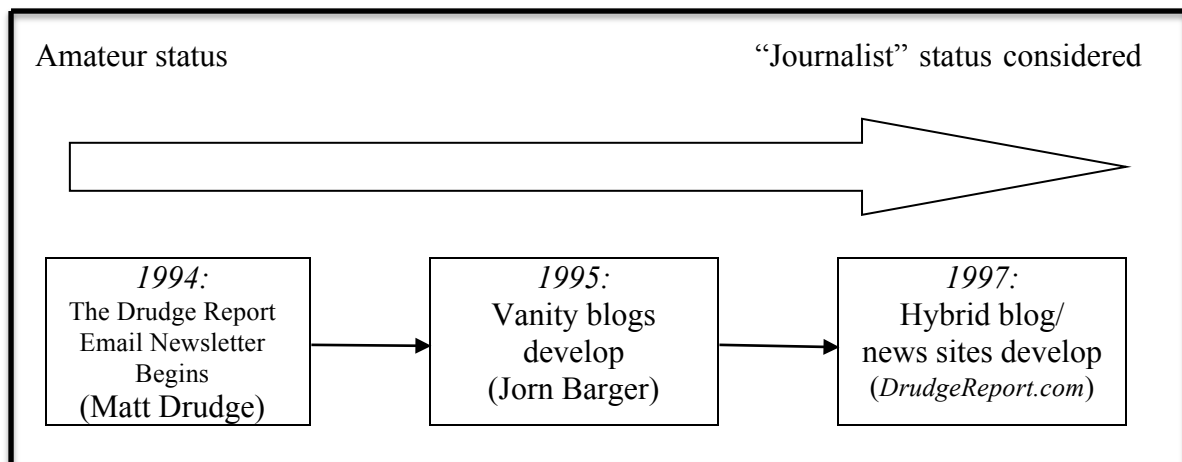
III – Drudge as a new media pioneer?

As discussed in Chapter One, blog tools emerged in 1999, with users being able to use blogging software and web hosting services (Snow 2010). One of the most important moments in the early days of blogging was the emergence of Matt Drudge’s voice. As explained by Russell,

By the end of 2004, blogs had become a key part of online news culture, and by the end of the decade, many bloggers became essential reading for members of the media and the public, bloggers with different political views and different approaches to the medium, like Markos Moulitas, Glenn Greenwald, Eric Erickson, and Matt Drudge (Bruns 2005: 18). These bloggers had developed their own personal news brand, picking up tips, building sources, and breaking stories (2011: 77).

In 1997, Drudge was the first blogger to move away from vanity postings and into news aggregation (Drudge 2000). In 1994, prior to entering the blogosphere, Drudge began emailing his news items in an online newsletter format, for \$10/year, to a select list of individuals (Drudge 2000). The weekly subscriber-based dispatch was supplemented a year later with the release of *The Drudge Report* (Drudge 2000). Based on my research findings, *The Drudge Report* marked the next stage in the blogging continuum: introducing online users to content aggregation (see Figure 5.3). Drudge would curate relevant news items and write his own headline, directing online readers to various news items that appeared on other websites, such as *The New York Times*, *the Associated Press*, *The Washington Post*, etc.

Figure 5.3. Mapping the blogosphere



Drudge reformatted the standard of content that appeared in the blogosphere, critically examining and commenting on mainstream news.

The Drudge Report's coverage of the Clinton-Lewinsky scandal has been termed a defining moment in the history of online journalism. According to Dr. Eric Alterman, a professor at the City University of New York, Drudge is in a league of his own:

Back to 1998... Drudge would soon be named one of *Newsweek's* new media stars and one of *People's* 25 Most Intriguing People. American Journalism Review ran a cover story titled "Journalism in the Era of Drudge and [Larry] Flynt," and the *Columbia Journalism Review* even cited his outing of the Monica Lewinsky affair in 1998 as one of the 10 key dates in the entire media history of the 20th century (Alterman, June 13, 2013).

Drudge achieved success by identifying the resources necessary to become a product of the "US"/"THEM"/"ME" schema developed by Rosenblatt. The main resource used by Drudge was the acquisition of an exclusive news story (i.e. "the scoop") at the expense of an offline source. This will be explained in the following section.

Drudge vs. the Democrats

Mark Halperin and John Harris stated that, "No Democratic politician will survive in the 2008 presidential campaign without understanding the singular power of Drudge and crafting a strategy to defend against this power," (Boehlert, October 21, 2008). In a piece posted on *Media Matters for America*, Eric Boehlert, author of *Bloggers on the Bus*, compiled evidence of Drudge's influence on presidential campaigns from 2004 to 2008:

Matt Drudge is still doing his loyal best to boost the chances of the GOP down the homestretch in the form of a blizzard of anti-Obama and pro-McCain links on his site... Not to be out-Drugged, Washingtonpost.com's Chris Cillizza recently labeled him the "single most influential source for how the presidential campaign is covered in the country" (*Media Matters for America*, October 21, 2008).

This section will first introduce Matt Drudge and his website in relation to the 2004 U.S. Presidential election, illustrating how he gained peer recognition amidst a historically divisive political campaign. Following an analysis of his influence in the political sphere, I will define and analyze his use of *meta-reporting* as a distinct strategy for gaining a "scoop" and subsequent legitimacy in the subfield of online journalism.

According to political consultant and *Huffington Post* founder James Boyce, *The Drudge Report* played a significant role in influencing undecided voters in the lead-up to the closing of the polls on November 2, 2004. At the 2004 U.S. Presidential election, incumbent President George W. Bush (Rep.) faced off against Senator John Kerry (Dem.). While being interviewed, Boyce cited a statistic that illustrates a critical coincidence between voter engagement online and the margin by which Kerry lost to Bush: “In the last 24 hours of the election, some 36 million people visited *The Drudge Report*. There were 125 million voters in the 2004 election, 36 million visitors on *Drudge*, and the election was lost because of 100,000 voters in Ohio.”

Ohio had been a contentious state throughout the Presidential campaign. As the results began to appear on election night, three swing states emerged: Ohio, Pennsylvania and Florida. These three states were seen as evenly divided, with each casting 20 electoral votes or more, and therefore holding the power to decide the election. As the ballots were counted, it became clear that Senator Kerry had taken Pennsylvania, and that President Bush had held Florida.

On November 3, 2004, the morning following the election, Bush established a lead of approximately 130,000 votes. While the Democrats reportedly had 200,000 votes, many were provisional ballots that had yet to be counted. Bush had preliminary leads of less than 5% of the vote in only four states, but if Iowa, Nevada and New Mexico had all eventually gone to Kerry, a win in Ohio would have created a 269-269 tie in the Electoral College (Cohen 2011: 148). In the event of an electoral tie, the result of the election is determined in the House of Representatives, with each state casting one vote, regardless of its population. Given the political makeup of the House in 2004, the election would have resulted in a victory for Bush; therefore the outcome of the election was contingent on Ohio, regardless of the totals in the other states. On the afternoon on November 3, 2004, Ken Blackwell, Ohio’s Secretary of State, announced that it was “statistically impossible” for the Democrats to make up enough valid votes in the provisional ballots to win. The Democrats had 135,000 votes. Had Kerry secured more votes in Ohio, he would have won the election despite losing the popular vote by over 3 million votes.

While the number of visitors to *The Drudge Report* in the last 24 hours of the 2004 election is a startling testimony to the popularity of his site, Matt Drudge became a household name six years earlier during the Bill Clinton/Monica Lewinsky scandal. He emerged as a key player in the subfield of online journalism as a result of

providing up-to-date reports on his website on one of the most infamous Presidential scandals in U.S. history. In his manifesto, Drudge writes candidly about the significance of the scandal in helping to create a name for himself in the industry. The following is an excerpt from an interview between Drudge and Harbrecht; Drudge included the transcript in his manifesto:

National Press Club Q & A
June 2, 1998

...

Mr. Harbrecht: Let's talk a little bit about the Monica Lewinsky episode for a moment. I guess one could say you did "out" that story by reporting that *Newsweek* had reservations about reporting it.

Mr. Drudge: ... When I broke the story, I had four days to myself exclusively where I was reporting details... I barricaded myself in the apartment. I was terrified, because from my Hollywood apartment a story of this magnitude was being born. I remember I teared up when I hit the "Enter" button on that one night, because I said, "My life won't be the same after this." And it turned out to be right (2000: 197-198).

Harbrecht's remark that Drudge "out[ed]" *Newsweek* typifies my definition of *meta-reporting*: referring to a form of journalism, primarily conducted online, in which journalists report not on an original story, but instead on other reporters reporting on an original story. This form of journalism has not been examined by scholars, but has been identified by those in the industry. As Chris Cillizza of *The Washington Post* remarked:

The second major reason for Drudge's influence... is his ability to sniff out a potentially big story when others -- including reporters -- miss it at first glance. "He can identify what's a big deal even when the reporters who actually cover and report on an event don't realize what they have," said one GOP strategist granted anonymity to speak candidly. "He scoops reporters' scoops" (July 10, 2008).

Cillizza cites Drudge's "elite readership" as the main reason for his influence: "Drudge's number of unique visitors is regularly touted, but what is more important, in terms of his ability to drive news cycles, is that every reporter and editor who covers politics is checking the site multiple times a day" (Cillizza July 10, 2008). Cillizza's reference to political reporters and editors "checking the site" illustrates one of Bourdieu's internal values of the field: "peer recognition" (1998: 70). Political editors and journalists recognize the influence of Drudge as a navigator of the online media landscape; by referring to his website for information, they validate not only its

existence, but also its legitimacy. As Alex Castellanos, a Republican media consultant and former advisor to 2012 U.S. Presidential candidate Mitt Romney, told Cillizza: “Drudge has become Center Court at Wimbledon... If it doesn’t happen there, it doesn’t happen” (July 10, 2008).

Drudge became a significant player in the subfield of online journalism as a result of his use of meta-reporting, which was achieved by accumulating degrees of social capital. This strategy can be understood as a form of networking: the organization using this practice must gain access to a specific newsroom in order to “scoop” information. Therefore, the individual relies on social capital (such as their relationship with other reporters) in order to gain access to this network and subsequently “scoop” them. This will be illustrated in the following example.

According to the interviews that I conducted, it was revealed that in the early days of his website, Drudge would spend his time in newsrooms, trying to absorb information about what reporters were writing. Before their story was published, he had often reported on it on his site. He achieved new media prominence by breaking stories before the mainstream press: in particular, and as already noted, as the first to report that President Clinton and White House intern, Monica Lewinsky, were allegedly having an affair.

Former *Newsweek* editor and current Editorial Director for *The Huffington Post* Howard Fineman explained in our interview that the success of Drudge’s reporting on the scandal lay not in revealing that the scandal had taken place, but that *Newsweek* was attempting to break the story first:

Matt Drudge was the first to realize that what went on in newsrooms was a get-able story in itself. He would hang out in newsrooms or work the phone of reporters to find out what they were working on and then he would try to break it on his site before they would break it on theirs. That was the key to what he did early on, from a Conservative bent. But the key to his success is not his Conservative bent, it is caging stories out of the newsrooms of the establishment – reporting on reporters. That is how he got the Lewinsky story. The key thing for him was finding out that *Newsweek* – where I was working at the time – was covering the story. This forced us (*Newsweek*) to put the Lewinsky story online before it was published in the magazine. That was the first time we had ever done that.

Drudge’s news item was thus that *Newsweek* was reluctant to publish a story about the President of the United States having an affair with a twenty-three year old intern (see Figure 5.4).

Figure 5.4. Clinton-Lewinsky headline from *The Drudge Report* (January 17, 1998)



Source: Drudge, Matt. "Newsweek kills story on White House intern". *The Drudge Report*. January 17, 1998. http://www.drudgereportarchives.com/data/2002/01/17/20020117_175502_ml.htm Accessed March 10, 2013

This series of online news stories reporting that *Newsweek* was considering publishing the story cemented Drudge's name in the world of online news, and subsequently elevated his status in the field through peer recognition. As he writes in his manifesto:

I sit at the keyboard frantically typing an item that *Newsweek*'s preparing to unload and unload big. My inside source confirms that Michael Isikoff's heard tapes, but once again – as I did by six weeks with his Willey – I'm beating him to the punchbowl.

...

I'm minutes – make that *seconds* – away from slapping a screamer on my website: *NEWSWEEK BOMBSHELL: TAPES REVEAL INTERN IN WHITE HOUSE SEX SHOCKER; PREZ GAVE GIFTS; STARR MOVES IN!!!* (2000: 57-58).

For Drudge, the story was never about infidelity, but about the editorial compromises made based on political agendas: in this case a primarily Democratic news magazine reporting on a Democratic President in a manner which brought his integrity into question. The story, posted on January 17, 1998 at 23:32 PST, began as follows:

At the last minute, at 6 p.m. on Saturday evening, *NEWSWEEK* magazine killed a story that was destined to shake official Washington to its foundation: A White House intern carried on a sexual affair with the President of the United States.

The DRUDGE REPORT has learned that reporter Michael Isikoff developed the story of his career, only to have it spiked by top *NEWSWEEK* suits hours before publication. A young woman, 23, sexually involved with the love of her life, the President of the United States, since she was a 21-year-old intern at the White House. She was a frequent visitor to a small study just off the Oval Office where she claims to have indulged the president's sexual preference. Reports of the relationship spread in White House quarters and she was moved to a job at the Pentagon, where she worked until last month (*The Drudge Report* online archives).

Drudge became successful thanks to his recognition that *meta-reporting* was one of the only ways he could get news items ("scoops") before anyone else, and thus be

recognized as a legitimate news organization by “the establishment”, as referred to by Fineman:

[Drudge] was a Conservatively-oriented reporter who was focusing on what was going on in the generally Liberal precincts of the media establishment. This is an example of the breakdown of the consensus of authority. In the old days, you would never report publicly on what another newsroom was working on, that was just not done. But he [Drudge] saw the world changing, and that the decisions taking place in the newsrooms, were news in and of themselves. In the old days, that would have to wait until someone’s book was published or maybe would do a reconstructing weeks or months later. But he was doing this in real-time, he was doing it before they even published the story.

Michael Isikoff, the former *Newsweek* editor who uncovered the Clinton-Lewinsky scandal, is skeptical of Drudge’s use of the internet to publish the story, arguing that the substance was missing from Drudge’s “scoop” and that he never had a story to begin with. “[The Clinton-Lewinsky] scandal was a sweet, generous gift to Drudge,” explained Isikoff in our interview:

Obviously it was the information that mattered, what appeared online was not the substance; when it came out online he didn’t have it, he was just picking up gossip and repeating it, and then when mainstream news organizations reported it and explained the evidence, that was the story.

Isikoff’s reluctance to admit that Drudge revealed the scandal before the mainstream media reported on it helps illustrate that traditional journalists do not see the value in meta-reporting; to them, it is not a legitimate form of journalism. That the resulting product of meta-reporting is its publication online and its authors seeking the same status as traditional journalists is indicative of the ongoing conflict associated with online news.

In December 2012, *Newsweek* published its final print edition. In this last issue, Isikoff published a story entitled, “Monica Lewinsky: Backstage at the Ultimate Washington Drama”: an after-the-fact article providing readers with a behind-the-scenes narrative of the story scooped by Drudge. He wrote:

The story would turn Washington upside down—and, I immediately knew, would raise as many questions about prosecutorial overreach as it would about presidential recklessness and mendacity. And *Newsweek* was right in the middle of it. We alone knew what was going on... If *Newsweek* went ahead with this story, or started making some calls to the White House for comment, we would tip off their targets and sabotage an ongoing law-enforcement operation. Could I be persuaded to hold off? I bargained. We could possibly hold off making phone calls for another day. (It was pretty much standard practice at *Newsweek* to hold off making phone calls to principals on major

exclusives until late in the week anyway—to avoid tipping off the competition.) (*Newsweek*, December 24, 2012).

The concept of “tipping off the competition” is a standard concern in print journalism. However, Isikoff did not consider the ramifications of “tipping off” an un-established offline journalist. He writes of Drudge’s “scoop”:

We were coming up against a hard deadline, and the brass wanted more work. The decision was final: *Newsweek* would hold the story. It didn’t take long, of course, for it to explode. Early Sunday morning, Internet scribe Matt Drudge popped his screaming “World Exclusive”: “NEWSWEEK KILLS STORY ON WHITE HOUSE INTERN ... SEX RELATIONSHIP WITH PRESIDENT.” ... As the truth began to unfold, and *Newsweek*’s insider knowledge became clear, *The New York Times* asked if I was suicidal when the story was spiked. I don’t know about suicidal, I replied. “But I won’t deny certain homicidal tendencies” (*Newsweek*, December 24, 2012).

Traditional journalists such as Isikoff view meta-reporting as parasitic and derivative; yet it represents a strategic method for those seeking to affiliate themselves with an established institution in order to gain legitimacy. Drudge investigated what was occurring in newsrooms, (i.e. finding out what other journalists – like Isikoff – were investigating) then reported on it. This method of journalism is what makes Drudge and his work both original and novel; and in the view of this dissertation, the founding father of meta-reporting. The following excerpt from his manifesto highlights the relevance of *The Drudge Report* in the Clinton-Lewinsky scandal, and how the grand jury focused repeatedly on Clinton’s initial exposure to the allegations, with Drudge as the conduit:

Map Room, White House
August 17, 1998 – 1:30 pm ET
Grand Jury Grilling

Q: You did have a great deal of anxiety in the hours – following the end of your deposition. Isn’t that fair to say?

A: Well, I had a little anxiety the next day, of course, because of the DRUDGE REPORT. And I had an anxiety after the deposition because it was more about Monica Lewinsky that it was Paula Jones ... this DRUDGE REPORT came out which used Betty’s name, and I thought we were going to be deluged by press comments.

Q: Mr. President, when did you learn about the DRUDGE REPORT allegations of you having a sexual relationship with someone at the White House?

A: I have no idea ... I think somebody called me and told me about it, maybe Bruce. Maybe someone else. I’m not sure, but I learned very early on the 18th of the DRUDGE REPORT.

Q: Very early morning hours, sir...?

A: I think it was when I got up on Sunday morning, I think. Maybe it was late Saturday night, I don't remember.

Q: Did you call Betty Currie, sir, after the DRUDGE REPORT hit the wire?

A: I did.

Q: Did you call her at home?

A: I did. Was that the night of the 17th?

Q: Night of the 17th...

A: Okay, yes, yes. I worked with Prime Minister Netanyahu that night until about midnight...

Toda Rabba.

I remember that night.

It was the night the gates blew open.

For news was no longer controlled, and never would be again.

Anyone from anywhere can cover anything.

And send it out to *everyone*.

Even this nobody. Filing.

From nowhere (2000: 67-68).

Drudge was consistently dismissed as both an outsider and a journalist without any credibility until he challenged two pillars of American society: the press and the President.

The Clinton-Lewinsky scandal was one of the most significant sexual scandals in American political history. The media coverage surrounding it became highly polarized as various news organizations resorted to partisan reporting in order to attempt to shed light on the hype surrounding the allegations. According to Isikoff, the mainstream media did not anticipate Drudge's presence, and his ability to reconfigure how information surrounding the scandal was released to the public. He became one of the definitive interpreters of the Clinton-Lewinsky scandal due to his position as an investigator of investigative journalists. As Isikoff reflects:

On Friday afternoon, June 27, Steve Tuttle, *Newsweek's* computer maven, popped into my office. "Drudge is in the office," he announced... On the night before he [Drudge] came to *Newsweek*, the right-wing writer David Brock and conservative pundit Laura Ingraham had co-hosted a grand dinner party for him at Brock's Georgetown home. A star-studded cast of political and journalistic notables was on hand – including *Newsweek's* Howard Fineman. At one point, amid the cigar smoke and gossipy chatter, Drudge said he planned to be making the rounds of Washington news organizations while he was in town. Fineman casually suggested he stop by *Newsweek*. So he did. ... He had the trademark instincts of a good gossip columnist: he gave the impression he knew much more than he was telling (2000: 150).

According to Isikoff, Drudge's blatant disregard for the established way of reporting news forced the scandal to become public knowledge and *Newsweek* was forced to publish the story online before its release in the magazine. This illustrates that Drudge had managed, as a result of his strategic relationships with industry insiders and his use of meta-reporting, to direct news production at one of the country's leading news organizations. As Isikoff explains it:

At about seven p.m., Tuttle came by. You might want to take a look at *Drudge*, he said. I called up his Web site. Drudge had a red police siren logo flashing atop *The Drudge Report* – a siren reserved for supposedly hot breaking news. “Foster Report Imminent!” it read. Drudge went on to say that “*Newsweek*'s Isikoff” would report on the Foster report in the magazine's issue due out Monday... As my unwritten “scoop” rocketed through cyberspace, I reviewed my options. Should I hastily type it into a story before my editors in New York read about it on *Drudge*? Or should I leave it out and make Drudge look stupid? But what if my competitors at *Time* read *The Drudge Report* and slipped a reference to the Foster report into their story?

Finally, I stuck a line about the Foster report into the Starr sex story. On Monday, I found that *Time* had done the same. The following Thursday, July 3, Drudge left me a message saying he needed to talk to me about another story. I called back, mainly to tell him what a sleazebag he was for stealing other reporters' stories.

Drudge said he had heard I was working on a story involving another woman who had been harassed by Clinton. My heart momentarily stopped. Where are you hearing this? I asked. What, exactly, were you told? In retrospect, I realize I displayed a bit too much alarm.

Well, I guess there must be something to this, he said.

I made it clear to him that I wasn't confirming a thing and slammed down the phone, fearing the worst (2000: 183).

Drudge was singlehandedly redefining the news cycle. The age-old adage, “if you can't beat them, join them”, is representative of Drudge's tactic in securing a name for himself by making connections in newsrooms and subsequently earning legitimacy in the subfield of online journalism. Bourdieu emphasizes the importance of using media for entry in this way:

You can only break out of the circle by breaking and entering, so to speak. But you can only break and enter through the media. You have to grab the attention of the media, or at least one “medium” so that the story can be picked up and amplified by its competitors (1998: 26).

Drudge made a name for himself by “entering through the media” and sustaining a position of legitimacy through his continued use of meta-reporting. Even though traditional journalists such as Isikoff may not respect him, they cannot disregard the point that his website has become a source for news content, regardless of how he accesses the news stories. In Harbrecht’s interview with Drudge, he asks him about his rapport with mainstream media:

Mr. Harbrecht: How many leaked stories do you get from mainstream journalists, and would you speculate on their motivation?

Mr. Drudge: That’s a good question, because what I’ve been doing lately is breaking news that’s about to be broken, coverage of the coverage of the coverage. But that’s where we are, since the media is so powerful. The media is comparable to government – probably passes government in raw power. A lot of the stories are internal (Drudge 2000: 200).

His ruthlessness in uncovering what other journalists are reporting illustrates that he understands the importance of keeping his finger on the pulse of the industry: both for affiliated benefits, and to stay competitive.

The channeling of resources amongst a unique set of elites solidifies positions within the field of journalism. Unlike offline media, successful online media organizations (in terms of unique daily visitors and the capacity to be deemed a legitimate source by industry insiders) value connections to social networks as much as, if not more than, financial connections, in that they provide greater access to resources, such as information about exclusive news stories. With regard to Drudge, he would not be able to conduct meta-reporting without having access to these types of journalistic networks.

IV – Huffington’s galaxy of stars

In today’s evolving subfield of online journalism, Huffington has emerged as a key player: based on her ability to leverage affiliations with already-established players and to use their resources to her benefit. She appears to only align herself with those players whom she believes will contribute successfully to her brand: “You should see the pictures in her office; she has been photographed with every major figure you can think of,” stated HPM7 during our interview.

Huffington privileges players within her network who have the resources she needs; these include gaining exclusive interviews, receiving invitations to elite parties

such as the *Vanity Fair* Oscar party, and maintaining contacts with like-minded individuals. Given the propensity for celebrity engagement and awareness in media, Huffington enlisted members of Hollywood's elite to write for her website, encouraging her status as an insider. As remarked in my interview with an anonymous Senior Politics Editor at *The Huffington Post* office in Washington, D.C., "What other news organization gets the big names that we get. It's like the who's who of pop culture heavyweights" (HPM4). Celebrities who are regular contributors to *The Huffington Post* include Alec Baldwin, Tom Hanks, Rita Wilson and many other A-listers. Figure 5.5 illustrates how Huffington has leveraged celebrity engagement on her site in order to position it as a leading source for "fresh takes and real-time analysis from HuffPost's signature lineup of contributors", as cited on her website. Her use of the words "fresh", "real-time" and "signature" encourage a sense of exclusivity that assures readers that they are gaining a unique perspective on news items. Figure 5.5 illustrates the types of articles written by many prominent celebrities. The headlines accompanying their articles suggest an inside perspective on topics easily relatable to readers, yet which provide content that they cannot access anywhere else.

Figure 5.5. Prominent celebrity bloggers on *The Huffington Post*

The screenshot displays the 'THE BLOG' section of The Huffington Post. At the top, it features the text 'Featuring fresh takes and real-time analysis from HuffPost's signature lineup of contributors' and a 'HOT ON THE BLOG' section listing Jeffrey Sachs and Novak Djokovic. Below this, three article cards are shown:

- Alec Baldwin** (Actor): Article titled 'How Broadway Has Changed', posted on 05/07/2013 at 10:43 am. Includes social media sharing options for FAN, RSS, EMAIL, and Like (1.1k).
- Rita Wilson** (Editor at Large, HuffPost50, Actor, Producer, Singer): Article titled 'My Friend Nora', posted on 06/27/2012 at 1:16 pm. Includes social media sharing options for FAN, RSS, EMAIL, Follow, and Like (119). Below the article title are reaction buttons: 'React > Amazing Inspiring Funny Scary Hot Crazy Important Weird' and a 'Read more >' link with a list of related articles.
- Robert F. Kennedy Jr.** (President, Waterkeeper Alliance, professor, Pace University): Article titled 'You Need to See This Movie', posted on 12/06/2012 at 1:36 pm. Includes social media sharing options for FAN, RSS, EMAIL, and Like (391).

As briefly introduced in Chapter Four, Huffington strategically formed relationships with the wives of the left-leaning media players listed in Figures 5.6 and 5.7. Her relationships with these women (see Figure 5.6) illustrate her understanding of the importance of maintaining ties with America’s media moguls in order to sustain her online franchise (see Figure 5.7). As an anonymous Assistant News Editor from *The Huffington Post*’s New York office explained to me,

The reason she gets the stories that she wants from these people [celebrity contributors] is because they are all part of the same network. Her daughter goes to Yale with their kids, they summer together and they discuss potential story ideas together. Obviously no one can compete with that. She gets exclusives because her network is exclusive.

Figure 5.6 outlines Huffington’s “exclusive” network.

Figure 5.6. Arianna Huffington’s social network of influence



Figure 5.7. Wives of American media moguls

Wife	Husband
Willow Bay	Bob Iger: Chairman/CEO, <i>Walt Disney</i> Director, <i>Apple Inc.</i> Board of Directors
Elaine Wynn	Steve Wynn: Co-Founder, Chairman, CEO of <i>Wynn Resorts</i> Responsible for the expansion/resurgence of the Las Vegas strip
Kathy Freston	Tom Freston: Entertainment Industry Exec. Former CEO of <i>Viacom</i> <i>Dreamworks</i> Board of Directors Board Chairman for the <i>ONE Campaign</i>
Wendi Murdoch	Rupert Murdoch: Chairman/CEO of <i>Newscorp</i>
Diane von Furstenberg	Barry Diller: Chairman/Senior Executive, <i>IAC (InterActiveCorp)</i> <i>IAC</i> owns <i>The Daily Beast</i> Responsible for the creation of <i>Fox Broadcasting</i> and <i>USA Broadcasting</i>

While online news organizations such as *The Huffington Post* rely on resources from offline relationships in order to solidify their legitimizing status, it is important to examine how it is that Huffington has leveraged her relationship with these women in order to benefit her organization. As HPF10, an anonymous Fashion and Beauty Reporter at *The Huffington Post*, told me during our interview in New York: “I would kill to have lunch with her and her girls at Monkey Bar. Can you imagine what they talk about? I mean, apart from their column”. Many of the interviews that I conducted with reporters and editors at *The Huffington Post* focused on Huffington’s network, with many commenting on her relationships with a sense of awe, as illustrated above in the quote from HPF10.

The women listed in Figures 5.6 and 5.7 have a connection with Huffington, and comprise the network of women Huffington dines with on a weekly basis, according to HPF10. Willow Bay, the wife of Robert Iger (CEO of Walt Disney), is a Senior Editor at *The Huffington Post*, while Elaine Wynn and Kathy Freston are contributors to the site (see Figure 5.8). In nearly all of my interviews with employees (both past and present) of *The Huffington Post*, a reference to Huffington’s elite network was often mentioned.

Figure 5.8. The befriended women of *The Huffington Post*

Willow Bay (wife of Walt Disney CEO, Robert Iger)



Willow Bay
RSS Feed

GET UPDATES FROM WILLOW BAY
FAN EMAIL Like 8

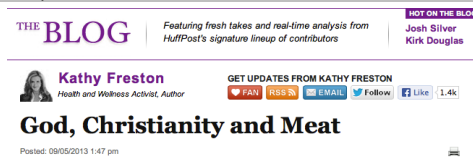
Willow Bay, Senior Editor of The Huffington Post, is a television journalist and author. She is also a special correspondent for Bloomberg Television. Most recently, Bay has interviewed Warren Buffett and President Bill Clinton in collaboration with Yahoo! News and The Huffington Post.

In 2006, Bay was the Executive Producer and Host of Lifetime Television's Spotlight 25, a multi-platform research initiative and television special that offers a unique look into the lives of today's twenty-something women.

In 2003, Bay wrote Talking to Your Kids in Tough Times: How to Answer Your Child's Questions About the World We Live In. (Time Warner Books)

From 1998 to 2003, Bay filled a variety of reporting and anchoring roles at the world's leading cable news network, CNN.

Kathy Freston (wife of former CEO of Viacom, Tom Freston)



THE BLOG Featuring fresh takes and real-time analysis from HuffPost's signature lineup of contributors

HOT ON THE BLOG
Josh Silver
Kirk Douglas

Kathy Freston
Health and Wellness Activist, Author

GET UPDATES FROM KATHY FRESTON
FAN RSS EMAIL Follow Like 1.4k

God, Christianity and Meat

Posted: 09/05/2013 1:47 pm

Elaine Wynn (wife of Wynn Resorts CEO, Steve Wynn)



Page: 1

The Power Women On The Vegas Strip

wowOwow | Posted 11.17.2011 | Healthy Living

Read More: Women, Las Vegas, Sexism, Elaine Wynn, Careers, Ivanka Trump, Women and Business, Powerful Women, Feminism, Healthy Living News

I wondered to myself as I looked around the majestic Las Vegas Strip for the very first time: How were women faring, employment wise, in the top ranks...

Read Whole Story

In July 2011, Huffington published a series of videos about female friendships. The series included notable women from various industries, including Kathy Freston and Wendi Murdoch. The series of stories stemmed from the release of the female empowerment film, *Snow Flower and the Secret Fan*, co-produced by Wendi Murdoch and Florence Sloan (see Figure 5.9).

Figure 5.9. Strategic friendships formed around *The Huffington Post*

THE BLOG | Featuring fresh takes and real-time analysis from HuffPost's signature lineup of contributors | **HOT ON THE BLOG**
Josh Silver
Kirk Douglas

Shasta Nelson, M.Div. GET UPDATES FROM SHASTA NELSON, M.DIV.
Founder, GirlFriendCircles.com

FAN RSS EMAIL Twitter Like 42

Four Different Friendships, Four Similar Themes

Posted: 07/15/11 12:09 PM ET

React > Amazing Inspiring Funny Scary Hot Crazy Important Weird

Follow > Video , Florence Sloan , Kathy Freston , Katie Lee , Snow Flower And The Secret Fan , Suzanne Malveaux , Wendi Murdoch , Amy Chua , Amy Chua Tiger Mother , Anne Ackerly , Female Friendships , Friends Til The End , Friendship , Friendship Differences , Friendship Expert , Friendship Interviews , How To Make Friends , Suzette Malveaux , Women News

Video 1: Co-producers of the *Snow Flower* film, [Wendi Murdoch and Florence Sloan](#)

Video 2: Chefs and authors, [Katie Lee and Kathy Freston](#)

Video 3: Law professor and author [Amy Chua](#) and investment management executive [Anne Ackerly](#)

Video 4: Twins, law professor [Suzette Malveaux](#) and CNN anchor [Suzanne Malveaux](#)

Each video is around 3 minutes, which isn't a lot of time for 2 people to talk about a friendship, and yet it's enough time to be inspired by many themes that kept repeating themselves from very different friendships.

By endorsing Murdoch's movie, Huffington was again participating in the associative resources of return transaction model: providing positive news coverage in exchange for social contacts. The examples cited in this section illustrate that it was imperative for Huffington to continue to foster her relationships with these women as a result of the social capital she gained from them. Breitbart referenced this currency exchange during our interviews, explaining that in the days leading up to the Brentwood brunch, Huffington became socially involved with women such as Bay and Freston, attending lunches and charity events with them.

Scooping “Deep Throat” again

Another example of Huffington’s use of the associative resources of return transaction model was her relationship with the late Nora Ephron. Ephron, an American writer who died in June 2012, was a key player in the Brentwood Group. According to HPF10, Ephron allegedly introduced Huffington to Tom Hanks’ wife, Rita Wilson, another key player in Hollywood and recently hired Senior Editor at *The Huffington Post*.

Ephron was once married to Carl Bernstein, of the famous Watergate investigative reporting team. During Watergate, Woodward and Bernstein received insider information from a source they named “Deep Throat”, whose identity remained a mystery until May 2005. Ephron was aware of his true identity; once it was revealed that a man named Mark Felt was the true source, she published an exclusive post on *The Huffington Post* about living with a secret that shaped President Nixon’s resignation. The post was circulated and re-posted on the websites of major news organizations.

The re-posted story parallels Bourdieu’s concept of a story being “picked up” (1998: 71) as signifying peer-recognition, one of the principles of legitimation of journalism. By befriending Ephron, Huffington was not only privy to her network (Sorkin, Hanks, etc.), but she landed the exclusive “Deep Throat” piece as a result of her networking with the Brentwood Group. Figure 5.10 provides an excerpt from Ephron’s seminal post, which provided Huffington with the status she needed from someone in an elite position.

Figure 5.10. *The Huffington Post* and Deep Throat – An exclusive

The screenshot shows a blog post header for Nora Ephron, author of 'Editor At Large, Huffington Post'. The post is dated May 31, 2005, at 10:45 PM. The title is 'Deep Throat and Me: Now It Can Be Told, and Not for the First Time Either'. Below the title is a 'What's Your Reaction?' section with buttons for Amazing, Inspiring, Funny, Scary, Hot, Crazy, Important, and Weird. A 'Read More' section lists related links. A 'SHARE THIS STORY' section shows social media share counts: 6, 1, 13, and 1. The main text begins with 'For many years, I have lived with the secret of Deep Throat's identity. It has been hell, and I have dealt with the situation by telling pretty much anyone who asked me, including total strangers, who Deep Throat was. Not for nothing is indiscretion my middle name.'

Ephron's post was published on May 31, 2005, three weeks after *The Huffington Post* was launched. Following her death in June 2012, Huffington wrote a eulogy for Ephron and posted it online:

She [Ephron] was also an integral part of the HuffPost family -- a contributing editor, an investor, a supporter, and a constant sounding board months before we launched. But, despite her amazing creative track record in which she excelled in so many different forms -- magazines, novels, essays, movies, plays, etc. -- Nora was initially reluctant to dip her toe in the blogosphere... That initial post -- which Nora called "Deep Throat and Me: Now It Can Be Told, and Not for the First Time Either" -- appeared in the first month of HuffPost's existence, and flew around the Internet from the moment she hit "publish."

According to industry insiders, *The Huffington Post* has become an established destination for readers seeking guidance on how to navigate the liberal media landscape and gain access to exclusive stories. Many of the site's content creators are celebrities that Huffington has befriended over the years, as previously stated. The site's revenue is based entirely on advertising. The business model adopted by *The Huffington Post* is one that grants autonomy to its contributors, but within a significantly managed space. As in traditional journalism, writers pitch ideas to their editors and proceed once it is approved. The editor has the final say and determines the level of exposure which the journalist receives based on where the story is published in the newspaper, how much space it is allocated (in terms of column inches), and whether it will include a follow-up report.

Online, this system is altered. The journalist has more power: often, no word limit applies given the infinite space online, and the level of exposure of the story has the capacity to increase given the propensity for readers to share and link stories of a similar subject matter. At *The Huffington Post*, the system is altered even more. The multi-million dollar online news organization does not pay its contributors; they are volunteers who submit themselves to the political affiliations of the site in order to gain an associate status as part of Huffington's network.

"She has certainly put together a nice business", explained Dr. Alan Rosenblatt in our interview. He added, "She is making a lot of money, but she did so by selling 7,000 volunteers to AOL and while we all agree to write for free, we are giving a lot of value to her and she did capitalize off that". Rosenblatt was initially sought out by Nico Pitney, the Political Director for *The Huffington Post* and former colleague of his at ThinkProgress.org to write for Huffington's site. Rosenblatt

explained that once his content was viewed as consistently aligning with the shared opinions of stories on the site, his stories no longer needed to be pre-approved. He explained in our interview,

Initially, I would write whatever I wanted. I would post it to the screen, but it was set up in a queue so that it could be reviewed by editors. They never stopped it. I think they were checking for certain things, and then they would publish it. If I contacted Nico and said I posted it, he would process it more quickly. After a few months he had it set so that I could publish straight to [the site], without going through that process. When I stopped publishing frequently, it reverted back to the queue. I think that is part of the dynamic – if you are not a frequent contributor then they queue it up.

The level of autonomy that journalists gain on the site is directly correlated with the level of trust that Huffington (and her editors) have with each reporter. She has to ensure that the content which is being posted aligns with her thematic sensibilities, which, in turn, allows her to maintain the social ties with those in her inner circle: Aaron Sorkin, Bob Iger, and the Democratic Party, amongst others. Strict monitoring of content appearing on the site is necessary in order for Huffington to maintain her position within this space and continue to foster her accumulation of social capital.

V – Revisiting the associative resources of return transaction model

The associative resources of return transaction model was first introduced in Chapter Four. As previously defined, it is used in relation to the proximity paradigm in order for organizations seeking legitimacy to demonstrate an internal value of the field (peer and/or public recognition, as highlighted by Bourdieu). Legitimacy is granted by those occupying positions of status within the field of journalism. If an online news organization wants to be considered a contender, it needs to understand the environment in which legitimacy is granted.

Drudge knows this space. The concept that led to my development of the associative resources of return transaction model is evident in Drudge's manifesto. He references it with regard to traditional media, whereas I apply the model to online news organizations seeking to be considered legitimate within the subfield of online journalism. Regardless, the incestuous nature of the networked community that exists within these spaces is comparable. He writes:

The reporters the editors the bureau chiefs the columnists the lobbyists the agents of the lawyers of the presidents who share beach houses with the ghosts of Kennedy John Sr Jr ... from ABC to CNN which was started by Ted who

married Jane Fonda not Peter with mixed results after hiring Christiane who married Jamie after dating Jr whose ghost shares the beach house with the president who ordered The War covered by Christiane after daily debriefing by Jamie who speaks for Madeline... Oldham not Purdum reported Lloyd who's always with Kim (who shies away from Karen) but shares the style section with Sally (who can). Donna designs suits for Sally's husband Ben who edits Lloyd who reports to Katherine who brought down Dick thanks to Ben's Bob and Carl whose ex-wife Nora was played by Meryl who won an Oscar because of Sydney not Sidney and wears Klein not Karan whose best friend Barbra not Barbara married James (2000: 79-80).

This excerpt typifies the associative resources of return transaction model: all players cited above exchange stories and sources that benefit the Democratic Media Complex. When Drudge refers to "Christiane", he means Christiane Amanpour, a prominent journalist who has worked for ABC, CNN and *60 Minutes*. "Madeline" means former U.S. Secretary of State, Madeline Albright; while "Ben" refers to Ben Bradlee, former Editor-in-Chief of *The Washington Post* and the paper's current vice-president at-large. "Sally" refers to Sally Quinn, Bradlee's third wife and the former editor of the style section of *The Washington Post*. "Katherine" denotes Katherine Graham, chairman of the board of *The Washington Post*. "Bob" and "Carl" are Woodward and Bernstein respectively; while "Nora" is Nora Ephron, an American journalist, screenwriter and novelist who was once married to Mark Felt, revealed as Watergate's "Deep Throat". As discussed in the previous chapter, Ephron attended Huffington's inaugural brunch and was a part-time editor and writer for *The Huffington Post* before her death in June 2012.

Unlike Huffington, who opted to befriend many of the individuals cited above, Drudge builds durable networks (i.e. social capital) by developing connections with traditional media such as *Newsweek*, which forms the basis of meta-reporting. As he writes in his manifesto:

'I'm a reporter, I'm a reporter,' I [Drudge] replied. 'I've written thousands of stories and have dozens of scoops. Just because I don't have the clout of a major newspaper doesn't mean I can't get close to truths' (2000: 163).

While the content that appears on *The Huffington Post* caters to the interests of those in Arianna's network, Drudge does the opposite: preferring to dismantle those in positions of power by revealing stories that often discredit their position. As he told Harbrecht at the National Press Club:

How did the story of Monica Lewinsky break out of a Hollywood apartment? What does that say about the Washington press corps? It just baffles me. I haven't come up with an answer on that (2000: 200).

In similar vein, Breitbart explained during our interviews that he started his own site after having worked for Drudge, and hoped to duplicate it: “Drudge treats everyone in a position of power and everyone above [him] as worthy of ridicule; I appreciated his template”. While he agrees that all individuals, irrespective of status, are open to ridicule, he does recognize that the maintenance of relationships sustains the power structure within this online space.

The associative resources of return transactional model provides a model for how certain online news organizations, such as *The Drudge Report*, are able to gain and maintain legitimacy in the subfield of online journalism as a result of: (i) gaining access to networks of journalists; and (ii) leveraging these relationships for exclusive news information (“scoops”) that separate them from their competitors. The next chapter will introduce and discuss the final tenet of the proximity paradigm.

Chapter 6: The use of sources

As has been identified in Chapters Four and Five, the three online news organizations examined in my study accumulated social capital and converted it into symbolic capital in a variety of ways in order to gain legitimacy. This chapter will examine the third tenet of the proximity paradigm (the use of sources) to illustrate how these three cases studies relied on varying degrees of social capital to access sources that would help them become a legitimate news organization in the subfield of online journalism.

Within the overarching field of journalism, sources are an essential part of the ecosystem. As stated in “The Professional Values of American Newsmen”:

[The newsman’s] relationship to news sources is straightforward – sources simply provide the reporter with news to be reported... the newsman has personal responsibility for the information he seeks to transmit, and his relationship to news sources is most circumscribed – sources provide leads but the reporter must sift through the real story (1972: 523).

Angela Phillips argues that regardless of the influence of technology on journalism, the importance of sources should not be overlooked:

The relationship between journalists and their sources is central to any claim that the news media may make to a role within a Habermasian ‘public sphere’. Through each technological change, from the invention of the printing press, through radio, television and now the Internet, news journalists have sought to play a mediating role between power and the people (2010: 87).

Based on my findings, it was revealed that within the subfield of online journalism there exist different types of sources. One type relies on other news organizations as sources of information (i.e. the use of *meta-reporting*): for example, Drudge scooping the Lewinsky story from *Newsweek*. The second is an outlier source, referred to as an individual who has experienced or been part of a news event and can provide a first-hand account of what took place, but is not part of the industry: thus, an outlier. Drudge sees this type of source as contributing to a new era of the populist press, whereby ordinary citizens can participate in the news cycle, although they are not officially a part of it. He explains in his manifesto,

I reported a great story about a website that had been set up, had been registered “Friends of Al Gore PAC [political action committee].” The billing address they used for this PAC was 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue. Someone had

registered a political action committee from the White House, using it as a billing address. This is a huge story. I had it exclusively. I guess mainstream press don't know how to use the Internet and get the information. This is an example of populous press. It's very concerning. That, to me, was violating quite a few laws. They said someone in the office had set it up, and they were told to bring it down, and it wasn't – bring it down. They changed the address eventually. I looked up the address. It was a graveyard in Denver. That's a populist press to me (2000: 201).

In order to understand the role of sources, specifically the use of what I have termed “outlier sources” – individuals external to the news industry who select an online news organization to reveal information – it is important to understand the use of networking in this exchange, specifically with regard to social and symbolic capital. This exchange will be examined in detail in this chapter.

As this dissertation has attempted to illustrate, in the subfield of online journalism, networking is paramount. Whether an online news organization leverages its networks with individuals of status, other news organizations, or its network of readers, an accumulation of social and symbolic capital emerges. Once an online news organization accumulates social capital through possessing a durable network of social relationships, they gain the affiliated prestige associated with the players in the network (i.e. their symbolic capital) and thus build their legitimacy within the subfield of online journalism.

According to the Oxford English Dictionary, an outlier is defined as “an individual whose origins, beliefs, or behavior place him or her outside a particular establishment or community; a nonconformist, an outsider” (2013). For the sake of this study, I define an outlier source as an individual who occupies a position outside the news industry, who has information about a specific news event that they want to reveal to the public, but is unable to do so because he or she does not have the necessary resources (i.e. an online platform and audience) to reveal it themselves. They do not write the news article, they merely act as a source; they should not be considered citizen journalists. As a result, these outlier sources rely on the symbolic capital affiliated with the online news organization to pursue their tip and report on it in a manner that aligns with their partisan background. Outlier sources are often devout readers of the news organization to which they provide information.

I reapply Bourdieu's notions of social capital and symbolic capital to this chapter in the following way: an online news organization (here termed ‘organization

X') reports on a news story that encourages greater awareness of organization X (e.g. *The Drudge Report* and the Clinton-Lewinsky scandal). Organization X gains a devout readership aligned with it politically. Organization X needs to maintain the partisan nature of its news content to appease its readership and/or key players (e.g. shareholders, the Brentwood Group, etc.). Organization X relies on the associative resources of return transaction model to gain exclusive news information from key players and continues to publish partisan stories that benefit them. Organization X is relying on their network of contacts (social capital) and the prestige affiliation with these contacts (symbolic capital) in order to report on stories that benefit both them and their network. All the while, organization X is developing a following of devout readers (i.e. outlier sources) who begin sending it exclusive news tips because they know that organization X is a trusted platform for their news story. This formula will be outlined throughout this chapter.

In Fenton's book, *New Media, Old News*, Couldry clarifies the varying types of sources that exist online:

Given media's intertextuality, which is intensified online (Bolter and Grusin, 2002), a story source can be anything (including another story), but there remains a clear distinction in practice between a story and a person or site (what we might call a 'source-actor') that is regularly regarded as reliable enough to make further inquiry unnecessary (2010: 138).

Couldry refers to source actors as "writer-gatherers", often depicted in the U.S. as "citizen-journalists" (2010: 139). He defines them as "those engaged in a regular practice of writing and/or information aggregation outside mainstream news organizations" (2010: 139). Online news organizations occupy an interstitial space between "writer-gatherers" and traditional media. Couldry views "writer-gatherers" as sources for news organizations, "lying between individual web-posters and fully-fledged news organizations" (2010: 139). He argues that the space occupied by writer-gatherers is "fragmented and clearly not a defined 'field' in Bourdieu's sense" (2010: 139), mainly due to "writer-gatherers" not possessing the preconditions required, according to him, to exist in the field. These conditions consist of the following:

- (i) an extension, even if in new language, of something like journalistic values, or the development of new sources on which journalistic practice can rely.
- (ii) the time for actors to carry out such a role
- (iii) the money and resources to carry out such a role

- (iv) legitimacy and recognition for such a role (2010: 139).

Couldry's pre-condition that the legitimation (and subsequent recognition) of writer-gatherers is essential for such a role to be considered part of the journalistic field (2010: 139) represents one of the main tenets addressed in this dissertation, which argues that, through the employment of the three characteristics which comprise the proximity paradigm, online news organizations can gain legitimacy as part of a subfield of this space. I agree with Couldry that writer-gatherers do not belong as members of the field of journalism (or in the subfield of online journalism), nor do outlier sources; however, outlier sources – as will be discussed in this chapter – are a resource used by those players (such as *Breitbart.com*) that occupy a legitimate space within the subfield. Therefore, outlier sources can only occupy the subfield as a resource for an online news organization; they do not belong on their own. The use of outlier sources as a key resource for online news organizations will be further discussed in this chapter.

The third characteristic to be addressed in this chapter concerns the role of sources. In referring to Couldry's definition of "source-actors", online news organizations could feasibly comprise a similar role in that they write both news stories and aggregate information. However, I contend that they are not "outside" the mainstream – as suggested by Couldry – because the organizations examined in this dissertation have secured the elements necessary to be considered legitimate as part of a subfield. Given the prevalence of online news organizations occupying a significant role in the media landscape, they have transitioned into more official news outlets than suggested by Couldry. He asks: "Is the online world throwing up new types of source-actors for journalism?" (2010: 138). This chapter affirms Couldry's inquiry, arguing that sources for online news organizations comprise a variety of categories, which proliferate online thanks to the degree of accessibility that exists within this space. The theme of accessibility, as discussed in Chapter One, is a key characteristic that separates the subfield of online journalism from the field of online journalism. The following sections will illustrate how my case studies emerged as legitimate players within the subfield of online journalism due to their strategic networking with different types of sources. These sources do not comprise their own space within the subfield, but exist as part of the online news organization's identity.

I - Andrew Breitbart and his outlier sources

With the mainstream media fearing Breitbart, it was clear that he was never going to receive press releases and tips from the establishment. As a result, he needed access to sources that could provide him with “the goods”. One of his websites, *BigGovernment* was created as a “stark contrast to the mainstream media”, and an “affront to the status-quo”. According to Breitbart, he set out to “report on the core corruption and inefficiency that correlated with the ever expanding influence of government”. This will be examined further in this section through an analysis of the ACORN scandal.

In *Righteous Indignation*, Breitbart argues that due to the consistent work of the DMC, President Obama’s victory in 2008 was inevitable. The following excerpt illustrates his passionate disdain for the left:

The election of Barack Obama, facilitated by the Democratic-Media-Complex that was aligned to usher him into his “rightful and deserved” place in the Oval Office, was the tipping point for my full and unyielding commitment to this war. Why? Because I saw early on that his was literally a made-for-television candidacy.

I knew the fix was in when Oprah Winfrey featured Obama twice on her mega-influential daytime show. One appearance on Oprah is enough to make a person a household name. This former state senator and “community organizer” was being given the star treatment as a junior senator from Illinois. For a Democratic Party plagued with sad clown Al Gore in the 2000 election cycle and the ghoulish John Kerry in 2004, charm, youth, and charisma were the obvious components that the next Democratic presidential candidate needed to have.

On the most superficial media level, Barack Obama was a godsend.

Plus he was black. For better, America needed to elect a black president. And the party that elected him or her would forever be granted that historical credit. But also, any criticism of Obama, with his thin résumé and shadowy past, could be framed by a like-minded media class as racism, cowering dissent.

A lifetime of work putting together a media and cultural system to affirm liberal narratives granted Obama a mega-catapult to launch him in a way that no Republican or conservative could ever experience.

With the press, the unions, academia, and Hollywood behind Barack Obama, and the American people wanting to get the race monkey off their backs, the

Obama presidency was a *fait accompli*—even if no one really knew anything about him (2011: 6).

Attempting to achieve an anti-hegemonic outlet for online readers, Breitbart's mainstream success emerged with *BigJournalism*. *BigJournalism* became a key site under the *Breitbart.com* umbrella following the Anthony Weiner scandal, which was termed “the first social media political sex scandal” by many of my interviewees, including Lee and Olmstead. Such was Breitbart's pathological distrust of the DMC, he managed to gain like-minded followers as he became an unofficial spokesperson for the Tea Party. As a result of his affiliation with this unique movement and as an outspoken critic of the left, he began receiving tips from readers and using them as sources for his stories. He wrote:

I love reporting stories that the Complex refuses to report. I love fighting back, I love finding allies, and—famously—I enjoy making enemies. Three years ago, I was mostly a behind-the-scenes guy who linked to stuff on a very popular website. I always wondered what it would be like to enter the public realm to fight for what I believe in. I've lost friends, perhaps dozens. But I've gained hundreds, thousands — who knows? — of allies (2011: 6).

The use of sources by Breitbart to gain legitimacy in the subfield of online journalism will be discussed in relation to the ACORN scandal. However, in order to examine how Breitbart networks with these outlier sources, it is important to examine his relationship to the Tea Party.

“Like the Tea Party movement itself, access to information is completely decentralized by the infinite sources online” (2010: 91), argued Former House Majority Leader Dick Armey in *Give US Liberty: A Tea Party Manifesto*. The Tea Party is not an official political party; no clear leader exists, nor does it have a central headquarters or even a unifying political platform. It is an unofficial political group that seeks to dismantle the “establishment”. According to some Tea Party members, such as former Republican Senate candidate Christine O'Donnell, the establishment refers to “a mindset” (2011: 6):

Not every incumbent or “established” politician is part of the establishment. Not every successful person is “establishment”. The phrase, as a pejorative, applies to “establishment-minded” people, those in power and those who *want* to be in power, those who share an eagerness to compromise their supposed principles and willingness to step on people in order to get ahead...

Establishment-minded people plague *all* levels of government, all arenas; those who have made it *and* those who are still trying to make it” (2011: 6).

O’Donnell’s disregard for the establishment mirrors Breitbart’s own anti-liberal mandate. Outlier sources are specifically important for Breitbart and his conservative echo-chamber; they provide strategic news tips that align politically with their targeted news story, as the following section will illustrate.

Breitbart and The ACORN scandal

“Make no mistake: America is in a media war,” writes Breitbart in 2011 in his book *Righteous Indignation: Excuse Me While I Save the World*. He continues,

The left does not win its battles in debate. It doesn’t have to. In the twenty-first century, media is everything. The left wins because it controls the narrative. The narrative is controlled by the media. The left *is* the media. Narrative is everything.

...

I volunteered to fight in this war. I have risen through the ranks and now find myself on the front lines with an army of New Media warriors following me into the fray. It is no longer a choice to fight; I am *compelled* to fight. The election of Barack Obama, facilitated by the Democrat-Media Complex that was aligned to usher him into his “rightful and deserved” place in the Oval Office, was the tipping point for my full and unyielding commitment to this war (2011).

His “New Media warriors” are his sources, specifically *outlier sources*, as introduced earlier in this chapter. During one of my interviews with Breitbart in Los Angeles, I asked him how he found his stories. He answered that he learns about them from “tips, meeting with people and [by having] voracious online readers. People realize that I am their best choice [for an outlet] and that I will get their story out”. He has positioned himself within the subfield of online journalism as an outspoken critic of the Left, filling a political void and encouraging like-minded individuals to join him in dismantling the DMC.

The Association of Community Organizations for Reform Now (ACORN) is a federally funded organization that advocates for liberal causes and candidates; its work includes registering voters, community organizing and advocating for low-to-middle income citizens. ACORN has emerged as a target for conservative journalists and activists, highlighted by Breitbart in the opening lines of *Righteous Indignation*:

In June 2009, I didn't know much about the Association of Community Organizations for Reform Now (ACORN). My attitude toward it was a generic conservative's attitude: I knew that the lack of interest the mainstream media were showing in ACORN – especially with all the accusations levelled against it regarding illegal voter fraud and ties with the Democratic Party – meant that there had to be something really, truly horrific about it (2011: 4).

He admits that while he was aware of ACORN's activities, he did not start to investigate it until being approached by a source from within his network. During my interviews with Breitbart, he would refer to individuals who sent him news tips (i.e. "outlier sources") as "foot soldiers" (also referred to as "new media warriors" in *Righteous Indignation*). These military references align with Breitbart's idea that he is "leading an insurgency" against the Democrats and liberal media. He cites James O'Keefe as one of these "foot soldiers".

James O'Keefe, a 25-year old fan of Breitbart and journalism student at Florida International University, represents what I have termed an "outlier source". As stated earlier, an outlier source is an individual who has experienced or been part of a news event and can provide a first-hand account of what took place. According to Breitbart, following Obama's inauguration in January 2009, the conservative movement yearned for a newsworthy story that could elevate their status in national public consciousness:

The Hope and Change had begun to wear off in the latter part of the summer of '09, and the Tea Party movement had already begun. But the conservative movement lacked a clear victory to rally the troops around. The ACORN videos became the rallying point of a resurgent conservatism and served as a wake-up call to millions of patriotic Americans that individuals can make a huge difference, especially now with an empowered, media-savvy, Internet army. That's right, an army (2011: 5).

The ACORN videos to which he refers were a series of five undercover videos involving O'Keefe and his friend, Hannah Giles. Both O'Keefe and Giles are conservative activists. In the videos, O'Keefe disguises himself as a pimp and Giles as a prostitute, seeking help from ACORN on how to establish an illegal prostitute ring (with predominantly underage women) and avoid paying taxes on their new business initiative. Breitbart explains,

...ACORN was not my number one target by any stretch of the imagination.

Then a young man named James O’Keefe walked into my office.

He showed me a set of videos.

My jaw dropped.

After I watched the videos, there was a silence. Then he turned to me and said, “We’re going to take down ACORN.”

“No,” I replied. “We’re going to take down the media” (2011: 5).

In order to “take down the media”, Breitbart established *BigGovernment.com*, another addition to his family of websites. The site’s first story was the publication of the first ACORN video on September 10, 2009. O’Keefe and Giles visited ACORN offices in Baltimore, Brooklyn, San Bernardino, San Diego and Washington, D.C. from July 24 to August 14, 2009. In the videos, O’Keefe and Giles ask about receiving tax credits for housing underage women from El Salvador. ACORN advises them to claim the women as dependents for tax purposes.

On September 16, 2009, California Governor Arnold Schwarznegger and California Attorney General Edmund Brown launched an investigation into “the activities of ACORN in California” (see Appendix XI). The following excerpt is from Governor Schwarznegger’s investigation:

They [O’Keefe and Giles] met with Tanya Thompson, a tax expert, and “Shera”. O’Keefe and Giles told the ACORN employees that Giles was a prostitute and that her former pimp was abusive and harassing her... Their story regarding the girls from Central America had evolved. The girls were now underage and no longer had aspirations to obtain legal documentation or the ability to vote. The couple explained the girls were going to live in the house with Giles and work as prostitutes for her... Thompson gave the couple advice on how to file a tax return for the profits they made on their sex business. She suggested Giles classify her occupation as “performing arts”. She told Giles she could possibly claim the underage El Salvadoran girls as dependents. When told the girls would be working as prostitutes, Thompson told Giles and O’Keefe, “I’m not hearing that.” She suggested they never mention this fact to anyone (CA. Dept. Justice, Attachment D, April 1, 2010).

The five videos released online over a series of months constituted a targeted attack against ACORN, President Obama and the DMC. In their wake, right and left-wing media were at odds as news organizations from both sides attempted to report on ACORN in a manner that aligned with their political sensibility. Specifically, a

discourse was forming about whether the work conducted by O’Keefe and Giles could be considered journalism. Mark Bowden of *The Atlantic* stated in an interview:

The young woman and filmmaker who visited those ACORN offices were political activists, and they put together what is, in essence, a very effective political protest against an organization they would like to damage. And they've done a very effective job of doing that. But I think they're clearly not journalists (Fenwick, September 18, 2009).

By commenting on the legitimacy of the investigation by O’Keefe and Giles, Breitbart’s integrity was called into question. Liberal media players, such as Bowden, are hesitant to validate the investigative strategies employed by O’Keefe and Giles, whereas media players on the right hailed the investigation:

Breitbart, O’Keefe and Giles soon became heroes of the right-wing echo chamber. Beck called O’Keefe “courageous”. Breitbart said that O’Keefe “is already on his way to being one of the great journalists” and that he deserves a Pulitzer Prize. Sean Hannity applauded him as a “pioneer in journalism”. Bill O’Reilly said he deserved a “congressional medal”. Richard Lowrey, editor of the conservative *National Review*, opined that O’Keefe deserved an “award for impactful journalism” (Dreier and Martin 2011: 19).

Bowden claims that the ACORN reports were “not a story”: “It’s a political protest. It’s a revelation... But it’s not a work of journalism. The video itself is the piece of information and the question then becomes, ‘How do you present it?’” (Fenwick, September 18, 2009). The answer Bowden was looking for was *Breitbart.com*. O’Keefe and Giles’ investigation required a platform in order for it to reach the required audience. They sought out Breitbart because he was the right conduit for their story, as other “foot soldiers” (i.e. outlier sources) had previously contacted him regarding ACORN’s liberal bias:

I had read that ACORN acted as a kind of street army on behalf of Progressive interests, working to get Democrats registered for voting, working to get people on public assistance in the name of “social justice” – and I had read that because of its goals, ACORN was granted absolute protection under the cover of law and the media’s willful blindness. I knew that Barack Obama had put ACORN in charge of large swaths of the Census. My e-mail tip box was filled with questions from readers asking “What are we going to do about ACORN’s Census involvement?” (2011: 4).

Breitbart's reference to his "e-mail tip box" and readers asking, "what are *we* going to do" illustrates his reliance on his network of outlier sources.. He receives tips from readers and based on whether these align with his anti-DMC stance, he pursues them. The stories that he breaks – Weingate and ACORN specifically – have become iconic examples which illustrate the power of online journalism in challenging the status quo. As Drier and Martin highlight:

O'Keefe, Giles and Breitbart received numerous speaking engagements before conservative groups, including Breitbart's appearance at the first National Tea Party Convention and the Conservative Political Action Conference, both in February 2010 (2011: 19).

By being recognized as a critic of the left, Breitbart gains legitimacy not only within his conservative echo-chamber, but in the subfield of online journalism: based on the political repercussions following the publication of many of his stories. The ACORN scandal had significant repercussions for Obama's presidency and the DMC; the organization lost its federal funding and was disbanded in March 2010.

Breitbart reflects:

The September 10, 2009, launch of *BigGovernment.com* did something President Obama couldn't: it created the first and only bipartisan vote of consequence of his presidency – the congressional defunding of ACORN, a "social and economic justice" advocacy organization key to the electoral infrastructure of the Progressive wing of the Democratic Party and a menacing and obstructive "community organizing" group central to Barack Obama's post-Harvard Law years (2011: 4).

Bowden sees this sense of a political battle between left and right as "post-journalistic". He refers to "ideology-infused" journalism as discrediting the profession of journalism. He explains to Fenwick:

It [post-journalism] sees democracy, by definition, as perpetual political battle. The blogger's role is to help his side. Distortions and inaccuracies, lapses of judgment, the absence of context—all of these things matter only a little, because they are committed by both sides, and tend to come out a wash. Nobody is actually right about anything, no matter how certain they pretend to be. The truth is something that emerges from the cauldron of debate. No, not the truth: *victory*, because winning is way more important than being right. Power is the highest achievement. There is nothing new about this. But we never used to mistake it for journalism. Today it is rapidly replacing

journalism, leading us toward a world where all information is spun, and where all “news” is unapologetically propaganda (*CJR*, September 18, 2009).

Bowden’s disdain for “post-journalistic” work as littering the profession with opinion and “distortion” echoes Isikoff’s sentiment towards Drudge and his use of *meta-reporting*. The work conducted by both Drudge and Breitbart are clear instances where online journalism reported on a series of stories that discredited the mainstream press either via a “scoop” or in relying on sources external to those used by traditional journalists to uncover a scandal.

Outlier sources and Breitbart’s echo-chamber

Within the conservative echo-chamber, Breitbart encourages like-minded readers to contact him with story ideas, enabling him to use them as sources. His stories transition to the mainstream narrative as a result of his use of outlier sources that provide him with the information he needs to gain attention from the DMC. Outlier sources prosper within this echo-chamber, as illustrated in the ACORN scandal. While these outlier-sources are external to the field, they are relevant amongst Tea Party supporters and provide insight (as sources) to stories that require further investigation. As Breitbart wrote in *Righteous Indignation*,

Big Hollywood contributor Patrick Courrielche, a brave Hollywood-based artist and media entrepreneur ... broke the White House/National Endowment for the Arts scandal that led to a top NEA employee’s resignation. After things started to settle down, Patrick and I shared words about the fact that circumventing Old Media by using New Media, forcing them to cover the story and to shape, control, and even change narratives, was an once-in-a-lifetime experience.

I felt like a New Media Sherpa. I took Patrick to the plateau and he saw what could be done. He continues to search for the next Big story. It will come. I know it. Patrick is but one in a growing stable of Big contributors to my Big group blog sites... tapping into a renaissance of investigative journalism and participatory democracy (2011: 7).

Breitbart is the navigator of this echo-chamber, both relying on and guiding sources (like Courrielche) to contribute stories that align with his anti-DMC narrative and often lead to recognition by the mainstream media when political consequences are at stake. According to Dreier and Martin, Breitbart occupies a noteworthy position in the “conservative echo-chamber”:

[The conservative echo-chamber] involves a web of organizations with a common ideological and political agenda. It includes cable TV shows (including the entire Fox News network), radio talk shows, publications (such as *National Review*, *American Spectator*, *Weekly Standard*, and others), think tanks (such as the Cato Institute, American Enterprise Institute, Heritage Foundation, Reason Foundation, and others), hundreds of websites, bloggers (such as Andrew Breitbart), and columnists for mainstream newspapers and magazines. Their influence is magnified by the fact that they work collaboratively as part of a network, echoing the same message; as a result, the whole conservative echo chamber is larger in influence than the sum of its parts (2011: 9).

Breitbart builds networks within this “conservative echo chamber” by becoming a mouthpiece for them, similar to Huffington, but on the opposite end of the political spectrum.

II - The sources according to Drudge

While it appears that Drudge works alone in his Hollywood apartment, selecting news items that often attempt to dismantle the Democratic party, he finds his stories through insiders who contact him when a new story is emerging. Breitbart, who started his career working for Drudge before he was poached by Huffington, is hesitant to reveal Drudge’s sources, explaining in one of our interviews, “you’ll never find out how he gets his news, he just gets it”.

Drudge’s manifesto reads as a tell-all of the world of reporting; but unlike books written by traditional media icons such as Walter Cronkite or Katherine Graham, he presents readers with a narcissistic, yet salacious account of how he has, according to him, “redefined twenty-first century journalism”, specifically through his use of sources. The following excerpts demonstrate Drudge’s reliance on his sources:

It comes late in the night. An urgent email. A juicy goodie from a source who’s been on the money in the past, helping me to pull off a series of world exclusives (2000: 51).

The Drudge Report has been headline, tagline, and punch line since its debut: winter 1994. Out of the gate, I was breaking and making news. From a little corner in my Hollywood hovel, in the company of nothing more than my 486 Packard Bell computer, I became a player, consistently able to break big stories. Thanks to a growing network of sources... (2000: 31)

Most of my sources are concerned citizens, in and out of government, who don’t like the direction of the White House Press Office, for example... (2000: 201)

Drudge also relies on sources from traditional media, offering a new perspective from a story that was published by an established news organization such as *The Washington Post*, for example. During my interviews in Washington, D.C. at the Project for Excellence in Journalism, research analyst Kenny Olmstead noted the often undetected network that exists between media organizations.

I think at this point there is a network. There is certainly a lot of movement between blogs, especially staff wise, similar to how you people move from *Newsweek* to *TIME*, I think with blogs it is more acute and the movement is quicker. Things are slowing down. I mean *The Huffington Post* was bought by AOL, so now they have more money; *Daily Kos* is established now, so their writers stay. But even two years ago, that wasn't the case, you could even move around really quickly, especially among niche blogs.

The convergence that takes place between online and offline media is a result of an organization's need for sustainability: gravitating towards the legacy of traditional journalism, while maintaining an online presence. For online news organizations such as *The Drudge Report*, content that appears on the website often references established offline news organizations in an attempt to accrue the symbolic capital affiliated with the source being cited. Drudge elaborates on this trend in his manifesto, by including the transcript from his National Press Club interview:

National Press Club Q & A
June 2, 1998

...

MR. HARBRECHT: For someone who has been attacked by the mainstream press, your website provides easy links to all the establishment media. Why do you do that?

MR. DRUDGE: Well, because it's – to me it's – I started with a place where readers could keep up – links to the various columnists. The links I have on my website I declare to be the most interesting people working in the business – all up and down – left, right and middle – I love to feature them. It's just a click away. You don't have to go through the front page – you go right to the column. A click away, you go to the AP Washington File – up to the minute. I started it as a lark. It built itself after I started collecting these names on the website (2000: 204).

By “collecting names (of those in the mainstream press)”, Drudge is relying on these news sites as sources. In addition to relying on industry insiders as sources, he also relies on other news organizations.

Drudge's trend of linking to other sources mirrors the associative resources of return transaction model discussed in Chapter Three; and as he directs readers to various news sites, these sites increase their readership and his status is legitimized further through recognition by his peers. This degree of recognition has been called "The Drudge Moment", and will be discussed in the next section. As Drudge states during his interview with Harbrecht:

I've been told quite a few people are reading it [*The Drudge Report*] – from the top level in government down – for access – for quick access, unfiltered access – a click to Helen Thomas's latest column, reintroducing a whole new generation to wire services and columnists – I love them all (2000: 204).

"The Drudge Moment"

The Clinton-Lewinsky scandal was a seminal incident, contributing to what many in online media have termed, "The Drudge Moment". Throughout the interviews I conducted for this dissertation, the presence of Drudge in directing news content and traffic was a trend that continued to reappear.

In a May 2011 study on online news conducted by the Project for Excellence in Journalism (PEJ), Matt Drudge was referenced in three paragraphs of the 100-page document. According to Olmstead, the website crashed as a result of the increase in traffic following Drudge's decision to post the link to the report on his website. "He [Matt Drudge] linked to that small section [of the report] and basically crashed our site; we couldn't handle the amount of traffic. I think people miss his site because it is aesthetically awful, but it is an incredible driver for all news sites", explained Olmstead in our interview:

When we talk to other news organizations, they all mention that the same thing happened to them – they have all had their "Drudge Moment" – Drudge links to one of their stories and the story goes from having an average of 1,000 readers per story, to 50,000 [readers]. It is amazing.

According to the study referenced above, *The Drudge Report* provided more than 30% of traffic to *The Daily Mail*; 19% of traffic to *The New York Post*; 15% to *The Washington Post*; and 11% to *Fox News* (Pew Research Center's Journalism Project Staff, 2011). By way of comparison, *Facebook* never drove more than 8% of traffic to any one site (2011). Specifically, *The Drudge Report* outranks social media (Facebook and Twitter) in terms of driving traffic to news sites (2011).

Olmstead cites the Clinton-Lewinsky scandal as a formative part of Drudge's success. "Drudge has an enormous audience, he is in the league of *The New York Times*, *CNN*, and *NBC*", he noted during our interview. "I think one of the reasons is historical. He really cut his teeth with the Monica Lewinsky scandal, and I think in this town [Washington, D.C.], everyone knows who he is". Drudge's popularity within the Beltway is substantial, not only amongst policy makers, but journalists as well. According to Olmstead, 15% of *The Washington Post's* online audience is directed to the site through *The Drudge Report*; *Politico*, another Beltway-oriented online news website, receives 22% of its traffic from *The Drudge Report*. According to PEJ's study, *The Drudge Report* provides 7% of the inbound referrals to the top news sites in the U.S (*Pew Research Center's Journalism Project Staff*, 2011).

Given Drudge's online influence, Lee explained to me during our lunch at Potenza that, many news organizations write content that they hope will be used as a source for Drudge, thus increasing their online traffic. Lee cited *Politico* specifically as adopting this unique strategy.

Politico launched on January 23, 2007 (*Politico.com*). The American political journalism organization exclusively covers political news in Washington, D.C. The insider perspective of life within the Beltway is published hourly on *Politico.com*, while a newspaper is distributed every morning on Capitol Hill and around Washington. 32,000 issues are distributed daily (*Politico.com*). *Politico* launched as a result of John F. Harris and Jim VandeHei's realization that there was a market for niche political journalism. They left *The Washington Post*, where they were both working as editors, and hired Frederick J. Ryan, former assistant to President Ronald Reagan, as *Politico's* President and CEO. As Jonathan Martin, a reporter at *Politico*, explained in our interview, the site emerged from a blogging format, attempting to distance itself from the confines of traditional journalism:

My colleague Ben Smith is the pioneer of the reported blog. He started doing it in New York when he was working for *The New York Observer*, *The New York Daily News* and we started here in January 2007 with two reported blogs: his was on the Democratic Primary, and mine was on the Republican primary. We are mainstream reporters covering politics. We don't do opinion, we don't do commentary; we do news and analysis from a traditional, unbiased, nonpartisan, detached perspective. Just because we have a blog and we are

doing our reporting and analysis on a blog, didn't change the fact that we were doing reporting and I think we get too hung up in the word.

While Martin stated in our interview that the content that appears on *Politico* is “nonpartisan”, many in the industry cite it as catering to Republican sensibilities. According to Lee, *Politico* strategically alters editorial content in order to be “picked-up” by Drudge. During my interview with Lee, he explained *Politico*'s tendency of catering its stories to appeal to Drudge's political bias: understanding that when Drudge links to *Politico*, an increase in advertising revenue occurs. Lee references a story about President Obama at a press conference in 2011, where he mistakenly told reporters the wrong date of one of his daughter's birthdays. *Politico* immediately posted on their website: “Obama says his 12-year-old is 13” (see Figure 6.0).

Figure 6.0. *Politico* seeks exposure on *The Drudge Report*



Source: Lee, MJ. “What’s her age again? Obama says his 12-year-old is 13”. *Politico*. June 29, 2011. http://www.politico.com/politico44/perm/0611/whats_her_age_again_b3dfff8f-2f9c-4902-9cd6-386dfea0984d.html Accessed: November 1, 2013

As Lee explained during our interview, “I remember seeing a post on Twitter, linking to the *Politico* story that read, ‘Hey Matt Drudge, look over here!’” Lee referenced *Politico*'s increase in web traffic as correlating with strategic editorial choices that align with news items referenced by Drudge. He continued,

For *Politico*, their profit model is entirely based on web traffic. That isn't true of *The Washington Post* or *The New York Times* whose percentage margins

are much smaller and whose profits aren't determined the same way. There is no question that if you are *Politico*, the difference between getting X amount of *Drudge* links a month and 2X the amount of *Drudge* links, is actually a lot of profit. We are talking of an uptick or downtick of 10% in your total traffic, which is directly correlated to your overall profit. Nobody knows for sure, [but] it would be almost bad business for them not to take into account whether a story or headline would be linked to *Drudge*.

Politico readership increases with Drudge as the conduit, referred to by insiders as "The Drudge Moment". The level of influence that Drudge enjoys, to the extent that *Politico* relies on it for revenue (an illustration of peer recognition), proves the degree to which he has emerged as a legitimate player within the subfield of online journalism. Moreover, it helps explain a unique phenomenon occurring online, whereby organizations rely on networking – whether official or not – with other news organizations in order to accumulate symbolic capital, specifically with regard to relying on them as sources. The next section will discuss Huffington's use of sources as form of gaining recognition.

III - Huffington and the "new media election"

As has been previously identified, Huffington built her empire through an accumulation of social capital through her relationships with individuals of status, specifically the Brentwood Group and the wives of media moguls. Once *The Huffington Post* launched, she relied on this network composed of left-wing celebrities and politicians to give interviews and exclusive stories on her site, creating a unique environment that attracted readers and subsequent recognition by those in positions of status within the field. This coincided with the celebrity culture fostered through Obama's endorsements by key players of the Democratic Media Complex during the 2008 Presidential Campaign. As a result, a perfect recipe of reciprocity was created between Obama and Huffington as will be examined in this section.

The American political climate in 2008 offered increased attention towards Internet-based initiatives. President Obama's successful campaign focused specifically on web platforms that catered to liberal sensibilities. *New York Times'* journalist David Carr remarked in the days following the 2008 election:

The juxtaposition of a networked, open-source campaign and a historically imperial office will have profound implications and raise significant questions.

Special-interest groups and lobbyists will now contend with an environment of transparency and a president who owes them nothing (November 9, 2008).

Carr argues that Obama's 2008 Presidential campaign relied not on donations from lobbyists and special-interest groups, but on grassroots campaign tactics, thereby minimizing any reciprocal agreements between the interests of lobbyists and his campaign promises. However, although Carr states, "lobbyists will now contend with an environment of transparency and a president that owes them nothing", he does not consider the degree of reciprocity which may have developed between Huffington and Obama with regard to the use of celebrity endorsements and positive campaign coverage.

Later in this section, I will argue that these two factors led to an important moment during a White House Press Conference that granted Huffington the "peer-recognition" she needed to be perceived as legitimate within the subfield of online journalism. In applying Bourdieu's principles of legitimation, online news organizations seeking legitimation exhibit the internal values necessary to be recognized by players of status within the field of journalism. As Bourdieu states:

A philosophical (or scientific, etc.) problem is a problem that philosophers (or scientists) recognize (in both senses) as such (because it is inscribed in the logic of the history of the field and in their dispositions, which are historically constituted by and for membership of the field) and which, by virtue of the specific authority they are recognized as having, has every chance of being very widely recognized as legitimate (1993a: 75).

Therefore, as echoed in Chapter One, a legitimate journalist can determine the legitimacy of another journalist seeking similar status.

Lynda Lee Kaid examines the importance of new media in contributing to political discourse:

Blogs originally served as a secondary level in development of news stories which were originally the prerogative of the traditional media; blogs were a venue for commentary and development of additional directions (Poniewozik, 2008a). In 2008, though, many news stories originated on blogs, not the mainstream media. For instance, it was on blogs that the rumors about the pregnancy of Sarah Palin's teenage daughter took root, forcing the family to make public disclosures (Poniewozik, 2008b). Sites such as the *Drudge Report* and *The Huffington Post* gained importance... In fact, one news magazine

columnist lamented that “Campaign 2008 is likely to be remembered as the one in which the bloggers pushed aside the mainstream media” (Buckley, 2008: 64; Kaid 2009: 420).

Given the prominence of the web in shaping a distinct political candidate, players in the field of journalism can no longer dismiss the relevance of online news organizations. As Carr states:

Thomas Jefferson used newspapers to win the presidency, F.D.R. used radio to change the way he governed, J.F.K. was the first president to understand television... But Senator Barack Obama understood that you could use the Web... The news media will now contend with an administration that can take its case directly to its base without even booking time on the networks (November 9, 2008).

Carr’s reference to “the networks” refers to the established media that comprise the field of journalism, such as CNN, NBC, or CBS. These networks chronicled the 2008 campaign and knew Obama’s tendency to resort to online means of communication. Therefore, it is not surprising that they became skeptical of additional competition from other outlets (e.g. online news organizations) for his time. As Bourdieu writes:

We know that in every field we shall find a struggle, the specific forms of which have to be looked for each time, between the newcomer who tries to break through the entry barrier and the dominant agent who will try to defend the monopoly and keep out competition (1993a: 72).

For the field of journalism, the “dominant agent[s]” are established players who occupy positions of status (e.g. *CNN*, *The New York Times*), while “competition” includes those new media players seeking legitimate status. For Huffington, she was able to stay competitive by leveraging the political bias of her network and using them as sources. This is best understood in examining Huffington’s celebrity sources and how they contributed to her ultimate recognition.

Numerous scholars have argued that the 2008 election specifically encouraged celebrity influence (Buckley 2008; Cogburn and Espinoza-Vasquez 2011; Kaid 2009). This tactic helped Obama raise money for and awareness of his campaign. According to *USA Today*, Obama’s support from celebrities was paramount:

For Hollywood, there's only one star left in the presidential campaign. Barack Obama's gala fundraiser Tuesday will attract the mandatory line-up of big-screen talent and boldface names — actors Samuel L. Jackson and Dennis

Quaid, model Cindy Crawford and boxing legend Sugar Ray Leonard — and confirm again that the entertainment industry remains one of the most reliable and abundant sources of Democratic campaign cash... An analysis by the Center for Responsive Politics, based on fundraising data released May 21, found Obama had collected more than \$4 million from movie, TV and music businesses during the campaign. Clinton had received \$3.4 million. McCain's take: \$636,000 (*USA Today*, June 23, 2008)

Given the celebrity-infused news content on *The Huffington Post*, there existed a symbiotic connection between it and the celebrity endorsements received by Obama during the 2008 campaign. Obama received celebrity endorsements from numerous individuals who attended Huffington's Brentwood Brunch, including Tom Hanks and David Geffen (*USA Today*, June 23, 2008). As argued by Wood and Herbst:

The premise behind the use of celebrity endorsers is that they will not only draw attention, but the image values associated with them will also be transferred to the product (in this case, a political candidate) (Englis, Solomon, and Ashmore 1994; O'Mahony and Meenaghan 1997; Till and Shimp 1998) (2008: 145).

This combination of networking with celebrities formed the basis of Huffington's legitimizing strategy and worked in conjunction with Obama's campaign, setting the stage for the newly elected President's public acknowledgment of *The Huffington Post* during one of his first White House Press Conferences. Moreover, *comScore* would go on to cite *The Huffington Post* as the most popular online news organization covering the campaign:

Political Web sites and blogs compete for scoops and eyeballs with an intensity rivalling the presidential candidates, so the Internet traffic figures released Wednesday by industry tracker comScore are likely to provide some bragging rights. The winner is... HuffingtonPost.com — founded by commentator Arianna Huffington, the site led among stand-alone political blogs and news sites with 4.5 million visitors in September, comScore said. That was way above the site's tally of 792,000 in the same month last year (Henderson, *Reuters*, October 22, 2008).

Thus given Huffington's ties to the Democratic Party, her celebrity-based news articles and Obama's online presence, a perfect recipe was created, enabling Huffington and Obama to (unofficially) work together to mobilize a Democratic victory. This relationship led to Huffington's legitimation by those in established positions as a result of Obama's acknowledgement of her website at his Press

Conference. When I addressed the press conference incident with the Senior Social Media Editor (HPM1) at *The Huffington Post* office in Washington, D.C., he seemed grateful for the acknowledgment:

I mean Sam [Stein] was obviously ready to answer any question that came his way. He's a seasoned guy and went to J-School at Columbia. He gets it. We were lucky that he was the first [one called] though. It signalled something, you know? Like, we didn't have to defend what we did for a living anymore.

HPM1 laughed and then paused, glancing at his identity badge hanging from his neck. He continued, "It could have been just plain luck, but it could have been something else too - something bigger".

Obama's acknowledgment is an example of symbolic capital, granting prestige and recognition to Huffington based on her successful use of networking with individuals rich in social capital. Obama offered an unofficial endorsement of Huffington by calling first on *Huffington Post* reporter, Sam Stein, during a White House press conference in February 2009, illustrating a shift in the hierarchy in the field of journalism. CBS News reported:

At a recent press conference, Obama shook up the print, television and radio establishment when he called on *Huffington Post* reporter Sam Stein to ask a question, which for the record, focused on how the president stood on a proposal to prosecute members of the Bush administration. Was it an example of Obama recognizing a scrappy beacon of the increasingly prominent Internet journalism community? Or was it a way to thank an organization that was in his corner when he ran against Republican Sen. John McCain? ... With one swift gesture, Obama placed *Huffington Post* on the nation's big stage, right alongside the *New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, and the television networks (Friedman, February 20, 2009).

Obama's perceived preferential treatment towards new media suggests that he recognized the liberal influence of Huffington. I argue here that there were three reasons why Obama selected a *Huffington Post* reporter over an established player at one of his first White House press conferences. To begin with, *The Huffington Post* was conceptualized following the 2004 election as a Democratic equivalent to *The Drudge Report*; and therefore by default would provide exclusive positive news coverage of the 2008 Democratic candidate. Second, given Huffington's prominent role within the DMC and her network of supporters (the Brentwood Group), it would be detrimental for Obama to deviate from this group: especially given that Huffington

is, according to Breitbart, a “mouthpiece for the Democratic Party”. Finally, Obama’s 2008 campaign posited itself as the “the new media campaign”; so in order to illustrate his support of this medium, he endorsed *The Huffington Post* by calling on Stein to ask the first question. It is important to situate Obama’s acknowledgment because it represented a vital moment in which players of status within the field of journalism (i.e. those who grant legitimacy) witnessed the validation of an online news organization by a prominent player (the President) who outranked them (the press). As Friedman commented:

For his part, Stein could do without being branded a trailblazer among bloggers. He prefers to view it as the administration's acknowledgement that *Huffington Post* is a legitimate alternative to newspapers, magazines, TV stations and radio outlets.

"We do good reporting and we break news," he said. "*Huffington Post* has earned legitimacy."

That point was confirmed Wednesday night when Arianna Huffington, founder and editor-in-chief of the operation, discussed the financial crisis and yukked it up with Jay Leno, a sure sign that Huffington has become a celebrity journalist (February 20, 2009).

This dissertation considers that Huffington’s model for gaining peer recognition from established players in the field is based on both the pro-Internet climate fostered during the 2008 Presidential campaign, and her strategic use of sources from the Brentwood Group. The two work hand in hand: as illustrated in the following scheme:

(1) Huffington harnesses a network of celebrities – referred to as “the Brentwood Group” – that provide exclusive interviews and stories to *The Huffington Post*.

(2) Stories written by celebrities attract a robust readership, surpassing the number of readers relying on some traditional media.

(3a) Meanwhile, Senator Obama has been endorsed by numerous celebrities, many of whom are contributors to *The Huffington Post* (such as Steve Martin and Tom Hanks).

(3b) Huffington is already providing positive news coverage of Obama due to her stake in the Democratic Media Complex. She is thus providing a significant number of (potential) voters with positive information about the Democratic candidate. Readers of *The Huffington Post* have migrated to an

unofficial Democratic news website and are being unofficially mobilized based on the left-wing content which appears on Huffington's site.

(4) Following the election, Obama calls on Stein during one of his first White House Press Conferences, demonstrating an unofficial endorsement of the site. This leads to greater attention to *The Huffington Post*; those occupying established positions in the field of journalism take notice.

The scheme I developed above is based on my understanding of the role of reciprocity in the accumulation of social capital, as has been identified by Baker (2000) and Putnam (2000) and as I have illustrated throughout this dissertation is necessary for becoming legitimate within the subfield of online journalism.

The role of exclusive celebrity sources

Obama occupied a unique position in 2008 in that he was relatively unknown in the political field and therefore needed to rely on non-traditional means of campaigning (i.e. using online media) in order to garner votes. In his November 2008 article, Carr interviewed Ranjit Mathoda, a lawyer and blogger:

“When you think about it, a campaign is a start-up business,” Mr. Mathoda said. “Other than his speech in 2004 at the convention and his two books, Mr. Obama had very little in terms of brand to begin with, and he was up against Senator Clinton, who had all the traditional sources of power, and then Senator McCain. But he had the right people and the right idea to take them on. When you think about it, it was like he was going up against Google and Yahoo. And he won” (November 9, 2008).

Bypassing the “traditional sources of power”, Obama relied on Huffington's readership as a strong voter base that had gathered online to read stories written by celebrities. These readers probably did not know that Obama viewed them as an ideal campaign outlet; but they were online, and had opted to read news from a website priding itself on its liberal sensibilities.

Huffington's readers (and Obama supporters) have a considerable presence online. Specifically, she created a news site with content written by sources that do not publish anywhere else and that cater to the celebrity-driven culture that persists online. As Karen Sternheimer argues:

Love it, hate it, or love to hate it, celebrity culture is one of the hallmarks of twenty-first century America. Never before has it been so easy to know so

much about so many people, even people we might not want to know about. We seem to be on a first name basis with them, give them nicknames, and sometimes even feel as if we know all about them (2011: xiii).

A sense of intimacy is created through Huffington's use of celebrities as reporters, allowing readers to migrate in droves toward her site, thus increasing her readership.

In comparing the number of visitors to *The Huffington Post* and *The Washington Post*, it is evident that the new media organization has surpassed the capital's newspaper. Huffington's substantial, growing readership is evidence that established players in the field of journalism need to pay attention to her. In an article published by *Bloomberg* in August 2013, Leonid Bershidsky highlighted the discrepancy between the two sites:

The Huffington Post, in its eight years of operation, has built up a broader readership than the venerable Washington paper... Last month, according to Quantcast, it had almost 72 million unique visitors and 595 million page views. AOL said in its 2012 annual report that since its acquisition in 2011, HuffPost saw a 48 percent increase in unique visitors... *The Washington Post's* readership performance has nonetheless been respectable. The paper still had 480,000 daily print subscribers last year, and it generated an average of 323 million monthly page views from 41 million unique visitors (August 6, 2013).

While *The Washington Post* has an esteemed reputation in the industry, it is difficult to dispute the noticeable difference that exists in the number of readers accessing news content provided by both organizations. I recognize that the above quote refers to two distinct ecologies and it is difficult to compare traditional print newspaper subscribers with those who access an online news site; however, while some may argue that print subscribers may be more invested (in terms of time and money) to a print newspaper, online news subscribers have greater choice in who they want to access: therefore, their selection of a given news site over another cannot be overlooked. Amid the abundance of online news organizations and blogs that exist online, online news consumers actively choose a news site in a manner that is pointed and selective. As Amy Mitchell, Deputy Director of the PEW Research Center's Project for Excellence in Journalism, told the BBC in March 2010, "Americans have become news grazers both on and offline - but within limits... They generally don't have one favourite website but also don't search aimlessly. Most online news consumers regularly draw on just a handful of different sites" (March 1, 2010). The

increase in the number of visitors accessing *The Huffington Post* illustrates that the public recognizes her status; and hence, that established players in the field should too.

According to a study conducted by *comScore* in 2009, individuals who read *The Huffington Post* are more avid online readers than those of other online newspapers, suggesting perhaps that an appetite exists for news content infused with celebrity opinion:

The average online newspaper reader spends an average of 26.2 minutes consuming online newspaper content each month, but the average reader of *The Huffington Post* spends 55.5 minutes doing so. So there is significantly heavier online newspaper consumption amongst those who use *The Huffington Post* (Lipsman, June 4, 2009).

This illustrates the prominence of *The Huffington Post* amongst readers of online news sites, demonstrating its status over other organizations. Public recognition, measured by Bourdieu through readership numbers, is a principle of legitimation and one of the mechanisms by means of which an online news organization can seek to be recognized as legitimate by those in established positions within the field. I will argue that the increased time spent on *The Huffington Post* could be an indicator of the unique online news site that she has created, offering readers the only online outlet which marries news items with celebrity commentary, based on her unique network of sources.

Through Huffington's affiliation with individuals of status she was able to create an online news organization that catered to the Democratic Media Complex. This was examined in this chapter through the associative resources of return transaction model, Huffington's unique networking strategies, and the influence of celebrity culture in creating a relationship of reciprocity between Huffington and Obama: a relationship that led to the legitimation of *The Huffington Post*.

Sources required to gain social capital

In order for organizations such as *Breitbart.com*, *The Drudge Report*, and *The Huffington Post* to gain recognition, they must possess a substantial stock of social capital. In the subfield of online journalism, online news organizations accumulate social capital through a variety of means, specifically via networking. This chapter

has illustrated that through networking with various types of sources, these three online news organizations emerged as legitimate players in the subfield of online journalism based on an accumulation of social capital and converting it into symbolic capital. Breitbart's ability to network with his readers and encourage outlier sources to approach him illustrates his influence within the conservative echo chamber. This led to the dismantling of ACORN, a non-profit organization that represented the liberal values that he and his new media warriors fought to disassemble. Drudge's positioning of himself within the media landscape allowed sources to contact him with their insider knowledge. He consistently presented information to his readers from sources embedded within the industry. Finally, Huffington's network of celebrity sources, specifically the Brentwood Group, allowed her to publish stories that both catered to her devout readership and helped contribute to Obama's 2008 victory, granting her the ultimate example of recognition by someone in status in Obama's public acknowledgment of her site during one of his first Presidential press conferences. These examples illustrate that the use of sources – the third tenet of the proximity paradigm – is a resource used by the online news organizations examined in this study to gain legitimacy in the subfield of online journalism.

Chapter 7: Conclusion

The interstitial space that exists between the field of journalism and the blogosphere is where questions of legitimacy emerge as online news organizations attempt to position themselves along the borders of this field. According to Wiik, technology has played a significant role in the re-structuring of the field of journalism. As she explains, “As traditional institutions gradually lose their structural powers, old boundaries get blurred and definitions start to float...Well-established professions suffer from re-organizations and boundary-breaking processes” (2009: 352). This dissertation set out to explore the contested space that exists between the field of journalism and the blogosphere; it has identified the logic of this subfield, the resources required for entry and the role and impact of social capital. The study has also sought to understand whether legacy news organizations and online news organizations can co-exist and if so, under what circumstances. The general theoretical literature on this subject and specifically in the context of legitimation has been largely overlooked by scholars. As a result, this study sought to answer the following research question: “How does an online news organization become a legitimate member of the subfield of online journalism?”

This final chapter will be divided according to the following sections: (I) an overview of my research findings; (II) the broader argument of my study; (III) potential areas of interest; (IV) my contribution to the discipline of sociology; (V) the limitations of my study; (VI) areas for future research, and finally (VII) the overall theme identified in this study.

I – Overview of research findings

My dissertation empirically examined the factors required for an online news organization to gain legitimacy within the subfield of online journalism. To do so, I studied elements relating to legitimacy, field formation, social capital, symbolic capital and proximity. In summarizing my findings with respect to legitimacy, it is revealed that there exists a distinct space within the field of journalism reserved for digitally native online news organizations. This subfield has its own logic that is based on the accumulation of social capital and its conversion to symbolic capital. The logic of the subfield includes *some* of the shared values that exist within the field of journalism and new factors that have not been identified by media sociologists. My

conclusion is that to be recognized as a legitimate member of the subfield of online journalism, nascent online news organizations that I examined in this study demonstrated an understanding of the shared values of the field of journalism and exhibited the three tenets of what I have termed *the proximity paradigm* (status, scoop and sources). This paradigm represents my understanding – having conducted case study research on three organizations – of the logic of the subfield of online journalism. In addition, nascent organizations can establish a network rich in social capital, leveraging their connections within their network in order to convert the network’s social capital into their own symbolic capital, and thus gain legitimacy.

As evident in my empirical chapters, Andrew Breitbart, Matt Drudge, and Arianna Huffington are recognized as legitimate players within the subfield of online journalism based on their strategic use of social and symbolic capital. As Bourdieu argues, capital can only exist and subsequently prosper through struggles that appear in the field of cultural production (1984). He writes,

It has to be pointed out that objectified cultural capital only exists and subsists in and through the struggles of which the fields of cultural production (the artistic field, the scientific field, etc.) and, beyond them, the field of the social classes, are the site, struggles in which the agents wield strengths and obtain profits proportionate to their mastery of this objectified capital, in other words, their internalized capital (1984: 225).

Breitbart, Drudge and Huffington yield a profit in their accumulation of resources; they all achieved legitimacy in the same way and I suggest that other online news organizations might achieve legitimacy in a similar manner.

The findings from my dissertation contribute to the current intellectual debate on online vs. offline journalism that is addressed primarily by Adrienne Russell in *Networked: A Contemporary History of News in Transition* (2011). In gaining legitimacy in the subfield of online journalism, the online news organizations examined in this study, earn a partial degree of legitimacy in the field of journalism; however, my work differs from Russell because while we both agree that both traditional and online journalism are related, I conclude that given that these online news organizations (*Breitbart.com*, *The Drudge Report* and *The Huffington Post*) overlap with both the blogosphere and a subsection of the field of journalism, they should be evaluated according to their own standard and cannot be included as fully-fledged members of the field of journalism, as suggested by Russell. They comprise

their own subfield. In addressing this distinction, I am advancing our understanding of why new media cannot be judged according to the values that defined traditional media; they comprise their own ecology that has formed according to a variety of factors. These factors include: an exogenous shock to the industry (i.e. the internet); the emergence of new forms of journalistic practice (i.e. “meta-reporting”); an emphasis on acquiring social capital as a means of securing resources; and, the maintenance of unique (and beneficial) relationships with sources. While some of these factors can be identified – to a certain degree – within the field of journalism, they carry greater significance in terms of influencing field formation because they exist in an ecology that is in constant flux.

Another important finding from my study is that in identifying the practice of meta-reporting, I extend current research on how the boundaries of the field of journalism are continuing to be contested and how as a result, new practices are emerging. Russell addresses this trend:

...In an attempt to protect their boundaries, journalists tend to cling to the norms of the profession and make only superficial adjustments to their content and practices (Lewis, 2012; Russell 2011b). Yet despite reluctance to change, shifts are taking place in how professional journalists understand and integrate emerging forms of participation into their professional identity and practice (Hermida, 2012; Lewis, 2012; Papcharissi and Oliveira, 2012) (2013: 4).

As the subfield of online journalism expands, meta-reporting has the potential to transcend the boundary of the subfield and enter the field of journalism. With public recognition (based on site traffic) of *Breitbart.com*, *The Drudge Report* and *The Huffington Post*, continuing to increase, traditional news organizations will need to evolve and adopt some of the practices being used within the subfield if they want to remain competitive. This shift of legacy news organizations (potentially) adopting journalism practices that emanate from a subfield illustrates a change in the status-quo. Many of the scholarly claims made about the relationship between legacy news organizations and online news organizations focus on whether the logic of the field of journalism is being addressed online. My findings suggest that this should no longer be the focus; instead, scholars should seek to examine the emergent practices of a growing subfield that exists according to a hybrid set of values.

II - Broader argument and trends

The broader argument addressed in this dissertation focuses on key trends relating to notions of status, professional logics, and how new technology influences organizational identities and practices. In any field influenced by technology, there exists a link between professional values and practice (Wiik 2009). When the existing practices start to evolve and the prevailing professional values become compromised, do subgroups within the profession emerge? And if so, how are these subgroups identified and positioned within the field? These two questions represent the broader arguments of this study; they are attempts to recognize how industries, professions and fields evolve and how positions are gained, maintained and negotiated amidst these transformations.

Identifying and exhibiting professional values is an important element for gaining entry into a specific field, as addressed in Wiik's study on the professional identity of journalists in Sweden. She writes,

It furthermore seems to me that the ideological frame of journalism – and professions in general – are used as ways to manage contextual as well as internal changes by emphasizing some crucial values. It is a process of refinement where a few fixed values constitute a solid base for the profession to rely on, while the journalistic collective looked upon more widely still might be increasingly diverse (2009: 362).

Journalism as a profession has fostered a sense of exclusivity over time because there is no formal training required for entry (Peters and Broersma 2013). For example, unlike writing the Bar Examination in North America in order to qualify as a lawyer, no certification is necessary to become a journalist. In fact, as revealed by my interviewees, there exist specific rules that must be followed in order to participate in the field of journalism, specifically in the United States. This was made evident during my time in New York when I was initially blacklisted by *The Daily Beast* and Lloyd Grove told me to “be a good little girl and play by the rules”. As the Editor-at-Large at *The Daily Beast*, Grove was referencing and reproducing an unwritten logic that exists within the field of journalism and applies particularly to those seeking entry, even if only as a researcher. As Bourdieu states, “Those who take part in the struggle help to reproduce the game by helping – more or less completely, depending on the field – to produce belief in the value of the stakes” (1993a: 73-74).

As this study has illustrated, one's identity (specifically within the journalism profession) is an object of debate, judged both by those within the industry (peer

recognition) and those external to it (public recognition). This study focused predominantly on peer recognition as those organizations selected as part of my sample, were already commercially successful and had thus achieved public recognition (Bourdieu 1998). Overall, I was interested in examining how the logic of journalism (i.e. the professional values of the field of journalism) is maintained when confronted with potential entrants that conduct journalism exclusively online. The answer, as illustrated in this study, is that these digital natives are not regarded as fully-fledged members of the field of journalism; they comprise their own subfield where they are legitimate in their own right, according to the unique logic of that space.

I conceptualized the logic of the subfield of online journalism based on my time in the field, and in analyzing the work conducted by media scholars researching online journalism. In my previous chapters, I illustrate that the subfield of online journalism is similar to a social network: a “structure of relationships linking social actors” (Marsden 2000: 2727) or “the set of actors and the ties among them” (Wasserman and Faust 1994). Social networks are comprised of both strong and weak ties (Burt 1980). According to Ronald S. Burt, strong ties create shared values, provide social identification and encourage interconnectedness (1980). Although the three organizations examined in this study are politically at odds, they do share similar journalistic values as were identified in detail in my empirical chapters. In examining social networks, the use of social capital by individuals and/or groups is essential: “At the group level, social capital represents some aggregation of valued resources (such as economic, political, cultural or social, as in social connections) of members interacting as a network or networks” (Lin 2008: 9).

This study provides new insights on how technology can contribute to the creation of a new value system. In identifying the logic of the subfield of online journalism (i.e. their value system), my dissertation advances our understanding of how within emerging subfields certain values are prized over others. By identifying this emerging logic, debates about journalism and online journalism will need to consider the value systems that comprise these two distinct spaces. According to Russell – and as stated in Chapter One – journalism refers to “The wealth of news-related information, opinion, and cultural expression, in various styles and from various producers, which together shape the meaning of news events and issues” (2011: 22). She does not differentiate between online and offline journalism. Instead,

she posits that they occupy the same space. Russell defines the practice of journalism as “work as a salaried employee of, or independent contractor for, an entity” (2011: 23). I should note that in *Networked* she states that video games could be considered journalism (Russell 2011). While my findings do not address this specific point, Russell’s broad definition of “what is journalism” provides a refreshing nod to an industry whose boundaries are constantly being debated.

As the existing literature on online media does not provide a framework for how online news organizations gain legitimacy in the subfield of online journalism, I devised a new approach to theorizing the power relations that exist in this space. Termed *the proximity paradigm*, this framework illustrates how through an accumulation of resources representing the logic of the subfield of online journalism, online news organizations become legitimate players in the subfield of online journalism. The tenets of the proximity paradigm were based both on my analysis of extant literature and on the results of my interviews with industry insiders. The proximity paradigm combines elements drawn from Mark Suchman’s work on organizational legitimacy, David Boschma’s work on proximity, research on legitimacy conducted by such prominent organizational theorists as Brayden King, Violina Rindova, and David Deephouse, and Pierre Bourdieu’s theory of fields, especially as adapted to journalism by Rodney Benson.

III – Potential areas of interest

My approach to understanding the factors contributing to the legitimation of online news organizations is rooted in understanding how networks are created and maintained in the media industry. For example, establishing strategic affiliations with key players who possessed considerable degrees of social and/or symbolic capital was a strategy used by my three case studies for achieving legitimacy. This area of research is of potential interest to policymakers, practitioners and academics.

Within the evolving field of journalism, gaining and maintaining legitimacy are central concerns. The research presented in this dissertation is topical for U.S. policymakers given that the United States Senate continues to debate the status of journalists in their country, and the degree of protection they should be receiving.

“[We are talking about] real reporters, not just anyone with a website”, explained Senator Dianne Feinstein, referring to an amendment made on September

13, 2013, clarifying the term “reporters” with regard to new legislation protecting journalists from disclosing confidential sources. The new legislation, called the Media Shield Bill, was met with controversy as online journalists, such as Matt Drudge, argued that a journalist should be considered a legitimate reporter, regardless of whether they have the support of an established news organization (Savage, September 12, 2013). The Democratic Senator dismissed comparisons drawn between blogs and traditional journalism: “I can’t support it if everyone who has a blog has a special privilege ... or if Edward Snowden were to sit down and write this stuff, he would have a privilege. I’m not going to go there,” she told the *Los Angeles Times* (Savage 2013). Drudge spoke out against Feinstein on Twitter, posting the following tweets:

Friday, September 13, 2013: “Gov’t declaring who qualifies for freedom of press in digital age is ridiculous! It belongs to anyone for any reason. No amendment necessary.”

Friday, September 13, 2013: “Federal judge once ruled Drudge ‘is not a reporter, a journalist, or a newsgatherer.’ Millions of readers a day come for cooking recipes?!!” (<https://twitter.com/DRUDGE>)

The Senate addressed the need for a bill protecting journalists as a matter of national security. As New York Senator Charles E. Schumer stated:

We're closer than we've ever been before to passing a strong and tough media shield bill. Thanks to important bipartisan compromises, we've put together a strong bill that balances the need for national security with that of a free press (Savage, September 12, 2013).

The responsibility of the Judiciary Committee was to define who is considered a journalist in the field of journalism. From a policy perspective, Feinstein offered a definition that encourages traditional reporters to conduct work online; yet it limits any further discussion concerning amateurs entering this space. She states that a journalist protected under the new legislation is someone who “gathers and reports news for an entity or service that disseminates news and information” (Savage 2013). The definition includes freelancers, part-timers and student journalists, and permits a judge to go further and extend the protections to “any legitimate news-gathering activities” (Savage 2013). The term “any legitimate news-gathering activity” raises

the question of how legitimacy is granted in an exclusively online space, the main research question addressed in this dissertation.

In September 2013, the Senate Judiciary Committee approved the Bill by a vote of 13 to 5 (Savage 2013). The next step is approval on the Senate floor, followed by a vote in the Republican-controlled House of Representatives. The fate of the Bill remains in question given the propensity for Republicans to prefer talk-radio programs as a form of opinion-infused journalism, as opposed to online media. As Snow writes:

Liberal views dominate in the blogosphere (*Huffington Post*) whereas conservative views dominate on talk radio (Rush Limbaugh, Glenn Beck, Bill O'Reilly)... The terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, may have helped to fuel an interest in readers to get to the other side of the story. In late 2001 and 2002, a number of sites sprouted up that questioned the government's version of the events of 9/11. Liberals who were upset at the Republican control of Congress and the White House were beginning to post their misgivings online (2010: 71).

The divisive nature of the legitimation of online media is an on-going discussion that continues to evolve amongst scholars, policymakers, and journalists themselves, especially given the polarized nature of the field. Research that focuses on how online journalists achieve legitimacy is essential given the rapid expansion of this unique space.

My dissertation has discussed how an individual's network can confer status on an online news organization, in exchange for a reciprocal action; this can include, biased news coverage, achieved through exclusive news "scoops" and interviews with a variety of sources. This accumulation of social and/or symbolic capital through strategic affiliations with established players allowed *Breitbart.com*, *The Drudge Report* and *The Huffington Post* to leverage their identities as legitimate news organizations within the subfield of online journalism. The roles of social and symbolic capital cannot be overlooked in the exchanges that were examined in my study. These exchanges centre on affiliating oneself with players of status in order to gain peer recognition (Bourdieu 1998). According to Wiik, status is a significant element in the construction of a professional identity. She explains,

Professional identity is a form of social identity that connects members of the same occupation. It hence refers to a wide frame of identification – an ideology – rather than specific objectives and members of single news organizations. It is tied to a sense of common understandings; experiences and expertise, cultivated through professional socialization on several levels (education, associations, work lore, etc.) (Soloski 1989, Evetts 2003). A significant aspect of professional identity construction is status (Windahl 1975)... Status is intimately associated with power and they are both crucial elements of professionalism (2009: 356).

IV – Contributions and implications

My work contributes to the literatures on field formation, legitimacy and online media. The findings presented in my empirical chapters support Fenton’s argument that “... under certain conditions journalism or journalists’ (whoever these may be) may transform power relations both within their domain and in others” (2010: 14). These findings illustrate that the power relations that hold the logic of the field of journalism together – specifically the importance of peer recognition in determining one’s degree of legitimacy (Bourdieu 1998) – play only a partial role in defining the logic of the subfield of journalism. “The domain” – as referred to above by Fenton (2010) – changed when an online news organization (*The Huffington Post*) was called on *first* by President Obama in one of his initial press conferences. While legacy news organizations such as *The New York Times* were present at the press conference, for one reason or another – whether it was Huffington’s favourable reporting of Obama during the election cycle, or the deep-pocketed Democrats affiliated with her website, or the fact that Obama’s victory has been credited “to a considerable extent to his integrated and strategic use of Web 2.0” (Cogburn and Espinoza-Vasquez 2011: 191) and therefore he wanted to acknowledge the power of new media – it signalled a change in the existing structure. As my study has demonstrated, *Breitbart.com*, *The Drudge Report* and *The Huffington Post*, all achieved a degree of legitimacy by accumulating specific resources that led to their recognition by those in positions of power. The example referenced above is one of many, as cited throughout this dissertation, that indicates that the subfield of online journalism merits further examination by journalism scholars who have previously confirmed that there is an outdated logic that permeates the field of journalism (Peters and Broersma 2013: 5), yet have not offered empirical evidence that suggests, as I have demonstrated, that there could be an alternative logic. Research conducted by Bogaerts and Carpentier echo Peters and Broersma’s acknowledgement that there are

changes occurring within the field and that “the borders of appropriate practice need[s] renegotiation” (2013: 61). In fact, they have identified that traditional journalists have adopted new forms of journalistic practice such as using the Internet for “source-gathering” (2013: 65), but they do not remark on how this new practice has the potential to alter the field’s existing logic. These scholars state the need for an examination of this space and its accompanying logic, yet none of them have conducted an empirical study to resolve these tensions. It is for this reason that I decided to also review extant studies conducted by organizational theorists who have conducted rigorous analyses of various types of organizations and their position in their accompanying field/industry. It is important that media sociologists apply an inter-disciplinary lens to their research so that the debates surrounding legacy journalism and new media can be addressed both at the organizational level and at the field level, specifically given its on-going development.

This study serves as the first empirical investigation into how digitally native news organizations in the United States gain legitimacy in the subfield of online journalism, positioned as a subfield of the overarching field of journalism. Previous studies addressing the identity of journalists rely predominantly on quantitative data, as examined in Nygren and Degtereva’s study based on data from 100 survey respondents (2012). Their study examined notions of journalistic autonomy and professional identity in Russia and Sweden (2012). Similarly, the work conducted by Wiik also relies on survey data, having collected national survey results (from 1989) through the Department of Journalism, Media and Communication at the University Gothenburg in Sweden (2010). Wiik’s research addresses organizational identity in journalism and what she refers to as “the de-professionalization” of journalism (2010). The use of survey data in researching organizational identity and the journalism industry has its limitations as it only provides fixed information based on the questions presented in the survey; any deviation from the question asked is restricted based on this format and therefore only a myopic understanding of the field is achieved. In this study, I have developed a more precise and critical understanding of how the field of journalism has evolved, by identifying the emergence of a subfield and the conditions for entry. It also provides a detailed documentation of the evolution of three nascent online news organizations from the perspective of those within the organization(s), those within the industry who have had interactions with

the three cases selected, and media coverage of the cases. It was imperative that this study include a longitudinal element given that in employing case study research, one must take into account as many perspectives as possible in order to gain a holistic understanding of a given case (Eisenhardt 1989). My theoretical framework was strengthened as a result of the use of longitudinal data and the manner in which I structured the study. Yin argues that in employing case study research, a theory-building approach develops and based on this structure, each chapter of the study reveals a new part of the theoretical argument (2013). It is for this reason that my three empirical chapters each address one of the three tenets of the proximity paradigm.

My study also identifies a fundamental element overlooked in the literature on online journalism: that the subfield of online journalism - while overlapping with the field of journalism – is beyond conventional genre boundaries. The boundaries of the field of journalism are being re-negotiated and while the digitally native news organization exhibits the characteristics required to gain a degree of legitimacy by those in positions of status within the field of journalism, they are not regarded as fully-fledged members. Many scholars such as Russell, Witschge and Nygren, and Wiik have noted that with regard to classifying traditional and online journalism, there exist varying interpretations: (a) online journalism is part of a networked media era where the definition of journalism should include online media and blogs (Russell 2013: 22); (b) journalism is a semi-profession (Witschge and Nygren 2009); (c) whether journalism is considered to be a profession or not is culturally dependent (Wiitz 2009). There has yet to be a study that has addressed and empirically illustrated the categorization of online news organizations as occupying their own subfield.

My study's theoretical contribution is that it provides a definition of legitimacy that is based on theoretical contributions from an interdisciplinary perspective. In drawing on definitions of legitimacy from sociology (Maurer 1974, Suchman 1995 and Weber 1964) and organization theory (Deephouse & Carter 2005, King & Whetten 2008, and Zimmerman & Zeitz 2002), my conceptualization of legitimacy is based on a hierarchical and evaluative definition referring to the recognition by those in positions of power that an organization merits inclusion in their system. Given the interconnected nature of the subfield of online journalism and

how the networks that exist within this space influence both the allocation of resources and the production of content – often from an inherently biased perspective – it is important that studies on legitimacy in the media industry consider interdisciplinary research. One is unable to examine media organizations or their status without drawing on seminal research previously conducted in both sociology and organizational theory.

The degree of legitimacy achieved by the organizations examined in this study is due to their use of social capital and their success in achieving the tenets of the proximity paradigm, a conceptual framework that combines parts of the logic of the field of journalism (i.e. getting scoops) with other characteristics distinctive to the subfield of journalism. The result is a new logic that acknowledges some of the values from the field of journalism, while identifying new elements that were – as identified in this study – the mechanisms used by my three case studies to gain recognition by those in positions of power. While the subfield exists *sui generis*, it is influenced by the field with which it shares its space and thus not so radically dissimilar from more traditional news organizations.

In Robert McChesney’s “Farewell to Journalism? Time for Rethinking”, the author presents an ominous view of the current journalistic landscape:

Journalism is in freefall collapse in the United States, and, to varying degrees, elsewhere. Unless there is a dramatic rethinking in the United States, and to a lesser extent elsewhere, all signs point to a continued deterioration of journalism. By all known political theory this means the continuation of credible democratic governance will be impossible. Hence this is a crisis of the greatest possible magnitude (2012: 614).

The findings identified in my dissertation do not align with McChesney’s cry for help, but instead offer a more optimistic perspective: the industry is not undergoing an identity crisis – as suggested above and by Bogaerts and Carpentier (2013), Peters and Broersma (2013) and Deuze (2005) – but it is in fact evolving to include a developing ecology that is based on its own logic and is coexisting alongside the more established field of journalism. My findings are consistent with Schudson and Downie, who state that “newspapers and television news are not going to vanish...but they will play diminished roles in an emerging and still rapidly changing world of digital journalism” (2009).

A limited number of studies have focused on the evolution of fields, specifically the mechanisms that bring together the actors and relationships that configure fields and their evolving boundaries. Adding to the debate of whether online journalism is part of the field of journalism, this study provides evidence that the relationship between traditional journalism and online journalism is constantly changing and not as binary as suggested by such scholars as Peters and Broersma. They argue that, “professional authority, credibility and autonomy are eroding” (2013: 2) within the industry as a result of new media. My study illustrates that the field of journalism is not eroding, but is expanding to include new players, similar to the eventual inclusion of rap music as a category at the Grammy Awards (Narasimhan and Watson 2004). A once-peripheral genre, rap music is now judged alongside traditional categories of music, expanding the field of commercial music through the tournament ritual of the Grammy Awards. My work on the expansion of the field of journalism to include a subfield adds to the work conducted by Narasimhan and Watson, who in their 2004 study, encourage field theorists to view tournament rituals as “an important symbolic medium for shaping field evolution” (2004: 61). According to Narasimhan and Jones, tournament rituals, such as the Grammy Awards, are representative of a transorganization structure, in that they represent a prominent industry awards ceremony, and therefore are “in effect tournaments of value (cf. Appadurai 1986) that shape field formation” (2008: 1038).

Narasimhan and Jones introduced the concept of transorganizational structures as contributing to field formation (2008). They define the term as “those [structures] that allow disparate constituents to become aware of their common concerns, join together, share information, coordinate their actions, shape or subvert agendas, and mutually influence field structuration” (2008: 1037). As shown in my study, the three players examined “share[d] information”, “subvert[ed] agendas” and “influenc[ed] field structuration”, whether intentional or not. This illustrates that they comprise what Narasimhan and Jones refer to as a “transorganizational structure” (2008), which is an important component of field formation. As previously stated, there have been few studies examining field formation; in particular, none of these studies have investigated how the field of journalism has expanded to include the formation of a new subfield.

According to Narasimhan and Jones, “where transorganizational structures are dynamic, they tend to have a vigorous and definitive influence on field formation” (2008: 1037). The findings in my study contribute to their configuration of transorganizational structures; the empirical chapters in this dissertation outline the important instances where Breitbart, Drudge and Huffington each contributed a definitive moment to the formation of the subfield of online journalism. Breitbart was the keynote speaker at the first Tea Party Convention, illustrating his status among far-right news organizations and politicians; Drudge became the first online reporter to receive a White House Press Pass; and, *The Huffington Post* was the first news organization to ask a question during one of President Obama’s first press conferences. These three examples – along with others cited as part of the strategic resources that comprise the proximity paradigm (status, scoop and sources) – all illustrate “a definitive influence” (Narasimhan and Jones 2008) on the field of journalism and the formation of its subfield. According to DiMaggio (1979), Powell (2005), and Narasimhan and Jones (2008), any transorganizational structure that influences field formation must meet four distinct criteria (Narasimhan and Jones 2008: 1038). The organizations examined in my dissertation fulfil the criteria necessary to be considered influential in field formation:

These field configuring mechanisms should: (1) enable increased interaction and communication among field constituents; (2) provide field participants with a sense of being interested in a set of common issues; and (3) facilitate structures of dominance. Bourdieu’s approach suggests that in addition to facilitating structures of dominance in social hierarchies, field-configuring mechanisms should also (4) allow for the transformation of capital within a field (Narasimhan and Jones 2008: 1038).

My findings contribute to this intellectual debate about how fields form according to a set of criteria. Figure 7.0 identifies how each online news organization examined in my dissertation, fulfils one of the criteria referenced above.

Figure 7.0. How transorganizational structuring contributed to the configuration of the subfield of online journalism

Criterion	Organization	Accomplished?	Example
Enable increased interaction and communication among field constituents	<i>Breitbart.com</i>	✓	Previously worked for Drudge and Huffington
	<i>The Drudge Report</i>	✓	Previously worked with Breitbart and would consult with Huffington on stories
	<i>The Huffington Post</i>	✓	Previously worked with Breitbart and would consult with Drudge on stories
Provide field participants with a sense of being interested in a set of common issues	<i>Breitbart.com</i>	✓	“A sense of being interested in a set of common issues” = individuals of STATUS (ACORN and Anthony Weiner)
	<i>The Drudge Report</i>	✓	“A sense of being interested in a set of common issues” = individuals of STATUS (President Bill Clinton)
	<i>The Huffington Post</i>	✓	“A sense of being interested in a set of common issues” = individuals of STATUS (The Brentwood Group)
Facilitate structures of dominance	<i>Breitbart.com</i>	✓	All three organizations occupy a dominant position compared to their competitors (<i>Gawker</i> , <i>Politico</i> , <i>Talking Points Memo</i>) based on public recognition (daily traffic to their site)
	<i>The Drudge Report</i>	✓	
	<i>The Huffington Post</i>	✓	
Allow for the transformation of capital within a field	<i>Breitbart.com</i>	✓	Accumulated social capital and transformed into symbolic capital (i.e. peer recognition)
	<i>The Drudge Report</i>	✓	
	<i>The Huffington Post</i>	✓	

Figure 7.0 illustrates that the findings in my dissertation are consistent with DiMaggio (1979), Powell (2005), and Narasimhan and Jones' (2008) interpretation of transorganizational structures. This chart has been included in the concluding chapter to demonstrate how the empirical chapters of this study have structured the development of the logic of the subfield of online journalism, as employed by my three cases. All points addressed in Figure 7.0 are discussed in detail in my empirical chapters.

The purpose of my dissertation is to provide a framework that captures the nuanced and ever evolving space where online journalism is conducted. Extant literature suggests that the standards by which online journalism is judged could be examined more precisely. Many scholars have either dismissed this online space altogether because it could not be categorized according to a specific professional

logic (Peters and Broersma 2013), or classified all news content (regardless of the publishing platform) as “journalism” (Russell 2013), without investigating whether the values that hold true in one space can be applied directly to another. One of the concerns that motivated me to pursue this topic was that the space where digitally native news organizations were conducting journalism was being judged (and often dismissed) as not being legitimate because it deviated from traditional notions of journalism; however, as the proximity paradigm has illustrated the logic of the subfield of online journalism provides a hybrid set of values from both the logic of journalism (achieving a “scoop” and relying on sources) and aligning oneself with individuals of status in order to borrow their social capital and convert it into symbolic capital. My intention was that in developing the proximity paradigm, my work would incorporate and extend significant contributions of other researchers. While my work aligns with the criteria outlined by such organizational theorists as DiMaggio (1979), Powell (2005), and Narasimhan and Jones (2008), it bridges their framework with the sociology of media, providing a new theoretical lens for examining the formation of subfields.

In contributing to research relating to online journalism and legitimacy, the case study methodology that I employed in this study, including the longitudinal data, provided a new perspective to studies relating to online media. I sought to understand a distinct phenomenon: the emergence of online news organizations as legitimate players in the subfield of online journalism. In constantly comparing the interviews I conducted, I developed a conceptual framework based on an individual’s ability to build a network. My approach to understanding the factors contributing to the legitimation of online news organizations is rooted in understanding how networks are created and maintained in the media industry. For example, establishing strategic affiliations with key players who possess considerable degrees of social and/or symbolic capital is essential.

V - Limitations of the study

One of the limitations of the study involves access to interviewees, specifically Matt Drudge and Arianna Huffington. While I spoke to a significant number of individuals who worked with Huffington and had encounters with both Huffington and Drudge, the closest I could get to direct contact with these two

individuals was through both email and books written by them. While Huffington and I emailed, she told me that she was unable to participate in the study due to “time constraints”, but that I could use two speeches that she had written as part of my data set. She attached the speeches to our final email correspondence. While the speeches were helpful, they did not provide me with the critical insight that I wanted in order to understand how she had built her empire. However, given both the collaborative nature of the new media industry and the fact that one of the central elements of this study was the use of an individual’s network, I did manage to speak to key people who had insider access to both Huffington and Drudge. I also conducted a rigorous examination of Drudge’s *Drudge Manifesto* and received daily “Google Alerts” when any of my subjects were mentioned in the media. Unfortunately, my many attempts to speak with Drudge were denied and further confirmed when Breitbart informed me that Drudge would not speak with me. I also received daily “Google Alerts” for *The Huffington Post*.

Another limitation of this study was that upon returning to the United Kingdom following my time in the field, many magazines and newspapers reported on some of the findings that I had uncovered, for example, Huffington’s now infamous Brentwood brunch. The increased interest in *The Huffington Post* was due to an on-going lawsuit that had received considerable attention from the press starting in January 2012. I returned from the field in January 2011 and immediately began transcribing and analysing my interviews, recognizing a couple of months later that the Brentwood brunch was a seminal moment in the history of *The Huffington Post*. Unfortunately the press, specifically *Vanity Fair*, also identified this moment and published a detailed story titled “Huffing and Puffing” in their February 2012 issue. One of the major limitations of researching new media is that the researcher is often competing against the industry itself as various discoveries previously uncovered by the researcher, also appear in the press; research findings can be scooped by the press, minimizing the research uncovered by the researcher. In addition, Breitbart died six weeks after I returned to the United Kingdom and therefore I was unable to conduct any follow-up interviews. At the time of his death, the press began publishing articles about his career and his working relationship with Huffington, printing exclusive information that I had previously heard directly from Breitbart during my time in Los Angeles. My five-year study has undergone various changes; however, one of the

limitations of spending numerous years examining one media related topic is that the press – with its shorter publication schedule – can reveal data to the public at a faster rate.

It is important that I address another key limitation from this study; in conducting case study research I chose to analyse three distinct online news organizations. As a result, I cannot infer that the resources accumulated by these three cases in order to gain legitimacy are generalizable beyond the specific insights that I identified. This study is a partial account of this unique space as it is in constant flux. Conducting research on an ever-changing environment is an additional limitation of this study as the data being collected and subsequently examined is not static. Finally, as previously addressed, access to media is extremely difficult given their unconventional working environment. The sexual politics, varying types of egos, and underhanded manner in which work is conducted within this industry are significant barriers that a researcher must both understand and overcome if he/she wants to collect data in this environment.

VI - Areas for future research

Bourdieu's principles of legitimation were referenced throughout this dissertation, emphasizing the importance of gaining peer and public recognition in order to gain legitimacy in the subfield of online journalism. Given the role of technology in disrupting many traditional elements of journalism – such as sources and access – research relating to how the industry attempts to evolve as a result of new players and resources is required. With incumbents in the field of journalism hesitant to recognize the value of online news organizations, further studies that address the overlap that exists between the field of journalism and the subfield of online journalism need to be conducted.

My research also highlights an emerging form of journalistic practice – referred to as *meta-reporting* – whereby online news journalists report on what other reporters are reporting. This practice proliferates online as a result of the networked infrastructure that both exists and is encouraged within this space. No research has been conducted before on meta-reporting. Studies on online journalism need to consider this trend: it can be compared to the “watchdog” era of journalism (Sabato 1991), which existed in the 1960s and ultimately led to historic news stories.

Journalists conducting work online not only monitor the actions of those in power, but also those of fellow journalists. My concept of meta-reporting extends work conducted by Bruns and his notion of “gatewatching” (2008), referring to an online practice adopted by bloggers who critically examine work conducted and published by established journalists. While my conceptualization of meta-reporting stemmed from Drudge’s unique investigative reporting of the Clinton-Lewinsky scandal, some scholars are dismissive of forms of journalism that celebrate celebrities and sex scandals. As McChesney argues,

Since the late 1970s, commercial pressure has eroded much of the autonomy that professional journalism afforded journalism, and that had provided the basis for the best work done over the past 50 years. It has led to a softening of standards such that stories about sex scandals and celebrities have become more legitimate, because they make commercial sense: they are inexpensive to cover, attract audiences and give the illusion of controversy without ever threatening anyone in power (2012: 616).

Whether McChesney’s statement is correct or not is not relevant here. As my study has identified, the use of meta-reporting leads to a more networked media (Russell 2011) where the journalist or news organization (be it online or offline) becomes part of the news narrative, ensuring that no individual or organization is immune to being “watched” (Bruns 2008). Future research could examine how meta-reporting has evolved with the growth of social media. Many journalists are active social media users and further research could examine whether their online practices have become a source of material for other reporters.

Other areas for future research include examining emerging partnerships between traditional and online media. I predict that soon legacy news organizations will acquire online news sites and vice-versa; for example, *The Washington Post* and *Politico* could merge following Jeff Bezos’ purchase of the former (Farhi, October 1, 2013). With Andrew Breitbart’s death, the continuing successes of Matt Drudge and Arianna Huffington, and the emergence of new key players within this space, further research to examine the subfield’s current landscape would be productive. It would also be interesting to investigate whether *Breitbart.com* is still a legitimate player in the subfield of online journalism given that Breitbart is no longer part of the organization. Given the blurred boundaries that exist between the field of journalism and the subfield of online journalism, further research will be needed if traditional

news organizations (such as *The New York Times* or *The Washington Post*) partner with online news organizations. Are these partnerships officially or unofficially taking place? Does a partnership between an organization in the field of journalism and an organization in the subfield of online journalism influence one's status within that space? Are traditional organizations threatened by the subfield of online journalism? Are other online news organizations appropriating elements of meta-reporting? If so, how and why?

With respect to professional norms, editorial lines in the journalism industry are blurring, as news stories are often pursued in a manner that privileges the social network of the journalist. This has been illustrated throughout this dissertation with regard to the work of Arianna Huffington. Compromising editorial content for social gain stems from struggles for legitimacy. By employing a business model based on the accumulation of social capital, the subfield of online journalism is at risk of becoming stigmatized, with many seeking to discredit its role as a credible outlet for news. In relying on relationships with other players (e.g. other news organizations, sources, outlier sources, etc.), a collaborative method of conducting journalism is emerging online. Collaboration and competition are amongst the seminal factors that have shaped this new subfield and further research examining the latest collaborations that are forming is necessary.

In fact, Schudson and Downie Jr.'s work addresses the collaborative nature of online journalism:

Reporting is becoming more participatory and collaborative... There is an increased competition among the different kinds of news gatherers, but there also is more cooperation, a willingness to share resources and reporting with former competitors. That increases the value and impact of the news they produce, and creates new identities for reporting while keeping old, familiar ones alive (2009: 1).

The collaborative nature of conducting journalism is an important part of the subfield of online journalism, a space where the relationships between key players will continue to fluctuate as new players enter. The field of journalism will always be a site of competition for stories, readers, and legitimacy, with established players continually discrediting developing subfields and new trends that attempt to infiltrate the field. Thus contemporary research needs to be conducted in order to understand

how news producers (be they offline or online) co-exist within this evolving field. As a result of my study, further research might be conducted on other methods of achieving legitimacy within this contested space, specifically if other forms of capital are relevant.

VII - It's the company you keep

With online news organizations continuing to proliferate and solidify their legitimacy within the subfield of online journalism, many traditional news organizations have become anxious about their future. As the legitimation of online news organizations continues to evolve, the field of journalism will only grow richer as other online news organizations seek positions within the subfield of online journalism. As Bourdieu states, "To understand fully what a journalist writes and says, it is essential to know what his or her position in the journalistic field is, that is the very power and prestige the channel or newspaper he or she works for has in the field" (1998: 223).

Appendix I: Interviews conducted

Formal Interviews at *The Huffington Post*

- Case Study Interviews
(Listed by those identified by their name and then in order of formal interviews conducted)

Coding I.D.	Name	Date of Interview	Level of Seniority	Gender	Interview Duration (hh:mm:ss)	Location
n/a	Howard Fineman	21/09/2011	Editorial Director, Washington Bureau	Male	2:51:01	Washington
n/a	Millie Kerr	06/10/2011	Travel Reporter	Female	2:09:36	New York
n/a	Brad Hill	11/19/2011	VP and Executive Projects Editor	Male	0:53:12	New York
n/a	David Flumenbaum	11/9/2011	Executive Projects Editor	Male	0:46:38	New York
n/a	Alan Rosenblatt	21/9/2011	Social Media Reporter	Male	0:30:16	Washington
n/a	Andrew Breitbart	21/11/2011	Former Editor	Male	3:18:38	Los Angeles
n/a	James Boyce*	18/11/2011	Co-founder/former Employee	Male	0:58:23	(Boston)
HPM1	Editor (anonymous)	22/9/2011	Senior Social Media Editor	Male	0:45:18	Washington
HPM2	Editor (anonymous)	28/9/2011	Technology Editor	Male	0:35:54	Washington
HPF3	Editor (anonymous)	28/9/2011	Senior Political Economy Reporter	Female	1:06:15	Washington
HPM4	Editor (anonymous)	29/9/2011	Senior Politics Editor	Male	0:47:29	Washington
HPM5	Reporter (anonymous)	29/9/2011	Business Reporter	Male	0:23:31	Washington
HPM6	Reporter (anonymous)	04/10/2011	Education Reporter	Male	0:36:02	New York
HPM7	Reporter (anonymous)	04/10/2011	Politics Reporter	Male	0:42:43	New York
HPM8	Reporter (anonymous)	05/10/2011	Labour Reporter	Male	1:42:06	New York
HPM9	Reporter (anonymous)	05/10/2011	Technology Reporter	Male	0:18:31	New York
HPF10	Reporter (anonymous)	05/10/2011	Fashion and Beauty Reporter	Female	0:56:12	New York
HPF11	Reporter (anonymous)	05/10/2011	Politics Reporter	Female	0:41:36	New York
HPM12	Reporter (anonymous)	06/10/2011	Healthcare Reporter	Male	1:28:13	New York
HPF13	Editor (anonymous)	10/10/2011	Assistant News Editor	Female	2:45:03	New York
HPM14	Reporter (anonymous)	11/11/2011	Social Media Reporter	Male	0:52:01	New York
HPM15	Reporter (anonymous)	14/11/2011	Senior Crime Reporter	Male	0:31:08	New York
HPM16	Reporter (anonymous)	14/11/2011	Technology Reporter	Male	2:21:09	New York
HPM17	Reporter (anonymous)	14/11/2011	Business Reporter	Male	0:47:22	New York

HPF18	Reporter (anonymous)	19/11/2011	Politics Reporter	Female	1:26:49	New York
HPM19	Reporter (anonymous)	13/12/2011	Sports Columnist	Male	0:40:15	New York
HPF20	Reporter (anonymous)	29/11/2011	Former Politics/Immigration Reporter	Female	2:06:07	Los Angeles
HPF21	Reporter (anonymous)	28/11/2011	Former Senior Political Reporter	Female	0:29:40	Los Angeles
HPM22	Reporter (anonymous)	22/11/2011	Former Senior Media Reporter	Male	2:06:07	Los Angeles
HPF23	Reporter (anonymous)	12/12/2011	Business Reporter	Female	0:55:14	New York
Total Hours of Formal Interviews with Current and Former Employees at <i>The Huffington Post</i>					36 hours, 32 minutes, 29 seconds	

*Mr. Boyce was interviewed by phone as he was in Boston at the time of our interview.

Informal Interviews at *The Huffington Post*

- Case Study Interviews
(Listed by those identified by their name and then in order of informal interviews conducted)

Coding I.D.	Name	Date of Interview	Level of Seniority	Gender	Interview Duration (hh:mm:ss)	Location
n/a	Howard Fineman	21/09/2011	Editorial Director, Washington Bureau	Male	0:26:02	Washington
n/a	Alan Rosenblatt	21/9/2011	Social Media Reporter	Male	0:15:34	Washington
n/a	Andrew Breitbart	21/11/2011	Former Editor	Male	1:51:29	Los Angeles
HP4M	Editor (anonymous)	29/9/2011	Senior Politics Editor	Male	0:14:00	Washington
HPM7	Reporter (anonymous)	04/10/2011	Politics Reporter	Male	0:06:22	New York
HPM15	Reporter (anonymous)	14/11/2011	Senior Crime Reporter	Male	0:24:56	New York
HPM16	Reporter (anonymous)	14/11/2011	Technology Reporter	Male	0:33:27	New York
HPM17	Reporter (anonymous)	14/11/2011	Business Reporter	Male	0:47:22	New York
HPM19	Reporter (anonymous)	13/12/2011	Sports Columnist	Male	0:05:50	New York
HPF23	Reporter (anonymous)	12/12/2011	Business Reporter	Female	0:55:14	New York
Total Hours of Informal Interviews with Current and Former Employees at <i>The Huffington Post</i>					5 hours, 40 minutes, 16 seconds	

Formal Interviews at *Breitbart.com*

- Case Study Interviews
(Listed in order of formal interviews conducted)

Name	Date of Interview	Level of Seniority	Gender	Interview Duration (hh:mm:ss)	Location
Andrew Breitbart	21/11/2011 22/11/2011 23/11/2011 28/11/2011 29/11/2011 30/11/2011 01/12/2011 02/12/2011 05/12/2011 06/12/2011 07/12/2011 08/12/2011 09/12/2011	Founder and Editor-in-Chief	Male	3:01:19 0:47:58 2:54:36 2:25:11 0:50:45 1:34:21 0:06:43 1:09:17 0:33:52 0:48:27 2:01:56 0:55:24 4:10:57	Los Angeles
Alexander Marlow	21/11/2011 22/11/2011 23/11/2011	Assistant to the Editor	Male	0:36:18 0:42:03 1:06:45	Los Angeles
Larry Solov	05/12/2011 06/12/2011 07/12/2011 08/12/2011 09/12/2011	Managing Editor	Male	2:31:52 1:09:12 0:54:17 0:31:04 1:01:49	Los Angeles
Peter Schweizer	28/11/2011 29/11/2011 30/11/2011 01/12/2011	Senior News Editor	Male	0:54:23 0:31:14 0:26:37 2:01:59	Los Angeles
Christian Toto	23/11/2011 02/12/2011 05/12/2011 06/12/2011	Columnist, Big Hollywood	Male	0:44:31 2:15:06 0:25:32 2:18:09	Los Angeles
Lee Stranahan	21/11/2011 22/11/2011 23/11/2011	Columnist, Big Government	Male	0:41:07 0:57:33 0:29:16	Los Angeles
Larry O'Connor	21/11/2011 22/11/2011 23/11/2011 28/11/2011 29/11/2011 30/11/2011 01/12/2011 02/12/2011	Editor-in-Chief, Breitbart TV	Male	0:45:34 0:18:36 2:41:09 0:39:28 0:59:47 0:34:12 0:40:56 0:16:24	Los Angeles
Stephen Bannon	11/15/2015	Executive Chairman, Breitbart.com	Male	3:01:10	New York
Total Hours of Formal Interviews with Current Employees at <i>Breitbart.com</i>				51 hours, 36 minutes, 49 seconds	

Informal Interviews at *Breitbart.com*

- Case Study Interviews
(Listed in order of informal interviews conducted)

Name	Date of Interview	Level of Seniority	Gender	Interview Duration (hh:mm:ss)	Location
Andrew Breitbart	21/11/2011 29/11/2011 05/12/2011 06/12/2011 07/12/2011 08/12/2011 09/12/2011	Founder and Editor-in-Chief	Male	0:10:24 1:18:05 0:57:30 0:28:01 0:42:59 0:05:08 2:36:11	Los Angeles
Larry Solov	06/12/2011 07/12/2011 08/12/2011	Managing Editor	Male	0:04:42 0:34:17 1:55:21	Los Angeles
Lee Stranahan	21/11/2011	Columnist, Big Government	Male	1:03:58	Los Angeles
Larry O'Connor	02/12/2011	Editor-in-Chief, Breitbart TV	Male	1:22:49	Los Angeles
Total Hours of Informal Interviews with Current Employees at <i>Breitbart.com</i>				11 hours, 19 minutes, 25 seconds	

Formal Interviews about *The Drudge Report*

- Case Study Interviews
(Listed in order of formal interviews conducted)

Name	Affiliation	Date of Interview	Organization/Level of Seniority	Gender	Interview Duration (hh:mm:ss)	Location
Andrew Breitbart	Former Editor at <i>The Drudge Report</i>	01/12/2011	Former Editor at <i>The Drudge Report</i>	Male	3:54:12	Los Angeles
Jonathan Martin	Discussed “The Drudge Effect” during our interview	09/20/2011	Senior Political Reporter, <i>POLITICO</i>	Male	1:48:39	Washington, D.C.
Howard Fineman	Editor at <i>Newsweek</i> during Clinton-Lewinsky Scandal	9/21/2011	Editorial Director, Washington Bureau, <i>The Huffington Post</i>	Male	2:51:01	Washington, D.C.
Michael Isikoff	Former reporter at <i>Newsweek</i> “scooped” by Drudge during Clinton-Lewinsky Scandal	9/29/2011	Author of <i>Uncovering Clinton: A Reporter’s Story</i> (1999) National investigative correspondent, <i>NBC News</i>	Male	0:35:18	Washington, D.C.*
Jesse Lee	Online outreach and response to Drudge’s criticisms of Obama	9/30/2011	Director of Progressive Media and Online Response, The White House	Male	1:46:59	Washington, D.C.
Kenneth Olmstead	A reference to The Drudge Report in his report crashed PEW’s website	9/29/2011	Research Associate, PEW: The Project for Excellence in Journalism	Male	2:21:26	Washington, D.C.
Stephen Bannon	Interaction with Drudge at Breitbart’s funeral	11/15/2015	Executive Chairman, Breitbart.com	Male	1:00:12	New York
Total Hours of Formal Interviews with Individuals Connected with Matt Drudge and/or <i>The Drudge Report</i>					14 hours, 17 minutes, 35 seconds	

*Conducted by telephone. Mr. Isikoff wanted to have a pre-interview call to discuss the parameters of the interview. He hung up the phone four times during our call as soon as I mentioned “Matt Drudge”. On the fourth attempt he spoke about Drudge.

Total Hours of Formal Interviews Conducted with Case Study Individuals	102 hours, 26 minutes and 53 seconds
--	--------------------------------------

Informal Interviews about *The Drudge Report*

- Case Study Interviews
(Listed in order of informal interviews conducted)

Name	Affiliation	Date of Interview	Organization/Level of Seniority	Gender	Interview Duration (hh:mm:ss)	Location
Andrew Breitbart	Former Editor at <i>The Drudge Report</i>	01/12/2011	Former Editor at <i>The Drudge Report</i>	Male	2:36:50	Los Angeles
Jonathan Martin	Discussed “The Drudge Effect” during our interview	09/20/2011	Senior Political Reporter, <i>POLITICO</i>	Male	0:03:47	Washington, D.C.
Jesse Lee	Online outreach and response to Drudge’s criticisms of Obama	9/30/2011	Director of Progressive Media and Online Response, The White House	Male	0:29:18	Washington, D.C.
Kenneth Olmstead	A reference to The Drudge Report in his report crashed PEW’s website	9/29/2011	Research Associate, PEW: The Project for Excellence in Journalism	Male	0:02:39	Washington, D.C.
Total Hours of Informal Interviews with Individuals Connected with Matt Drudge and/or <i>The Drudge Report</i>					3 hours, 12 minutes, 34 seconds	

*Conducted by telephone. Mr. Isikoff wanted to have a pre-interview call to discuss the parameters of the interview. He hung up the phone three times during our call as soon as I mentioned “Matt Drudge”. On the fourth attempt he spoke about Drudge.

Total Hours of Informal Interviews Conducted with Case Study Individuals	20 hours, 12 minutes and 15 seconds
--	-------------------------------------

Formal (Non-Case Study) Interviews

- Listed in order of formal interviews conducted

Name	Date of Interview	Organization/Level of Seniority	Gender	Interview Duration (hh:mm:ss)	Location	
<i>POLITICO</i>						
Jonathan Martin	20/9/2011	Senior Political Reporter	Male	1:48:39	Washington, D.C.	
Jacqueline Klingebiel	29/9/2011	Former Political Reporter	Female	3:06:15	Washington, D.C.	
Total Hours of Formal Interviews with Current and Former Employees at <i>POLITICO</i>				4 hours, 54 minutes, 54 seconds		
<i>The Washington Post</i>						
Steven Mufson	22/9/2011	Opinions Editor	Male	2:30:46	Washington, D.C.	
Hal Strauss	28/9/2011	Executive Producer, Editorial Producer Development	Male	4:29:34	Washington, D.C.	
Total Hours of Formal Interviews with Current Employees at <i>The Washington Post</i>				7 hours, 0 minutes, 20 seconds		
Michael Isikoff						
Michael Isikoff	9/29/2011	Author of <i>Uncovering Clinton: A Reporter's Story</i> (1999)	Male	0:35:18	Washington, D.C.*	
		National investigative correspondent, <i>NBC News</i>				
Total Hours of Formal Interviews with the author of <i>Uncovering Clinton: A Reporter's Story</i> (1999)				35 minutes, 18 seconds		
<i>Talking Points Memo</i>						
David Kurtz	14/11/2011	Managing Editor and Washington Bureau Chief	Male	1:51:36	Washington, D.C.	
Total Hours of Formal Interviews with an Employee of One of the First Online Blogs – <i>Talking Points Memo</i>				1 hour, 51 minutes, 36 seconds		
Coding I.D.	<i>ThinkProgress.Org</i>					
n/a	Faiz Shakir	14/11/2011	Editor-in-Chief and Vice-President, Centre for American Progress	Male	3:06:10	Washington, D.C.
TPM1	Reporter (anonymous)	14/11/2011	Investigative Reporter	Male	0:42:50	Washington, D.C.
TPF2	Editor (anonymous)	14/11/2011	Senior Editor	Female	0:58:12	Washington, D.C.
Total Hours of Formal Interviews with Employees at <i>ThinkProgress.org</i>				4 hours, 47 minutes and 12 seconds		
Coding I.D.	<i>The Daily Beast</i>					
n/a	Andrew Kirk	18/11/2011	Head of Communications	Male	0:46:27	New York
n/a	Allison Yarrow	18/11/2011	Assignment Editor	Female	0:35:09	New York
n/a	Brian Ries	18/11/2011	Social Media Editor	Male	0:17:56	New York
n/a	Joyce Tang	18/11/2011	Outreach Editor	Female	0:48:42	New York
DBM1	Editor (anonymous)	18/11/2011	Senior Director, Digital Strategy	Male	0:51:39	New York

DBM2	Editor (anonymous)	18/11/2011	Senior Editor	Male	0:22:40	New York
DBM3	Reporter (anonymous)	18/11/2011	Political Reporter	Male	1:03:45	New York
DBF4	Reporter (anonymous)	18/11/2011	Political Reporter	Female	0:43:08	New York
DBF5	Reporter (anonymous)	18/11/2011	Investigative Reporter	Female	0:21:12	New York
DBM6	Reporter (anonymous)	18/11/2011	General Assignment Reporter	Male	0:38:10	New York
DBF7	Reporter (anonymous)	18/11/2011	General Assignment Reporter	Female	0:25:06	New York
Total Hours of Formal Interviews with Employees of <i>The Daily Beast</i>					6 hours, 53 minutes, 54 seconds	
TIME						
Mark Halperin		05/10/2011	Co-Author (with John Heilemann) of <i>Game Change: Obama and the Clintons, McCain and Palin, and the Race of a Lifetime</i> (2010)**	Male	2:56:29	New York
Total Hours of Formal Interviews with the Author of <i>Game Change: Obama and the Clintons, McCain and Palin, and the Race of a Lifetime</i>					2 hours, 56 minutes and 29 seconds	
The Sartorialist						
Scott Schuman		18/10/2011	Founder and CEO	Male	3:13:58	New York
Garance Doré		18/10/2011	Reporter	Female	0:32:04	New York
Total Hours of Formal Interviews with <i>The Sartorialist</i>					3 hours, 46 minutes and 2 seconds	
Gawker						
<i>Coding I.D.</i>						
n/a	Gaby Darbyshire	17/11/2011	Chief Operating Officer and Chief Legal Counsel	Female	3:56:08	New York
n/a	Writer (anonymous)	24/10/2011	Staff Writer	Male	0:41:40	New York
n/a	Remy Stern	24/10/2011	Editor-in-Chief	Male	0:34:19	New York
n/a	John Cook	24/10/2011	Investigations Editor	Male	0:25:03	New York
GF1	Reporter (anonymous)	24/10/2011	Gossip Reporter	Female	0:16:53	New York
GM2	Editor (anonymous)	24/10/2011	Associate Editor	Male	0:21:57	New York
GF3	Editor (anonymous)	24/10/2011	Associate Editor	Female	0:33:59	New York
GM4	Writer (anonymous)	24/10/2011	Staff Writer	Male	0:29:14	New York
GM5	Reporter (anonymous)	17/11/2011	Economic Reporter	Male	0:55:01	New York
GM6	Editor (anonymous)	17/11/2011	Associate Editor	Male	0:17:35	New York
GM7	Writer (anonymous)	17/11/2011	Senior Writer	Male	0:48:12	New York
Total Hours of Formal Interviews with Gawker					9 hours, 20 minutes and 1 second	
VanityFair.com						
Chris Rovzar		10/11/2011	Digital Editor	Male	0:59:23	New York
David Friend		10/11/2011	Creative Director	Male	0:15:21	New York
Total Hours of Formal Interviews with VanityFair.com					1 hour, 14 minutes and 44 seconds	
GQ						
Michael Hainey		11/11/2011	Deputy Editor	Male	2:06:47	New York
Total Hours of Formal Interviews with <i>GQ</i>					2 hours, 6 minutes and 47 seconds	

					seconds
<i>Mashable</i>					
Ben Parr	05/12/2011	Technology Journalist (former employee at <i>Mashable</i>)	Male	1:35:02	New York
Total Hours of Formal Interviews with Past Employees at <i>Mashable</i>				1 hour, 35 minutes and 2 seconds	
<i>Coding I.D.</i>	<i>ProPublica</i>				
Mike Webb	30/12/2011	Vice-President of Communications	Male	0:38:11	New York
PPF1	Reporter (anonymous)	30/12/2011	General Reporter	Female	0:56:42 New York
Total Hours of Formal Interviews with Employees at ProPublica				1 hour and 34 minutes and 53 seconds	
<i>New York Magazine</i>					
Jonathan Chait	7/12/2014	Commentator and Writer	Male	0:40:52	Washington, D.C.
Total Hours of Formal Interviews with Employees at <i>New York Magazine</i>				40 minutes and 52 seconds	
<i>NewYorkTimes.com</i>					
Anahad O'Connor	8/12/2014	Reporter	Male	0:53:21	New York
Total Hours of Formal Interviews with Employees at <i>NewYorkTimes.com</i>				53 minutes, 21 seconds	
<i>Technorati</i>					
David Sifry	14/10/2011	Founder and CEO	Male	2:15:39	San Francisco* **
Total Hours of Formal Interviews with Employees at <i>Technorati</i>				2 hours, 15 minutes, 39 seconds	

*Conducted by telephone. Mr. Isikoff wanted to have a pre-interview call to discuss the parameters of the interview. He hung up the phone four times during our call as soon as I mentioned "Matt Drudge". On the fourth attempt he spoke about Drudge.

**Game Change discusses the roles played by Matt Drudge and Arianna Huffington in Barak Obama's Presidential Campaign in 2008

***Conducted by telephone as Mr. Sifry was in San Francisco

Total Hours of Formal Interviews Conducted with Non-Case Study Individuals	52 hours, 27 minutes and 4 seconds
--	------------------------------------

Informal (Non-Case Study) Interviews

- Listed in order of informal interviews conducted

Name	Date of Interview	Organization/Level of Seniority	Gender	Interview Duration (hh:mm:ss)	Location	
<i>POLITICO</i>						
Jacqueline Klingebiel	29/9/2011	Former Political Reporter	Female	0:53:10	Washington, D.C.	
Total Hours of Informal Interviews with Current and Former Employees at <i>POLITICO</i>				53 minutes, 10 seconds		
<i>The Washington Post</i>						
Steven Mufson	22/9/2011	Opinions Editor	Male	0:31:18	Washington, D.C.	
Total Hours of Informal Interviews with Current Employees at <i>The Washington Post</i>				31 minutes, 18 seconds		
Coding I.D.	<i>ThinkProgress.Org</i>					
n/a	Faiz Shakir	14/11/2011	Editor-in-Chief and Vice-President, Centre for American Progress	Male	0:09:29	Washington, D.C.
TPF2	Editor (anonymous)	14/11/2011	Senior Editor	Female	0:04:45	Washington, D.C.
Total Hours of Informal Interviews with Employees at <i>ThinkProgress.org</i>				14 minutes and 14 seconds		
Coding I.D.	<i>The Daily Beast</i>					
n/a	Andrew Kirk	18/11/2011	Head of Communications	Male	1:09:36	New York
n/a	Brian Ries	18/11/2011	Social Media Editor	Male	0:03:12	New York
n/a	Joyce Tang	18/11/2011	Outreach Editor	Female	0:23:01	New York
DBM3	Reporter (anonymous)	18/11/2011	Political Reporter	Male	0:47:40	New York
DBF7	Reporter (anonymous)	18/11/2011	General Assignment Reporter	Female	0:25:06	New York
Total Hours of Informal Interviews with Employees of <i>The Daily Beast</i>				2 hours, 48 minutes, 35 seconds		
<i>The Sartorialist</i>						
Scott Schuman	18/10/2011	Founder and CEO	Male	0:34:11	New York	
Garance Doré	18/10/2011	Reporter	Female	0:05:46	New York	
Total Hours of Informal Interviews with <i>The Sartorialist</i>				39 minutes and 57 seconds		
Coding I.D.	<i>Gawker</i>					
n/a	Writer (anonymous)	24/10/2011	Staff Writer	Male	0:25:02	New York
n/a	John Cook	24/10/2011	Investigations Editor	Male	0:14:31	New York
GF1	Reporter (anonymous)	24/10/2011	Gossip Reporter	Female	0:47:33	New York
GF3	Editor (anonymous)	24/10/2011	Associate Editor	Female	0:06:17	New York
GM4	Writer (anonymous)	24/10/2011	Staff Writer	Male	0:51:44	New York
Total Hours of Informal Interviews with <i>Gawker</i>				2 hours, 25 minutes and 7 seconds		

<i>VanityFair.com</i>					
Chris Rovzar	10/11/2011	Digital Editor	Male	0:08:10	New York
Total Hours of Informal Interviews with <i>VanityFair.com</i>				8 minutes and 10 seconds	
<i>GQ</i>					
Michael Hainey	11/11/2011	Deputy Editor	Male	2:06:47	New York
Total Hours of Informal Interviews with <i>GQ</i>				2 hours, 6 minutes and 47 seconds	
<i>Coding I.D.</i>	<i>ProPublica</i>				
n/a	Mike Webb	30/12/2011	Vice-President of Communications	Male	0:02:23 New York
Total Hours of Informal Interviews with Employees at <i>ProPublica</i>				2 minutes and 23 seconds	
<i>NewYorkTimes.com</i>					
Anahad O'Connor	8/12/2014	Reporter	Male	1:00:04	New York
Total Hours of Informal Interviews with Employees at <i>NewYorkTimes.com</i>				1 hour, 0 minutes and 4 seconds	
<i>Technorati</i>					
David Sifry	14/10/2011	Founder and CEO	Male	0:09:56	San Francisco*
Total Hours of Informal Interviews with Employees at <i>Technorati</i>				9 minutes and 56 seconds	

*Conducted by telephone as Mr. Sifry was in San Francisco

Total Hours of Informal Interviews Conducted with Non-Case Study Individuals	10 hours, 59 minutes, 41 seconds
--	----------------------------------

Formal (Political Player) Interviews

- Listed in order of formal interviews conducted

Name	Date of Interview	Organization/Level of Seniority	Gender	Interview Duration (hh:mm:ss)	Location
<i>The White House</i>					
Jesse Lee	30/9/2011	Director of Progressive Media and Online Response	Male	1:46:59	Washington, D.C.
Total Hours of Formal Interviews with White House Employees				1 hours, 46 minutes and 59 seconds	
<i>New York Digital Office</i>					
Rachel Sterne	18/10/2011	New York Digital Office (Mayor's Office)*	Female	3:41:37	New York
Total Hours of Formal Interviews with New York Digital Office				3 hours, 41 minutes, 37 seconds	
<i>Howard Dean Campaign for President</i>					
David Weinberger	17/12/2011	Senior Internet Advisor for Howard Dean's 2004 Presidential Campaign**	Male	0:25:29	Boston
Joe Trippi	18/12/2011	Campaign Manager for Howard Dean's 2004 Presidential Campaign***	Male	0:41:53	New York
Total Hours of Formal Interviews with Former Campaign Workers from Howard Dean's Campaign				1 hour, 7 minutes and 36 seconds	

*Rachel Sterne was the Founder and CEO (from 2006-2010) of *GroundReport*, a crowdsourced news start-up. Many cite *GroundReport* as one of the earliest examples of citizen journalism.

**In addition to being part of Howard Dean's 2004 Presidential Campaign, David Weinberger is the author of *Small Pieces Loosely Joined: A Unified Theory of the Web* (2002).

***In addition to being part of Howard Dean's 2004 Presidential Campaign, Joe Trippi is the author of *The Revolution Will Not Be Televised: Democracy, the Internet, and the Overthrow of Everything* (2004).

Total Hours of Formal Interviews Conducted with Political Players	6 hours, 35 minutes and 58 seconds
---	------------------------------------

Informal (Political Player) Interviews

- Listed in order of informal interviews conducted

Name	Date of Interview	Organization/Level of Seniority	Gender	Interview Duration (hh:mm:ss)	Location
<i>The White House</i>					
Jesse Lee	30/9/2011	Director of Progressive Media and Online Response	Male	0:10:19	Washington, D.C.
Total Hours of Informal Interviews with White House Employees				10 minutes and 19 seconds	
<i>New York Digital Office</i>					
Rachel Sterne	18/10/2011	New York Digital Office (Mayor's Office)*	Female	0:35:03	New York
Total Hours of Informal Interviews with New York Digital Office				35 minutes, 3 seconds	
<i>Howard Dean Campaign for President</i>					
Joe Trippi	18/12/2011	Campaign Manager for Howard Dean's 2004 Presidential Campaign**	Male	0:12:55	New York
Total Hours of Informal Interviews with Former Campaign Workers from Howard Dean's Campaign				12 minutes and 55 seconds	

*Rachel Sterne was the Founder and CEO (from 2006-2010) of *GroundReport*, a crowdsourced news start-up. Many cite *GroundReport* as one of the earliest examples of citizen journalism.

**In addition to being part of Howard Dean's 2004 Presidential Campaign, Joe Trippi is the author of *The Revolution Will Not Be Televised: Democracy, the Internet, and the Overthrow of Everything* (2004).

Total Hours of Informal Interviews Conducted with Political Players	58 minutes and 17 seconds
---	---------------------------

Formal (Field Expert) Interviews

- Listed in order of formal interviews conducted

Name	Date of Interview	Organization/Level of Seniority	Gender	Interview Duration (hh:mm:ss)	Location
<i>The Project for Excellence in Journalism</i>					
Kenneth Olmstead	29/09/2011	Research Associate	Male	2:21:26	Washington, D.C.
Total Hours of Formal Interviews with Employees at <i>The Project for Excellence in Journalism</i>				2 hours, 21 minutes and 26 seconds	
<i>Columbia University</i>					
Dr. Michael Schudson	06/10/2011	Faculty, School of Journalism	Male	0:51:49	New York
Dr. Herbert Gans	12/10/2011	Faculty, Department of Sociology	Male	1:08:24	New York
Total Hours of Formal Interviews with Relevant Faculty at Columbia University				2 hours, 0 minutes and 13 seconds	
<i>New York University</i>					
Dr. Jay Rosen	07/12/2011	Faculty, Department of Journalism	Male	0:47:11	New York
Total Hours of Formal Interviews with Relevant Faculty at New York University's Department of Journalism				47 minutes and 11 seconds	
Total Hours of Formal Interviews Conducted with Field Experts				5 hours, 8 minutes, 50 seconds	

Informal (Field Expert) Interviews

- Listed in order of informal interviews conducted

Name	Date of Interview	Organization/Level of Seniority	Gender	Interview Duration (hh:mm:ss)	Location
<i>The Project for Excellence in Journalism</i>					
Kenneth Olmstead	29/09/2011	Research Associate	Male	0:15:28	Washington, D.C.
Total Hours of Informal Interviews with Employees at <i>The Project for Excellence in Journalism</i>				15 minutes and 28 seconds	
<i>Columbia University</i>					
Dr. Herbert Gans	12/10/2011	Faculty, Department of Sociology	Male	0:04:39	New York
Total Hours of Informal Interviews with Relevant Faculty at Columbia University				4 minutes and 39 seconds	
<i>New York University</i>					
Dr. Jay Rosen	07/12/2011	Faculty, Department of Journalism	Male	0:31:25	New York
Total Hours of Informal Interviews with Relevant Faculty at New York University's Department of Journalism				31 minutes and 25 seconds	

Total Hours of Informal Interviews Conducted with Field Experts	51 minutes and 32 seconds
---	---------------------------

Appendix II: An example of notes from the field

(November 14 & 18, 2011)

DAVID KURTZ
 - Managing Editor TPM
 - Washington Bureau Chief
 Talking Points Memo
 - digital native news organization
 - survival reporting
 * key stories to readers; this reports # first
 - objectivity/transparency: came out
 - conversation on going dynamic
 - consume the news
 - new developments
 - break down the wall with the reader
 [Reader] - high level information
 - highly engaged/active in politics/affair
 - coastal audience, still capt
 * with levels of moderation
 - want an insider perspective
 - overwhelmed for the
 - higher engagement; experts (see US
 decision)
 autonomous; netroots (2005)
 - strong editorial view
 - D.C. reps that cloak themselves
 as insiders
 - experience insight
 - in D.C. but not of D.C.
 - play within the space
 - audience in this space
 public opinion: summarizing
 - statistically valid; base
 - results
 * poll track; legitimate survey

* limited to the national political conversation / deep influence
 "BLOG:"
 - editor = blog
 - Josh & David kinds
 - started as a "blogging"
 - "iterative"
 - frequent updates
 - "not define; form of
 "evolution"
 - opinionating = blogging
 - Josh Marshall
 - takes on the personality of bloggers
 - hard to differentiate those
 folks
 Industry: Matt Yglesias (TPM Cafe)
 Ezra Klein
 Ken Smith
 Greg Sargent
 from blogs to hybrids
 * multiply the effects of
 what is going on
 * mid-2000s voices popping up
 out of nowhere
 a) talented / resource
 * marginalized happening in a
 different way
 TPM: - advertises solely, keep a %
 - evolved (log ads) 2009:
 - investment
 - blog ad wholesaler
 - larger advertiser (in-house)

Andrew Kirk, Daily Beast

a) cheat sheet: Sam
 - real time flipped in the evening
 ≠ geo-centric
 * all in one space
 - 18-70 cheats

b) live stream video
 * election cycle
 * salubrious live-streaming
 * stories: congregate
 - aggregate: 70% original
 30% original
 * sole aggregation is cheat sheet

proactive
 * "poli-partisan": readers engage
 * liberal viewpoint
 * Mark McKinnon
 * moderation a chat
 * Andrew Sullivan - The Dish - bedman
 * populate: read maps
 * online front trails how people get in
 * understand the reader
 * customized advertising
 = "online news source/magazine"
 * focus on mag style
 * diverse content above

* folded in the UK
 - "daily": more viral/brant
 * content from there

* DSK accusation: spoke to by email

Young / vibrant / viral * talking points via video

partnership with GMA/ABC (opeds)

10.3 million: 136% use, non metrics

UKL "controversy" tracked/regulated

10.3 million months security community
 * Twitter subs - pollination
 "social engagement"

Scoops: "Investigative Journalism"
 * DSK interview - 1 crew
 * 7 m Afghanistan (face mutilated by inlaws)

Obama selling bunker bombs

Interview with Raja Natan (broader Wall Street reader)

Simpsons: White House & billionaire donors
 Steve obs. Leasing surgery
 bin Laden special CIA report

Structure: Hudson's
 VP of news / circulation director
 Stephen Colvin (CEO) - hand clearly
 - srpsales & sales marketing
 - through

Magazine = 2 & deputies (Magazine)
 Editorial Ops. Justin
 Jane Spence

Role: huge part of compensation
 - 60-70% week
 - sliced on other blogs
 - "read this, skip that"

Appendix III: Tools used during fieldwork

1 - "Project Overview" (Yin 1994: 64): Making sense of some of the completed interviews by identifying emerging categories for the project

COMPLETED INTERVIEWS:	DATE	TRANSCRIBED
Jonathan Martin (POLITICO) ✓	9/20/2011	✓ (18:39)
Alan Rosenblatt (ThinkProgress) ✓	9/21/2011	✓ (30:16)
Howard Fineman (Huffington Post)	9/21/2011	ne ✓ (51:01)
Steven Mufson (Washington Post)	9/22/2011	ne ✓ (23:46)
Hal Strauss (Washington Post)	9/28/2011	ne ✓ (49:34)
Kenny Olmstead (PEW-RESEARCH)	9/29/2011	ne ✓ (22:26)
Michael Isikoff (Newsweek/NBC)	9/29/2011	ne ✓ (4x) 35:18
Jesse Lee (White House)	9/30/2011	ne ✓ (46:59)
Dr. Aaron Barlow (academic)	10/04/2011	ne Director of
Lloyd Moore (Daily Beast)	10/04/2011	ne Director of
Mark Halperin (TIME)	10/05/2011	ne ✓ (2:56:59)
Michelle K... (Huffington Post)	10/06/2011	ne ✓ (2:01:36)
Dr. Michael Schudson (Columbia)	10/06/2011	ne ✓ (5:44)
Dr. Herbert I... (Columbia)	10/12/2011	ne ✓ (1:08:24)
David Sifry (Lechtorati)	10/14/2011	ne ✓ (2:15:39)
Scott Schuman (The Sartorialist)	10/18/2011	✓ (3:13:58)
Remy Stern (Hauker) ✓	10/24/2011	Game
John Cook (Hauker) ✓	10/24/2011	Change:
Chris Rovzar (Vanity Fair)	11/10/2011	ne ✓ (59:23)
Rachel Sterne (NYC Digital Office)	11/11/2011	ne ✓ (3:41:37)
Michael Hainey (GQ)	11/11/2011	ne ✓ (2:06:47)
Faiy Shakir (ThinkProgress)	11/14/2011	ne ✓ (3:06:10)
DAVID KURTZ (Talking Points Memo)	11/14/2011	ne ✓ (4:51:36)
Gaby Darbyshire (Hauker)	11/17/2011	ne ✓ (3:56:00)
David Weinberger (Dean 2004)	11/17/2011	ne ✓ (3:56:00)

2- "Field procedures" (Yin 1994: 64): An example of notes taken during a formal interview

[David Sifun, Teekhorati]

→ how do you measure influence?

- Founder/CEO of 1st 5 years
- why? 2002 = Lynex Care
 - content management tool called "blogs" on other blogs
 - ego-gratification
 - other things going on
 - online communities, emerging
 - geek & the internet had slipped into not only an old paradigm of documents & libraries
 - global communication @ its ♥

one motivation: vanity

- mentioned his name
- supposed thing was that people wanted to know who sleep/looks at them

BLOGS characteristics

- content management system that has certain protocols
- # supports
- set of common technologies
- post (more than one person)

guy in pajamas stigma (initially)

news sites & media literacy surrounding the online world

difference:

- blogs are more individual
- people formerly known as sources going out into

“Field procedures” continued:

Connecting words of the day with developing themes

(a sample from my fieldwork notebook)

* "to know it when you see it" = network (blogs)

→ technological determinism (Politico)

niche outlets (POLITICO) → 2008 election

• Jonathan Martin: "blogs are just a word to describe online reporting"

→ "She (Arianna Huffington) has certainly put together a nice business and she is making a lot of money, but she did so by selling 7,000 volunteers to AOL."

- DR. ALAN ROSENBLATT (Thinkprogress.org / HuffPo contributor)

* blogs and Sunday morning talk shows

[Key: "Dudge Moment" → Dudge: coining stories from the news items of the establishment]

* Interest group media

* Niche Market Media

* professionalization of blogs

→ blogs are not public opinion, they are an influence on public opinion

(Mukson: symbiotic relationship WaPo vs. HuffPo)

→ not public opinion itself, reshape the media landscape

[Gotta Journalism] → where do blogs fit? outsiders

* bloggers as outsiders

→ insider vs. outsider status

→ junkyard dog journalism

→ Technorati's "Authority Index"

[PLUTOCRACY rule by the wealthy]

→ Washington Post reporters → The Daily Beast

→ Clinton Lumsden scandal → Dudge = traffic

→ "The Consensus of Authority"

→ political scandal and online news

→ why the correct platform?

- Craigslist Congressmen (Nipples)

- Clinton - Lumsden (Dudge)

→ Sunday talkshows and blogs (?)

3- “Case Study questions” (Yin 1994: 64): See Appendix IV

4- "Outline of the narrative" (Yin 1994: 64): Outlining the framework (a sample from my fieldwork notebook)

The Proximity Paradigm: (framework)

Literature:

Benson: "within the field of journalism, there is permanent competition to appropriate the leadership, of course, but also to appropriate what is thought to secure leadership, in other words, (i) the earliest access to news, (ii) the SCOOP, (iii) exclusive information, (iv) distinctive rarity, (v) big names, and so on" (2005: 44)

re-working him

How legitimacy is achieved

PRINCIPLES OF LEGITIMACY
"NORMATIVE STRUCTURE"

"big names" = Jaded status

"the SCOOP"

~~What sources~~ Sources

symbolic (Hartley)
"breaking news"

Beetham: legitimacy

- * ACCESS (exclusion)
- * SOURCES (of authority)

validity according to rules
the justifiability of rules
(in terms of shared beliefs)

expressed consent
(on the part of those qualified to give it)

"legitimacy deriving from an authoritative source" (pg. 70)

"... each will have its respective guardians and interpreters who enjoy a special prestige b/c of connection"

Latour Actor-Network Theory

"an actant can be anything provided it is granted to be the source of the action"

Bourdieu = CAPITAL = symbolic capital

Appendix IV: Interview guides

GUIDE FOR CASE STUDY ORGANIZATIONS

Organizations Interviewed/Discussed by Relevant Individuals*: (listed in order of interviews conducted)

- *The Huffington Post*
- *Breitbart.com*
- *The Drudge Report*

*I interviewed individuals that had interacted (both professionally and personally) with Drudge

Reminders:

- Tape recorder and notebook
- Consent form signed
 - Explain and answer any questions concerning the form and the use of the interviewee's name/position within the organization
- Business card given
- Introduce research topic (broadly) – what are the dynamics of/within online news organizations?

Questions:

[Phase I: blogging vs. journalism]

- How would you describe the blogosphere?
- What differentiates blogging from online journalism?
- Who do you think are the most influential bloggers today?
 - Has this changed over the last 3 -4 years?
 - How?
- How do you see your organization's role within this online space?
- How would you define public opinion?
- Is public opinion different in an online space?

[Phase II: gaining an organizational understanding]

- Can you explain your role and responsibilities at the organization?
- Who do you report to (within the organization)?
 - Do you report to anyone outside of the organization (i.e. shareholders, Board of Directors, etc.)?
- Why do you produce online news?
- Who do you think you are writing for?
- Do you think your readers are primarily/overwhelmingly American?
 - Do you know this?
 - If so, how?
- How do you maintain your space within the field of online news?

[Phase III: industry insights]

- Do you think some online news organizations are more powerful/influential than others?
 - Why?
 - Which ones?

- What do you think of Arianna Huffington and *The Huffington Post*? (ask to interviewees external to *The Huffington Post*)
- What do you think of Matt Drudge and *The Drudge Report* (ask to interviewees external to *The Drudge Report*)
- What do you think of Andrew Breitbart and *Breitbart.com* (ask to interviewees external to *Breitbart.com*)

[Phase IV: positioning narratives and opinions]

- How do you see the relation between what you're doing and what mainstream media do (i.e. traditional newspapers)?
- Do you think what you do and what other online news organizations do is as important, or more important than what the mainstream do?
 - If so, why?
- Do you think that online journalism advances public opinion on certain topics?
 - Why/why not?
- Do you think that blogging advances public opinion on certain topics?
 - Why/why not?
- How do you see your organization in terms of its capacity to express opinions in an online space?
 - Are there any topics that are off-limit?
- Can you give a specific example where you think you influenced public opinion?

[Phase V: logistics]

- What is the structure of your organization?
- Who decides what is going to be published?
- How do you find your stories? Are you influenced by what other online news organizations are writing about?
 - Are you influenced by what's being discussed in the mainstream media?
- How do you find sources for your stories?
 - Are they individuals within your existing network?
- What is the capacity to which the editorial and business departments interact?
- What kind of feedback do you get from your readers?
 - Do you always read it?
 - What do you do with this? Do you track it?
- Do you interact with online journalists at other organizations?
 - If so, how?
- How does your organization make money?
 - Do you seek out advertisers or do they approach you?
- Are your writers paid?

GUIDE FOR NON-CASE STUDY ORGANIZATIONS

Organizations Interviewed: (listed in order of interviews conducted)

- *Politico*
- *The Washington Post*
- *Newsweek*
- *ThinkProgress.com*
- *Talking Points Memo*
- *The Daily Beast*
- *TIME*
- *The Sartorialist*
- *Technorati*
- *Gawker*
- *VanityFair.com*
- *GQ.com*
- *Mashable*
- *ProPublica*
- *New York Magazine*
- *NewYorkTimes.com*

Reminders:

- Tape recorder and notebook
- Consent form signed
 - Explain and answer any questions concerning the form and the use of the interviewee's name/position within the organization
- Business card given
- Introduce research topic (broadly) – what are the dynamics of/within online news organizations?

Questions:

[Phase I: blogging vs. journalism]

- How would you describe the blogosphere?
- What differentiates blogging from online journalism?
- Who do you think are the most influential bloggers today?
 - Has this changed over the last 3 -4 years?
 - How?
- How do you see your organization's role within this online space?
- How would you define public opinion?
- Is public opinion different in an online space?

[Phase II: gaining an organizational understanding]

- Can you explain your role and responsibilities at the organization?
- Who do you report to (within the organization)?
 - Do you report to anyone outside of the organization (i.e. shareholders, Board of Directors, etc.)?
- Why do you produce online news?
- Who do you think you are writing for?

- Do you think your readers are primarily/overwhelmingly American?
 - Do you know this?
 - If so, how?
- How do you maintain your space within the field of online news?

[Phase III: industry insights]

- Do you think some online news organizations are more powerful/influential than others?
 - Why?
 - Which ones?
- What do you think of Arianna Huffington and *The Huffington Post*?
- What do you think of Matt Drudge and *The Drudge Report*?
- What do you think of Andrew Breitbart and *Breitbart.com*?

[Phase IV: positioning narratives and opinions]

- How do you see the relation between what you're doing and what mainstream media do (i.e. traditional newspapers)?
- Do you think what you do and what other online news organizations do is as important, or more important than what the mainstream do?
 - If so, why?
- Do you think that online journalism advances public opinion on certain topics?
 - Why/why not?
- Do you think that blogging advances public opinion on certain topics?
 - Why/why not?
- How do you see your organization in terms of its capacity to express opinions in an online space?
 - Are there any topics that are off-limit?
- Can you give a specific example where you think you influenced public opinion?

[Phase V: logistics]

- What is the structure of your organization?
- Who decides what is going to be published?
- How do you find your stories? Are you influenced by what other online news organizations are writing about?
 - Are you influenced by what's being discussed in the mainstream media?
- How do you find sources for your stories?
 - Are they individuals within your existing network?
- What is the capacity to which the editorial and business departments interact?
- What kind of feedback do you get from your readers?
 - Do you always read it?
 - What do you do with this? Do you track it?
- Do you interact with online journalists at other organizations?
 - If so, how?
- How does your organization make money?
 - Do you seek out advertisers or do they approach you?
- Are your writers paid?

GUIDE FOR POLITICAL PLAYERS

Sources Interviewed: (listed in order of interviews conducted)

- Jesse Lee (Director of Progressive Media and Online Response, The White House)
- David Weinberger (Senior Internet Advisor to Howard Dean's 2004 Presidential Campaign, and author of *Small Pieces Loosely Joined: A Unified Theory of the Web*)
- Joe Trippi (Campaign Manager for Howard Dean's 2004 Presidential Campaign, and author of *The Revolution Will Not Be Televised: Democracy, the Internet, and the Overthrow of Everything*)

Reminders:

- Tape recorder and notebook
- Consent form signed
 - Explain and answer any questions concerning the form and the use of the interviewee's name/position within the organization
- Business card given
- Introduce research topic (broadly) – what are the dynamics of/within online news organizations?

Questions:

[Phase I: blogging vs. journalism]

- How would you describe the blogosphere?
- What differentiates blogging from online journalism?
- Who do you think are the most influential bloggers today?
 - Has this changed over the last 3 -4 years?
 - How?
- How would you define public opinion?
- Is public opinion different in an online space?

[Phase II: industry insights]

- Can you explain your role and responsibilities at the organization?
- Do you think some online news organizations are more powerful/influential than others?
 - Why?
 - Which ones?
- What do you think of Arianna Huffington and *The Huffington Post*?
- What do you think of Matt Drudge and *The Drudge Report*
- What do you think of Andrew Breitbart and *Breitbart.com*
- What do you think of *POLITICO*?
- What do you think of *Gawker*?

[Phase III: positioning narratives and opinions]

- Do you think there is a relationship between online news organizations and traditional journalism?
 - If so, what is it?

- If not, why?
 - Is one more important than the other in terms of producing news?
- Do you think that online journalism advances public opinion on certain topics?
 - Why/why not?
- Do you think that blogging advances public opinion on certain topics?
 - Why/why not?
- Can you give a specific example where you think that an online news organization influenced public opinion by publishing a specific story?

GUIDE FOR FIELD EXPERTS

Sources Interviewed: (listed in order of interviews conducted)

- Kenneth Olmstead (Researcher, The Project for Excellence in Journalism)
- Dr. Alan Rosenblatt (Researcher and academic, ThinkProgress.org)
- Dr. Michael Schudson (Faculty, Columbia University School of Journalism, author of *The Power of News* and *The Sociology of News*)
- Dr. Herbert Gans (Faculty, Columbia University, and author of *Democracy and the News*)
- Dr. Jay Rosen (Faculty, Department of Journalism at New York University, author of *PressThink*, a prominent blog, and a contributor to *The Huffington Post*)

Reminders:

- Tape recorder and notebook
- Consent form signed
 - Explain and answer any questions concerning the form and the use of the interviewee's name/position within the organization
- Business card given
- Introduce research topic (broadly) – what are the dynamics of/within online news organizations?

Questions:

[Phase I: blogging vs. journalism]

- How would you describe the blogosphere?
- What differentiates blogging from online journalism?
- Who do you think are the most influential bloggers today?
 - Has this changed over the last 3 -4 years?
 - How?
- How would you define public opinion?
- Is public opinion different in an online space?

[Phase II: industry insights]

- Can you explain your role and responsibilities at the organization?
- Do you think some online news organizations are more powerful/influential than others?
 - Why?
 - Which ones?
- What do you think of Arianna Huffington and *The Huffington Post*?
- What do you think of Matt Drudge and *The Drudge Report*
- What do you think of Andrew Breitbart and *Breitbart.com*
- What do you think of *POLITICO*?
- What do you think of *Gawker*?

[Phase III: positioning narratives and opinions]

- Do you think there is a relationship between online news organizations and traditional journalism?

- If so, what is it?
 - If not, why?
 - Is one more important than the other in terms of producing news?
- Do you think that online journalism advances public opinion on certain topics?
 - Why/why not?
- Do you think that blogging advances public opinion on certain topics?
 - Why/why not?
- Can you give a specific example where you think that an online news organization influenced public opinion by publishing a specific story?

Appendix V: Interviewee consent form



INTERVIEW CONSENT FORM

I agree to be interviewed for the purposes of Ms. Brooks' doctoral research through the Sociology Department at the University of Cambridge. The purpose and nature of the interview has been explained to me. I agree that the interview may be electronically recorded.

Any questions that I asked about the purpose and nature of the interview and research have been answered to my satisfaction.

I understand that this research will be published.

The respondent can discontinue the interview at anytime and without explanation.

Please select a) or b)

a) I agree that my name can be used and/or cited in Ms. Brooks' dissertation.

b) I do not wish my name to be used and/or cited, or my identity otherwise disclosed in Ms. Brooks' dissertation. As a result, the comments will be cited anonymously.

Name of interviewee _____

Signature of interviewee _____

Date _____

Appendix VI: Analyzing the data and developing a framework

The Proximity Paradigm: (framework) ✓

Literature:

Benson: "within the field of journalism, there is permanent competition to appropriate the leadership, of course, but also to appropriate what is thought to secure leadership, in other words, (i) the earliest access to news, (ii) the SCOOP, (iii) exclusive information, (iv) distinctive rarity, (v) big names, and so on" (2005: 44)

re-working

How legitimacy is achieved

PRINCIPLES OF LEGITIMACY
"NORMATIVE STRUCTURE"

"big names" = ^{affiliated status}

"the SCOOP"

~~Access to sources~~

Beetham: Legitimacy

* ACCESS (exclusion)

* SOURCES (of authority)

symbolic (Hartley)
"breaking news"

validity according to rules
the justifiability of rules
(in terms of shared beliefs)

expressed consent
(on the part of those qualified to give it)

"legitimacy deriving from an authoritative source" (pg. 70)
- "... each will have its respective guardian's and interpreters who enjoy a special prestige b/c of connection"

Actor-Network theory

• "an actant may be anything provided it is granted to be the source of the action"

Bourdieu: CAPITAL = symbolic capital

How do news organizations, born digitally, become legitimate? Are they part of the profession of journalists? **KEY THEMES:**

<p>A "Professionalism/Expert Status"</p> <p>Chapter 4 of dis.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Alvares/Vette (2003), Witschke Tunstall (1971), F. M. Ryan (2004) Bourdieu (1990), Frankforter Proff (1986) <p>→ "Public acceptance as a pursuit of pro. status"</p> <p>→ Bourdieu (1990) "perceived as professionals = cultural capital"</p> <p>(Key) professional designation = cultural capital</p> <p>Legitimacy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> → professional standards and hierarchical supervision → stock of cultural capital as the practical work necessary for professionalization → "the professional logic" → lack of omnibus character → "the absence of some institution/dyadic rel." → a identity crisis in professionalization → "how do they do online digital natives?" → a need for preservation <p>Fenton: "The world of news media has not yet established the ascendancy of dominant news brands"</p>	<p>B "Exclusives/Breaking News/Access"</p> <p>Chapter 3 of dis.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mabweazara (2011) Schudson (2009) Dominico (2008a) Romero (2005) <p>→ "access & structured and hierarchical" = social capital</p> <p>→ "privileged sources who wield social hegemony"</p> <p>→ "position themselves as specialists, stumps for the exclusive, as the trademark of online journalism"</p> <p>→ "the struggle for capital recognition and thus power"</p> <p>→ the exclusive story is valuable = position itself in a non-legal spot over its competitors</p> <p>→ breaking news = the cream of the news</p> <p>* dismantle the "profession" of journalists</p> <p>* Those organizations who dominate a field are generally those who successful, convert one form into the other, and in doing so, amass both 'social capital' of friendship and collaborative networks, and 'symbolic capital' through which their dominance is LEGITIMATED</p>
--	--

LITERATURE **with online journalism staying where it is, the tension is between online journalists and bloggers: 'legitimacy' fight!**

Sources

Chapter 5 of dis.

- Wesman (2004)
- Spain (2004)
- Ellis (2010) (Fenton)
- Wahy (2010)

Actor Network theory

→ human actors, networks, etc. create by new products and organizations

→ network news links to blogs

→ Wesley argues that all blogs were relying the media rather than a primary source

→ "through journal relationships have been non-optional" they seem to reflect need to determine political and cultural agenda of the moment

source-actors:

- source-actors: one regularly treated as legitimate, another as illegitimate, through to a further necessary essay (Baker)
- in types of sources "inter-gatherers"

Legitimation Elements:

- Tuchman (1978): "there is no conflict between the professional and the organization in newsworld, they both ultimately serve to legitimize the status quo... hegemony"
- * Online news organizations rely on the same technological infrastructure and network. The social structure of journalism (Tuchman's tenets) in order to produce a new product that is a hybrid of traditional journalism (facts) and blogging (opinion)
- the hybrid offers legitimate

→ Bozwardski:

```

graph TD
    Technology --> Organization
    Technology --> Communication
    Organization --- Communication
    
```

- * "The new online seems to be significantly informed by the relationship among the other groups that increasingly populate the news world" (2004:184) i.e. → **RELATIONSHIPS**
- Fenton: "legitimacy granted through a) media work (symbolic capital) b) symbolic capital within professional fields, such as doctors = **GAP**: affiliated work as granting legitimacy"
- * Allomorphic normative theory (online) journalism should be evaluated

Appendix VII: U.S. Political Campaign Donations from 1990 – 2010

(Amount in U.S. dollars)

Name	Leslie Mooves, CEO of <i>CBS</i>	
Total Donation	\$36,900.00	
Political Party Affiliation	Democrat	
Date of Contribution	Affiliation	Amount Donated
10/25/2010	Roy Blunt	\$2,400
05/17/2011	CBS Corporation Political Action Committee	\$5,000
06/25/2012	CBS Corporation Political Action Committee	\$5,000
10/25/2010	Rely on Your Beliefs Fund	\$5,000
10/26/2010	Missouri Republican State Committee – Federal	\$5,000
08/07/1998	Evan Bayh	\$500
02/11/1998	Thomas Daschle	\$1000
10/14/1998	Ernest Hollings	\$1000
01/23/1998	Mark Green	\$500
04/29/1997	John Kerry	\$1000
04/30/1997	Patrick Leahy	\$1000
04/30/1997	Patrick Leahy	\$1000
04/11/1997	Richard A. Sefhardt	\$1000
11/12/1999	Joseph Lieberman	\$1000
30/30/1998	Barry Gordon	\$500
09/08/2009	CBS Political Action Committee	\$5000
04/07/1999	Al Gore	\$1000

Name	Jeffrey Bewkes, CEO of <i>Time Warner</i>	
Total Donation	\$126, 900	
Political Party Affiliation	Democrat	
Date of Contribution	Affiliation	Amount Donated
11/04/2002	John Kerry	\$1000
02/25/1997	National Cable and Telecommunications Association Political Action Committee (NCTA PAC)	\$3000
04/01/1998	NCTA PAC	\$3000
06/16/2004	Howard Mills	\$1000
10/24/2006	James Webb	\$1000
10/13/2004	Barack Obama	\$1000

09/08/2008	Christopher Dodd	\$2300
03/21/2012	Time Warner	\$5000
12/02/1998	Robert Kerrey	\$1000
07/27/1999	Robert Kerrey	\$1000
11/26/2003	Chris Dodd	\$1000
05/06/2004	Rahm Emanuel	\$2000
05/10/2001	NCTA PAC	\$2000
09/24/1999	NCTA PAC	\$3000
04/17/2000	NCTA PAC	\$3000
06/28/2005	Edward Kennedy	\$1000
01/25/2002	Charles Schumer	\$1000
12/11/1997	AOL Time Warner	\$5000
11/12/2003	Thomas Daschle	\$1000
04/21/2004	Harold Ford	\$2000
04/21/2004	Harold Ford	\$2000
05/12/1997	Patrick Leahy	\$500
11/29/2001	Harry Reid	\$1000
10/15/1997	Ernest Hollings	\$500
10/23/2002	Ernest Hollings	\$1000
02/04/2007	Christopher Dodd	\$2300
02/04/2007	Christopher Dodd	\$2300
03/27/2002	NCTA PAC	\$2000
03/07/2006	NCTA PAC	\$5000
05/14/2008	NCTA PAC	\$5000
04/13/2010	NCTA PAC	\$5000
04/19/2011	NCTA PAC	\$5000
03/13/2012	NCTA PAC	\$5000
04/09/2009	NCTA PAC	\$5000
12/14/1999	John McCain	\$1000
11/05/1999	Al Gore	\$1000
11/05/1999	Al Gore	\$1000
03/14/2008	Time Warner Inc.	\$5000
02/25/2010	Time Warner Inc.	\$5000
02/25/2011	Time Warner Inc.	\$5000
12/19/2009	Time Warner Inc.	\$5000
08/25/2004	Time Warner Inc.	\$5000
04/21/2006	Time Warner Inc.	\$5000
04/10/2007	Time Warner Inc.	\$5000

Name	Tom Freston, CEO of <i>Viacom</i>	
Total Donation	\$66,004	
Political Party Affiliation	Democrat	
Date of Contribution	Affiliation	Amount Donated
10/13/2004	America Coming Together	\$204
09/25/1998	Charles Schumer	\$1000
03/23/1999	Al Gore	\$1000

03/25/1999	John McCain	\$1000
10/21/1998	Charles Robb	\$1000
03/23/1999	Al Gore	\$1000
03/28/2003	Patrick Leahy	\$1000
06/19/2007	Political Action Committee	\$5000
04/12/2009	Political Action Committee	\$5000
09/27/2003	Thomas Daschle	\$2000
05/27/2004	John Kerry	\$2000
03/13/2003	NCTA PAC	\$1000
03/31/2004	NCTA PAC	\$1000
12/13/2000	Charles Schumer	\$1000
12/13/2000	Charles Schumer	\$1000
03/18/2003	Charles Schumer	\$1000
03/18/2003	Charles Schumer	\$1000
03/18/2004	Victory Campaign 2004	\$5000
03/31/2004	NCTA PAC	\$1000
04/22/2006	Midwest Values PAC	\$1000
06/06/2005	Theodore Stevnes	\$2000
03/10/2005	NCTA PAC	\$2000
03/10/2005	NCTA PAC	\$5000
03/04/1998	Hilary Clinton	\$1000
09/13/2004	Thomas Daschle	\$1000
08/12/2010	Humane USA Political Action Committee	\$5000
04/24/2008	Al Franken	\$500
04/20/2006	Democratic Senatorial Campaign	\$1000
03/30/2007	Barack Obama	\$4600
03/20/2007	Christopher Dodd	\$2000

Name	Stephen Burke, CEO of <i>NBC</i>	
Total Donation	\$61,800	
Political Party Affiliation	Republican	
Date of Contribution	Affiliation	Amount Donated
04/04/2006	Dennis Hastert	\$2000
08/23/2004	Frederick Upton	\$2000
02/28/2006	NCTA PAC	\$5000
02/15/2005	NCTA PAC	\$5000
01/31/2007	Comcast Corporation and NBC Universal Political Action Committee (CC/NUPAC)	\$5000
09/26/2008	CC/NUPAC	\$5000
01/14/2009	CC/NUPAC	\$5000
03/09/2010	CC/NUPAC	\$5000

10/17/2006	Trust Team Republicans for Utilizing Sensible Tactics	\$1000
06/28/2010	Frederick Boucher	\$2400
03/15/2011	Comcast Corporation and NBC Universal PAC	\$5000
03/08/2012	CC and NBC PAC	\$5000
09/29/2008	National Republican Congressional Committee	\$1500
06/30/2007	Mitt Romney	\$2300
08/03/2005	National Republican Congressional Committee	\$2000
06/18/2007	Rudolph Giuliani	\$2300
01/29/2008	Mitt Romney	\$2300
04/27/1999	Al Gore	\$1000
05/03/2012	Mitt Romney	\$1000

Name	Robert Iger, CEO of <i>Walt Disney</i>	
Total Donation	\$325, 800	
Political Party Affiliation	Democrat	
Date of Contribution	Affiliation	Amount Donated
06/07/2000	Charles Rangel	\$1000
12/06/2001	Motion Picture Association of America Inc. PAC	\$1000
08/09/2002	MPAA Inc. PAC	\$1000
08/08/2009	Patrick Leahy	\$2300
06/26/2008	Mitch McConnell	\$2300
08/11/2010	Democratic State Central Committee of California	\$700
10/12/2004	Xavier Becerra	\$1000
10/12/2006	Harold Ford	\$1000
06/30/2008	Democratic Senatorial Campaign	\$2500
10/20/2009	Democratic Senatorial Campaign	\$2500
06/30/2011	Democratic Senatorial Campaign	\$2500
02/11/2003	Motion Picture Association of America	\$1000
10/12/2010	Motion Picture Association of America	\$5000
06/21/2007	Katrina Swett	\$1000
01/21/2005	Walt Disney Productions Employees	\$5000
04/13/2006	Walt Disney Productions Employees	\$5000
04/14/2000	Wilbert Tauzin	\$1000

06/28/2003	Christopher Dodd	\$1000
08/19/2002	Tim Johnson	\$1000
12/06/2006	Christopher Dodd	\$2000
10/21/2008	Gordon Harrid Smith	\$2300
02/28/2006	Democratic Senatorial Campaign	\$1000
08/21/2009	Dianne Feinstein	\$2400
08/21/2009	Dianne Feinstein	\$2400
09/17/2004	Arlen Specter	\$500
05/31/2007	Arlen Specter	\$500
07/14/2003	Patrick Leahy	\$2000
07/14/2003	Patrick Leahy	\$2000
08/15/2000	Los Angeles PAC	\$1000
02/20/1998	Thomas Daschle	\$1000
03/31/1997	Richard Gephardt	\$1000
12/17/2001	Richard Gephardt	\$1000
06/06/2005	Theodore Stevens	\$2000
03/08/2002	John Kerry	\$1000
05/04/2000	John Dingell	\$1000
01/06/2000	Walt Disney Productions	\$5000
10/12/2007	John Davison Rockefeller	\$1000
03/31/2012	Bill Nelson	\$2500
11/04/2000	Barbara Boxer	\$1000
11/18/2003	Hilary Clinton	\$1000
04/20/2006	Hilary Clinton	\$1000
04/20/2006	Hilary Clinton	\$1000
10/09/2003	Thomas Daschle	\$1000
03/29/2012	Joseph Kennedy III	\$1000
04/09/2008	Mark Warner	\$1000
07/08/2004	Charles Hagel	\$1000
03/24/2004	Charlie Crist	\$1000
03/24/2004	Democratic Senatorial Campaign	\$5000
03/30/2006	Dianne Feinstein	\$2000
03/31/2004	Bill Nelson	\$2000
06/08/2010	Harry Reid	\$2400
06/08/2010	Harry Reid	\$2400
12/02/2002	Mary Landrieu	\$1000
03/05/2002	Max Baucus	\$1000
06/07/2007	Max Baucus	\$2000
12/22/1998	Richard Devine	\$1000
04/01/1998	Conrad Burns	\$1000
06/02/1998	Ernest Hollings	\$1000
05/15/1998	Edward John Markey	\$1000
06/30/1999	Edward John Markey	\$1000
04/08/1998	John McCain	\$1000
04/24/1998	John Dingell	\$1000
12/10/1999	Kay Bailey Hutchison	\$1000
05/26/2004	Edward John Markey	\$2000
05/26/2004	Edward John Markey	\$2000

06/01/2004	Thomas Daschle	\$1000
06/30/2011	Bill Nelson	\$2500
02/22/2005	National Republican Congressional Committee	\$2500
03/20/2006	National Republican Congressional Committee	\$2500
02/24/2005	Texas Freedom Fund	\$2000
08/19/2002	Montana Democratic Party	\$1000
02/29/2008	Democratic Congressional Campaign	\$1000
03/25/2009	Democratic Congressional Campaign	\$2500
1/29/2003	Walt Disney Productions Employees	\$5000
02/10/2004	Walt Disney Productions Employees	\$5000
01/12/2007	Walt Disney Productions Employees	\$5000
01/28/2008	Walt Disney Productions Employees	\$5000
02/23/2009	Walt Disney Productions Employees	\$5000
01/28/2010	Walt Disney Productions Employees	\$5000
1/24/2011	Walt Disney Productions Employees	\$5000
03/26/2012	Walt Disney Productions Employees	\$5000
07/24/2002	John Dingell	\$1000
12/17/2001	Rahm Emanuel	\$1000
1/12/2001	Walt Disney Productions Employees	\$5000
03/20/2008	Jane Harman	\$200
03/20/2008	Jane Harman	\$2300
07/30/2007	PAC to the Future	\$2000
07/25/2008	PAC to the Future	\$2500
10/07/2008	Searchlight Leadership Fund	\$2000
10/26/2009	Searchlight Leadership Fund	\$2500
06/27/2001	Howard Berman	\$1000
06/27/2001	Howard Berman	\$1000
06/12/2006	Henry Waxman	\$1000
06/11/2001	Edward John Markey	\$1000
12/31/2007	Howard Berman	\$2000
12/05/2011	Howard Berman	\$2500
12/05/2011	Howard Berman	\$2500
12/05/2011	Howard Berman	\$2500
11/30/2005	Howard Berman	\$2000
11/09/2000	Al Gore	\$1000
10/11/2002	National Republican	\$1000

	Congressional Committee	
10/11/2002	DNC Services Corporation	\$1000
05/24/1999	The Lincoln Club of Orange County	\$1500

**Appendix VIII: Relevant notes about Drudge from Michael Isikoff's book
Uncovering Clinton**

[Michael Isikoff, UNCOVERING CLINTON (1999)]

→ Isikoff as a character: "I was part of the story" (pg. xv)

* "The players in this saga - the accusers, the conspirators even the president - had all at times calculated their actions in response to what they thought I might do."

'Drudge' = "a reckless gossip merchant"

Book I: PAULA JONES, February 1994 - May 1994

Troopergate: American Spectator
- Clinton (Arkansas): "the raucous mini-scandal that had erupted barely 2 months earlier when a group of Arkansas state-troopers told stories about soliciting & facilitating extramarital trysts for Clinton while he was governor" (pg. 4)

- February 11, 1994 (press conference: Paula Jones)
"had come to Washington to clear her 'good reputation'. She had been 'defamed, libeled and slandered' by Arkansas state trooper Danny Ferguson in the Troopergate article.
- Lloyd Stone attended the press conference (The Washington Post's Style, p. 16)

* "The political intrigue of Arkansas fascinated me - the linguistic character, the southern folklore, the strange mix of humor, fact, and tall-tale fantasy." (5)

- All the King's Men (online / of the Propaganda)

on Monday... I reviewed my options. Should I hastily type it into the story before my editors and New York read about it on Dudge? Or, should I leave it out and make Dudge look stupid? But what if my competitors at TIME read the DRUDGE REPORT and slipped a reference to the Foster ~~the~~ report into their own story?"

pg 149: DRUDGE writes, 'tsikoff of Newsweek was 'hot on the trail' of another ~~who~~ who had been harassed by Clinton on federal property.'

pg 149: GAME CHANGING MOMENT

→ "Come on Lanny (White House Special Counsel) you're asking me something in an internet gossip report?"

pg 154: "Drudge had struck again - and this time he had done real damage."
WILLEY'S DECISION: White House Employee & Reporter that President Made SEX PAST

pg 155: **KEY** → "Like we (tsikoff / Newsweek) - as some critics later charged - using a scumbag internet gossip column as a pretext for publishing something that didn't meet the magazine's usual standard for what is fit to print?"

pg 155




GAME CHANGERS: "changed the equation"

- (a) Drudge's account, rightly or wrongly, had unleashed widespread public speculation about who Willey was and what she might have to say about the President
- (b) Cammarata's (Jones's lawyer) subpoena. Willey was now a witness in a lawsuit involving the President of the United

The Drudge Report viewed as "an Internet gossip report/column"




Appendix IX: Email Transcript with Andrew Kirk, *The Daily Beast*

October 5, 2011

Kirk, Andrew <Andrew.Kirk@newsweekdailybeast.com> 10/5/11 ☆  
to gab36 

Gillian, I thought I was pretty clear that I would arrange the appropriate people for you to speak with. So I was rather suprised to see and hear that you have been contacting our editors on your own steam and it makes me question the motivation for this research - please advise.

Andrew

gillianabrooks@gmail.com 10/5/11 ☆  
to Andrew 


Dear Andrew,
I apologize. I did not intend to go behind your back on this.
After I spoke with Mr. Grove yesterday, he listed other editors whom I should contact.

Sent via BlackBerry from T-Mobile

From: "Kirk, Andrew" <Andrew.Kirk@newsweekdailybeast.com>
Date: Wed, 5 Oct 2011 16:13:00 -0400
To: 'gillianabrooks@gmail.com' <gillianabrooks@gmail.com>
Subject: Re: FW: Attn: Tina Brown

Dear Andrew,
I apologize. I did not intend to go behind your back on this.
After I spoke with Mr. Grove yesterday, he listed other editors whom I should contact.
It seems that's exactly what you did - as I told you, Tina is not available for you - what further information did you need from what you discussed with Lloyd Grove?




Andrew

Kirk, Andrew <Andrew.Kirk@newsweekdailybeast.com> 10/5/11 ☆  
to me 

I had questions about advertising, traffic and editorial.
Please feel free to send them over and I'll have them answered for you.

A

October 13, 2011

Gillian Brooks <gab36@cam.ac.uk> 10/13/11 ☆  
to Andrew 

Dear Andrew,

I wanted to apologize again for the confusion that appears to have arisen with regard to arranging interviews for my PhD research. I was only following up with the four individuals that Lloyd Grove had recommended I contact:

- Edward Felsenthal
- Tom Weber
- Jane Spencer
- Stephen Colvin

I contacted Lloyd Grove on the same day in May 2011 when I contacted you about interviewing Ms. Brown. While I recognize that Ms. Brown is not available for an interview, Stephen Colvin has told me that he is available to be interviewed. He forwarded his assistant (John Pierce) my contact information for setting up a time to meet. I have not contacted John directly, as you mentioned that I should go through you to arrange any interviews.

I have travelled from the U.K. to conduct my fieldwork and without being able to speak with editors at The Daily Beast, my research is compromised. If you need a credibility check my supervisor is Dr. John B Thompson at the University of Cambridge and he can be reached at jb11000@cam.ac.uk

You can also contact Dr. Jeanine Turner at Georgetown University - she was my advisor during my Masters degree. Her contact information is turnerjw@georgetown.edu and her phone number is 703.915.8876. It may be easier to contact Dr. Turner as Dr. Thompson is currently traveling.

I really appreciate how helpful you have been in this process.

Please let me know how to proceed with regard to setting up a time to interview Mr. Colvin, and/or anyone else you would recommend.

If need be, I can send you my questions in advance and you can approve the post-interview transcript.

I have also attached the ethics form from the University of Cambridge.

I look forward to hearing from you and please do not hesitate to call me if you have any further questions.

Take care,
Gillian
202.390.1877

Kirk, Andrew <Andrew.Kirk@newsweekdailybeast.com>
to Gillian, John

10/13/11 ☆

Hi Gillian,

Not sure that there was any confusion, I had said I'd arrange suitable interviews for your research, you contacted our senior execs directly without mention that we had already been in touch.

I've spoken with Stephen, and as CEO his schedule unfortunately does not allow him time to meet to discuss our business model for academic research.

Please do send over your remaining questions and I'll have them answered where possible for you and can arrange a tour of the newsroom while you are in the States.

Best,

Andrew

October 14, 2011

Gillian Brooks <gab36@cam.ac.uk>
to Andrew

10/14/11 ☆

Thank you Andrew.

Here are my questions:

- how do you see the Daily Beast's role in the online world?
- how would you categorize the website? (blog? online news organization?)
- who are you writing for?
- are you readers overwhelmingly American?
- what is The Daily Beast's demographic?
- what is the traffic on your site?
- how do you see what you are doing and what the mainstream media (newspapers, tv, radio, etc.) are doing?
- how do you find your stories?
- what kind of feedback do you get from your readers? what do you do with it?
- what is the structure of the organization?
- who decides what is going to be published?
- how do you see The Daily Beast in terms of its capacity to express opinions in an online space?
- what is the capacity to which the editorial and business departments interact?
- how does The Daily Beast make its money?
- can you give a specific example where you think you influenced public opinion?

November 7, 2011

Gillian Brooks <gab36@cam.ac.uk>
to Andrew

11/7/11 ☆

Dear Andrew,

I hope you are doing well.

I am checking in about the interview questions I sent you and seeing if there is a time where I might be able to tour the newsroom.

Thank you.

Take care,

Gillian

November 16, 2011

Kirk, Andrew <Andrew.Kirk@newsweekdailybeast.com>
to Gillian

11/16/11 ☆

Why don't you come by Friday morning? What time works?

A

November 17, 2011

From: gab36@cam.ac.uk [mailto:gab36@cam.ac.uk]
Sent: Thursday, November 17, 2011 5:41 PM

To: Kirk, Andrew
Subject: Re: NWDB

How is 11am?
Sent from my BlackBerry device on the Rogers Wireless Network

Kirk, Andrew <Andrew.Kirk@newsweekdailybeast.com>
to gab36 ▾

11/16/11 ☆ ↶ ▾

That's fine – ask for me at reception and I'll come down and get you. My number is 212.524.8856 incase you have any delays.

We're at;

555 West 18th Street
New York, NY 10011

Best,

Andrew

Appendix X: Autopsy Report for Andrew Breitbart

NEWS

DEPARTMENT OF CORONER

County of Los Angeles

Lakshmanan Sathyavagiswaran, M.D.
Chief Medical Examiner-Coroner/Director
1104 North Mission Road
Los Angeles, CA 90033

Contact:

Craig Harvey, F-ABMDI
Chief, Operations/PIO
(323) 343-0783/0788

Ed Winter, Assistant Chief,
Operations/PIO
(323) 343-0783/0788

LOS ANGELES, CA - FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

RE: Coroner Case Number 2012-01471 – BREITBART, Andrew James

The Los Angeles County Department of Coroner conducted an autopsy on the body of Andrew James Breitbart, age 43, on March 2, 2012.

The final cause of death has been determined to be:

- HEART FAILURE
- HYPERTROPHIC CARDIOMYOPATHY WITH FOCAL CORONARY ATHEROSCLEROSIS

OTHER SIGNIFICANT CONDITIONS: NONE

MANNER OF DEATH: NATURAL

TOXICOLOGY: No prescription or illicit drugs were detected. The blood alcohol was .04%.

No significant trauma was present and foul play is not suspected. It is anticipated that the final Coroner report will be available for release within two weeks.

crh04/20/2012

Appendix XI: ACORN Investigation in California

09/16/2009

14:25

GOVERNOR ARNOLD SCHWARZENEGGER * 9163277154

NO. 888 002



GOVERNOR ARNOLD SCHWARZENEGGER

September 16, 2009

Via facsimile: (916) 445-6749

The Honorable Edmund G. Brown, Jr.
Attorney General
State of California
1300 I Street
Sacramento, California 95814

Dear Mr. Attorney General,

Over the past few days, I have seen a series of news stories regarding the ACORN organization that have concerned me greatly. As you may be aware, the most recent report has come out of San Bernardino. Given this, I believe it is appropriate that your office launch a full investigation into ACORN's activities in California. My administration stands ready to assist in any way necessary.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Arnold Schwarzenegger".

Arnold Schwarzenegger

na

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Accardo, Alain. *Introduction a une sociologie critique: Lire Bourdieu*. Paris: Mascaret, 1997
- Aldrich, Howard E. "Entrepreneurial strategies in new organizational populations." *Entrepreneurship: The Social Science View*, 2000. pp. 211-228.
- Aldrich, Howard E., and C. Marlene Fiol. "Fools rush in? The institutional context of industry creation." *Academy of Management Review*, 1994. Vol. 19 No. 4. pp. 645-670.
- Aldridge, Meryl and Evetts, Julia. "Rethinking the Concept of Professionalism: The Case of Journalism". *The British Journal of Sociology*. Vol, 54, No. 4, 2003. pp. 547 – 564
- Alexa.com. <http://www.alex.com/siteinfo/breitbart.com> Accessed: August 30, 2013
- Alexa.com. <http://www.alex.com/siteinfo/thedrudge.com> Accessed: August 30, 2013
- Alexa.com. <http://www.alex.com/siteinfo/thehuffingtonpost.com> Accessed: August 30, 2013
- Alterman, Eric. "Think Again: The Mainstream Media Needs to Break Its Addiction to the *Drudge Report*". *The Huffington Post*. June 13, 2013. <http://www.huffingtonpost.com/eric-alterman/think-again-the-mainstream-media-3434890.html> Accessed: June 15, 2013
- Anderson, Benedict. *Imagined Communities Revisited*. London: Verso, 1991
- Anheier, Helmut K., Gerhards, Jurgen and Romo, Frank P. "Forms of Capital and Social Structure in Cultural Fields: Examining Bourdieu's Social Topography". *American Journal of Sociology*. 1995. Vol, 100. No. 4. pp. 859-903
- Arksey, Hilary and Knight, Peter. *Interviewing for Social Scientists*. New York: Sage Publications, Ltd. 1999
- Armey, Dick. *Give US Liberty: A Tea Party Manifesto*. New York: William Morrow, 2010
- Atkinson, Paul and Hammersley, Martyn. *Principles in Practice*. 1st Edition. London: Routledge, 1983
- Bagdikian, Ben H. *The Media Monopoly*. Boston: Beacon Publishers, 1983
- Baker, Wayne E., and Nathaniel Bulkley. "Paying It Forward vs. Rewarding Reputation: Mechanisms of Generalized Reciprocity". *Organization Science*. 2014 (Articles in Advance). pp. 1-18.

- Baker, Wayne E., and Robert R. Faulkner. "The social organization of conspiracy: Illegal networks in the heavy electrical equipment industry." *American Sociological Review*. 1993. Vol. 58. No. 6. pp. 837-860.
- Barlow, Aaron. "The Citizen Journalist as Gatekeeper: A Critical Evolution". *Public Journalism 2.0: The Promise and Reality of a Citizen-Engaged Press*. Ed. Jack Rosenberry and Burton St. John III. New York: Routledge, 2010. pp. 21-31
- Barnhurst, Kevin. "News, Geography and Monopoly: The Form of Reports on U.S. Newspaper Internet Sites". *Journalism Studies*. Vol. 3, No. 4, 2002. pp. 477-489
- Barnhurst, Kevin and Diana Mutz. "American Journalism and the Decline of Event-Centered Reporting." *Journal of Communication*. December 1997. pp. 27 – 53
- Barnhurst, Kevin and John Nerone. *The Form of News: A History*. New York: Guilford Press, 2001
- Bates, Thomas. "Gramsci and the theory of hegemony". *Journal of the History of Ideas*. Vol. 36, Issue 2, 1975. pp. 351-266
- Baum, Joel AC, and Brian S. Silverman. "Picking winners or building them? Alliance, Intellectual, and Human Capital as Selection Criteria in Venture Financing and Performance of Biotechnology Start-ups." *Journal of Business Venturing*. 2004. Vol. 19, No. 3. pp. 411-436.
- Bauman, Zygmunt. *Legislator and Interpreters: On Modernity, Post-Modernity and Intellectuals*. Cambridge: Polity Press, 1987
- Beam, Christopher. "Media is Everything. It's Everything". *Slate*. March 15, 2010
http://www.slate.com/articles/news_and_politics/politics/2010/03/what_is_andrew_breitbart_thinking.html Accessed: May 3, 2011
- Beckett, Charlie. *Supermedia: Saving Journalism So It Can Save the World*. London: Wiley-Blackwell, 2008
- Beetham, David. *The Legitimation of Power*. London: MacMillan Education Ltd. 1991
- Bennett, Lance. *News: The Politics of Illusion*. New York: Longman, 2001
- Benson, Rodney. "Field theory in a comparative context: A new paradigm for media studies". *Theory and Society* 1999. Vol. 28. pp. 463–498.
- Benson, Rodney. "Shaping the Public Sphere: Habermas and Beyond". *American Sociology*. 2009. Vol. 40. pp. 175-197
- Benson, Rodney and Neveu, Erik. *Bourdieu and the Journalistic Field*. Cambridge: Polity Press, 2005

- Benbasat, Izak, Goldstein, David and Mead, Melissa. "The Case of Research Strategy in Studies of Information Systems". *MIS Quarterly*. 1987. Vol. 11. pp. 369-386
- Bercovici, Jeff. "The Huffington Post Wins Its First Pulitzer Prize". *Forbes*. April 16, 2012. <http://www.forbes.com/sites/jeffbercovici/2012/04/16/the-huffington-post-wins-its-first-pulitzer-prize/> Accessed: September 1, 2013
- Berg, B.L. *Qualitative Research Methods for the Social Sciences*. Boston, MA: Allyn and Bacon, 2001
- Besteman, Catherine and Gusterson, Hugh. *Why America's Top Pundits are Wrong: Anthropologists Talk Back*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005
- Bimber, Bruce and Richard Davis. *Campaigning Online: The Internet in the U.S. Elections*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2003
- Blood, Rebecca. "Weblogs and Journalism: Do They Connect?" *Nieman Reports*. Fall 2003. pp. 61 - 63
- Boczkowski, Pablo. *Digitizing the News: Innovation in Online Newspapers*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 2004
- Boczkowski, Pablo. "Future Avenues for Research on Online News Production". *Making Online News*. Volume II. Ed. Chris Paterson and David Domingo. New York: Peter Lang Publishing, Inc., 2011. pp. 161-167
- Boczkowski, Pablo. "The Development and Use of Online Newspapers: What Research Tells Us and What We Might Want to Know". *Handbook of New Media: Social Shaping and Consequences of ICTs*, 2002. pp. 270-286
- Boehlert, Eric. "Drudge Unplugged: How his campaign influence has collapsed". *Media Matters for America*. October 21, 2008. <http://mediamatters.org/research/2008/10/21/drudge-unplugged-how-his-campaign-influence-has/145773> Accessed: September 1, 2013
- Bogaerts Jo and Carpentier, Nico. *Rethinking Journalism: Trust and Participation in a Transformed News Landscape*. London: Routledge, 2013.
- Boschma, Ron. "Proximity and Innovation: A Critical Assessment". *Regional Studies*. 2005. Vol. 39. No. 1. pp. 61-74
- Bourdieu, Pierre. *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgment of Taste*. Boston: Harvard University Press, 1984
- Bourdieu Pierre, *Language and Symbolic Power*. Cambridge, United Kingdom: Polity Press, 1991
- Bourdieu, Pierre. *On Television and Journalism*. London: Pluto Press, 1998

- Bourdieu, Pierre. *Outline of a Theory of Practice*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977
- Bourdieu, Pierre. *Pascalian Meditations*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2000
- Bourdieu, Pierre. *Sociology in Question*. London: Sage, 1993a
- Bourdieu, Pierre. *The Field of Cultural Production*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1993b
- Bourdieu, Pierre. "The forms of capital". *Handbook of Theory and Research for the Sociology of Education*. New York: Greenwood, 1986. pp. 241-258
- Bourdieu, Pierre. *The Logic of Practice*. Cambridge: Polity Press, 1992
- Bourdieu, Pierre. "The political field, the social field, and the journalistic field". In *Bourdieu and the Journalistic Field*. Ed. Rodney Benson and Erik Neveu, 2005. pp. 29-46
- Bourdieu, Pierre. "Understanding". *The Weight of the World: Social Suffering in Contemporary Society*. Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1999. pp. 607-626
- Bourdieu, Pierre and Wacquant, Loic. *An Invitation to Reflexive Sociology*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992
- Breed, Warren and Ktsanes, Thomas. "Pluralistic Ignorance in the Process of Opinion Formation". *Public Opinion Quarterly*. Vol. 25, No. 3, 1961. pp. 382-392.
- Breitbart, Andrew. *Righteous Indignation: Excuse Me While I Save the World*. New York: Grand Central Publishing, 2011
- "Breitbart.com". *Quantcast*. www.quantcast.com/breitbart.com Accessed: September 10, 2013
- Breitbart News. "Flashback: One Year Ago, Weiner's Resignation". June 16, 2012. *Breitbart.com* <http://www.breitbart.com/BigGovernment/2012/06/16/flashback-one-year-ago-the-weiner-resignation> Accessed: November 20, 2013
- Brock, George. *Out of Print: Newspapers, Journalism and the Business of News in the Digital Age*. London: Kogan Page, 2013
- Broddason, Thorbjorn. "The Sacred Side of Journalism". *European Journal of Communications*. Vol. 9. No. 3. pp. 227-248
- Bruns, Axel. *Gatewatching: Collaborative Online News Production*. New York: Peter Lang, 2005

- Bruns, Axel. "Gatewatching, Gatecrashing: Futures for Tactical News Media". *Digital Media and Democracy: Tactics in Hard Times*. Ed. Megan Boler. Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 2008. pp. 247 - 270
- Bruns, Axel. "Gatewatching, Not Gatekeeping: Collaborative Online News". *Media International Australia Incorporating Culture and Policy: Quarterly Journal of Media Research and Resources*. 2003. pp. 31-44
- Bruns, Axel and Jacobs, Joanne. *Uses of Blogs*. New York: Peter Lang Publishing, 2006
- Burdy, Jason and Brown, Angie. "Web Analytics Definitions". *Web Analytics Association*. August 16, 2007
http://www.digitalanalyticsassociation.org/Files/PDF_standards/WebAnalyticsDefinitionsVol1.pdf Accessed: May 19, 2013
- Burnby, Jason and Brown, Angie. "Web Analytics Definitions". *Web Analytics Association*. 2007
- Burt, Ron. "The Contingent Value of Social Capital". *Administrative Science Quarterly*. 1997. Vol. 42. No. 2. pp. 339-365
- Butler, Judith, Laclau, Ernesto, and Žižek, Slavoj. *Contingency, Hegemony, Universality: Contemporary Dialogues on the Left*. London: Verso, 2000
- BuzzFeed Staff. "How Andrew Breitbart Helped Launch *The Huffington Post*". *BuzzFeed*. March 1, 2012. <http://www.buzzfeed.com/buzzfeedpolitics/how-andrew-breitbart-helped-launch-huffington-post> Accessed: March 3, 2012
- Calderone, Michael. "Andrew Breitbart, 'Reborn' on the Internet, Died a Force in Media and Politics". *The Huffington Post*. March 1, 2012.
http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2012/03/01/andrew-breitbart-dead-huffington-post-drudge-report_n_1314639.html Accessed: March 1, 2012
- Calderone, Michael. "Republicans flock to *The Huffington Post*". *POLITICO*. May 22, 2009. <http://www.politico.com/news/stories/0509/22861.html> Accessed: April 15, 2011
- California Department of Justice. "Report of the Attorney General on the Activities of ACORN in California". *California Department of Justice, Office of the Attorney General*. April 1, 2010, attachment D
- Carr, David. "How Drudge Has Stayed On Top". *The New York Times*. May 15, 2011
<http://www.nytimes.com/2011/05/16/business/media/16carr.html> Accessed: April 5, 2012
- Carr, David. "How Obama Tapped Into Social Networks' Power". *The New York Times*. November 9, 2008.
http://www.nytimes.com/2008/11/10/business/media/10carr.html?_r=0 Accessed: November 3, 2012

- Carr, David. "The Provocateur". *The New York Times*. April 13, 2012.
http://www.nytimes.com/2012/04/15/business/media/the-life-and-death-of-andrew-breitbart.html?_r=0 Accessed: November 1, 2012
- Carr-Saunders, Sir A.M. and Wilson, Paul Alexander. *The Professionals*. Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1933
- Castells, Manuel. *Communication Power*. Oxford, United Kingdom: Oxford University Press, 2009
- Cattani, Gino, Ferriani Simone, and Allison, Paul D. "Insiders, Outsiders, and the Struggle for Consecration in Cultural Fields: A Core-Periphery Perspective". *American Sociological Review*. April 2014. Vol. 79. No 2.pp. 258-281
- Cenite, Mark. "Doing the Right Thing Online: A Survey of Bloggers' Ethical Beliefs and Practices". *New Media and Society*. July 2009. pp. 575 - 596
- "Christopher Lee Warned About the 'Dangers of the Internet' in Op-Ed". *The Huffington Post*. February 10, 2011.
http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2011/02/10/christopher-lee_n_821289.html
 Accessed: July 30, 2013
- "Chris Lee Resigns After Craigslist Photos Come to Light". *The Huffington Post*. February 9, 2011. http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2011/02/09/chris-lee-resigns-after-c_n_821080.html Accessed: July 30, 2013
- Chomsky, Noam. *American Power and the New Mandarins*. New York: The New Press, 1969
- Chomsky, Noam. *Manufacturing Consent: The Political Economy of the Mass Media*. New York: Random House, 2010
- Cillizza, Chris. "How Matt Drudge Rules the (Political) World". *The Washington Post*. July 10, 2008. <http://voices.washingtonpost.com/thefix/eye-on-2008/how-matt-drudge-rules-the-poli.html> Accessed: July 20, 2013
- Clifford, James and Marcus, George. *Writing Culture: The Poetics and Politics of Ethnography*. London: University of California Press, Ltd., 1986
- Cogburn, Derrick L., and Espinoza-Vasquez, Fatima K. "From networked nominee to networked nation: Examining the impact of Web 2.0 and social media on political participation and civic engagement in the 2008 Obama campaign." *Journal of Political Marketing*. 2011. Vol.10. No. 2. pp. 189-213.
- Cohen, William. "Huffing and Puffing" *Vanity Fair*. February 2011
<http://www.vanityfair.com/business/features/2011/02/ariana-huffington-201102> Accessed: September 10, 2012

- Cook, John. "Don't Read *Politico*, Urge *Politico* Editors". *Gawker*. May 31, 2012. <http://gawker.com/5914657/dont-read-politico-urge-politico-editors> Accessed: April 15, 2013
- Cottle, Simon. *Media Organization and Production*. London: Sage Publications, 2003
- Couldry, Nick. "Media Meta-Capital: Extending the range of Bourdieu's field theory". In *After Bourdieu: Influence, Critique, Elaboration*. Ed. David Swartz and Vera Zolberg, 2004. pp. 165-189
- Couldry Nick. "Media meta-capital: Extending the range of Bourdieu's field theory". *Theory and Society*. 2003. Vol. 32. pp. 653-677.
- Couldry, Nick. "New Online News Sources and Writer-Gatherers". In *New Media, Old News: Journalism and Democracy in the Digital Age*. Ed. Natalie Fenton. London: Sage Publications, Ltd., 2010. pp. 138-153
- Couldry, Nick. "Bourdieu and the media: the promise and limits of field theory". *Theory, Culture and Society*. 2007. Vol. 36. pp. 209-213
- Cox, Ana Marie. "Matt Drudge". *TIME*. May 8, 2006. http://content.time.com/time/specials/packages/article/0,28804,1975813_1975838_1976296,00.html Accessed: January 10, 2011
- Creswell, John. *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design: Choosing Among Five Approaches*. Thousand Oaks, California: Sage Publications, Ltd., 2007
- Curran, James. "Technology Foretold". In *New Media, Old News: Journalism and Democracy in the Digital Age*. Ed. Natalie Fenton. London: Sage Publications, Ltd., 2010. pp. 19 -35
- Dahlgren, P. "Media Logic in Cyberspace: Repositioning Journalism and its Publics". *Javnost: The Public*. Vol. 3, No. 3, 1996. pp. 59-72,
- Deephouse, David L. and Suzanne M. Carter. "An Examination of Differences Between Organizational Legitimacy and Organizational Reputation". *Journal of Management Studies*. 2005. Volume 45, Number 2. p. 331
- Denton, Nick. "The Cruise Indoctrination Video Scientology Tried to Suppress". *Gawker*. January 15, 2008. <http://gawker.com/5002269/the-cruise-indoctrination-video-scientology-tried-to-suppress> Accessed: March 1, 2012
- Dery, Mark. "Media: Megaphone for the Masses or Moral Sinkhole." *Media Channel*. March 26, 2000. <http://www.mediachannel.org/atissue/sample5/index.shtml> Accessed: August 1, 2013
- Deuze, Mark. *Media Work: Digital Media and Society Series*. Cambridge: Polity Press, 2007
- Deuze, Mark. "What is Journalism? Professional Identity and Ideology of Journalists Reconsidered". *Journalism*. London: Sage Publications, 2005. pp. 442-464

- Deuze, Mark. "What is multimedia journalism?" *Journalism Studies*. 2004. Vol. 5. Issue 2. pp. 139-152
- Deuze, Mark. "The Internet and its Journalisms: Considering the Consequences of Different Types of Newsmedia Online". *Online Journalism Review*. July 2002. <http://www.ojr.org/ojr/future/1026407729.php> Accessed: August 15, 2011
- Deuze, Mark. "The Web and its Journalisms: Considering the Consequences of Different Types of Newsmedia Online." *New Media and Society*. Vol. 5. No. 2, 2003. pp. 203-220
- Dickinson, Roger. "Accomplishing Journalism: Towards a Revived Sociology of a Media Occupation". *Cultural Sociology*. Vol. 1, No. 2, 2007. pp. 189-208
- Dickinson Roger. "Studying the Sociology of Journalists: The Journalistic Field and the News World". *Sociological Compass* 2. 2008. pp. 1383–1399.
- DiMaggio, Paul. "Constructing an organizational field as professional project: US art museums, 1920 - 1940". In *The New Institutionalism in Organizational Analysis*. Eds. Paul DiMaggio and Walter W. Powell. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press. 1991. pp. 267-292
- DiMaggio, Paul and Walter Powell. "The iron cage revisited: Institutional isomorphism and collective rationality in organizational fields". *American Sociological Review*. 1983. Vol. 48. pp. 147-160.
- Dodds, Peter and Duncan Watts. "Influentials, Networks, and Public Opinion Formation". *Journal of Consumer Research*, Vol. 34, December 2007, p. 441
- Domingo, David. "Interactivity in the daily routines of online newsrooms: dealing with an uncomfortable myth". *Journal of Computer Mediated Communication*. Vol. 13. No. 3, 2008. pp. 680-704
- Domingo, David. "Inventing Online Journalism: Development of the Internet as a News Medium in Four Catalan Newsrooms". PhD dissertation, Bellaterra: Universitat Autònoma 2006 www.tesisenxarxa.net/TESIS_UAB/AVAILABLE/TDX-1219106-153347//dd1de1.pdf Accessed: October 2013
- Domingo, David and Paterson, Chris. *Making Online News: The Ethnography of New Media Production*. Volume II. New York: Peter Lang Publishing, 2011
- Domingo, David and Quandt, Thorsten, Heinonen, Ari, Paulussen, Steve, Singer, Jane B., Vujnovic, Marina. "Participatory Journalism Practices in the Media and Beyond: An international comparative study of initiatives in online newspapers". *Journalism Practice*. Vol. 2, No. 3, 2008. pp. 326-342

- Downing, John. "Political Change in Eastern Europe and Conceptual Approaches to Media Communication: A Critique". *Electronic Journal of Communications*. Vol. 4, No. 1, 1994. <http://www.cios.org/EJCPUBLIC/004/1/00413.HTML> Accessed: July 15, 2013
- Downing, John. *Internationalizing Media Theory: Transition, Power, Culture*. London: Sage Publications, 1996
- Dreier, Peter and Christopher Martin. "The News Media, the Conservative Echo Chamber, and the Battle over ACORN: How Two Academics Fought in the Framing Wars". *Humanity and Society*. Vol. 35, No. 1, February 2011. pp. 4-30
- "Drudge Report sets tone for National Political Coverage". *ABC News*. October 1, 2006. <http://abcnews.go.com/WNT/story?id=2514276&page=1> Accessed: September 3, 2013
- "Drudge Report". *Quantcast*. www.quantcast.com/drudgereport.com Accessed: September 10, 2013
- Drudge, Matt. "Newsweek kills story on White House intern". *The Drudge Report*. January 17, 1998. www.drudgereportarchives.com/%2Fdata%2F2002%2F01%2F17%2F20020117_175502_ml.htm&ei=Ie7TUo0XxLKEB4-1gYgM&usg=AFQjCNHkxNh52ExeeKbuL7IN0-QChT9Y4Q&sig2=KZUxbjzgCtSd31pCnmVEyA&bvm=bv.59026428,d.d2k Accessed: March 10, 2013
- Drudge, Matt. *The Drudge Manifesto*. New York: New American Library, 2000
- Drudge, Matt. "@Drudge" *Twitter*. September 13, 2013 <https://twitter.com/DRUDGE/status/378453497366069248>
- "Drudge, Matt". *BrainyQuote.com*. *Xplore Inc, 2013*. February 17, 2013 <http://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/quotes/m/mattdrudge381617.html> Accessed: October 1, 2013
- "Drudge Sets Tone for National Political Coverage". *ABC News*. October 1, 2006. <http://abcnews.go.com/WNT/story?id=2514276> Accessed: May 10, 2013
- Dumenco, Simon. "Has *Huffington* helped AOL Become Content Juggernaut – Or the Other Way Around". *Ad Age*. April 29, 2013. <http://adage.com/article/the-media-guy/huffington-helped-aol-content-juggernaut/241156/> Accessed: May 1, 2013
- Eisenhardt, Kathleen. "Building Theories from Case Study Research". *The Academy of Management Review*. 1989. Vol. 14. No. 4. pp. 532-550
- Eisenhardt, Kathleen and Melissa E. Graebner. "Theory Building From Cases: Opportunities and Challenges". *Academy of Management Journal*. 2007. Vol. 50. No. 1. pp. 25-32=

- Eisenhower, Dwight. "Farewell Address to the Nation". *Presidential Recordings: Dwight D. Eisenhower Presidential Library*. Audio-recording (15:30 minutes: seconds). January 17, 1961. https://archive.org/details/dde_1961_0117 Accessed: January 15, 2012
- Elberse, Anita and Jeroen Verleun. "The Economic Value of Celebrity Endorsements". *Journal of Advertising Research*. June 2012. Vol. 52. No. 3. pp. 149-165
- Entwhistle, Joanne and Agnes Rocamora. "The Field of Fashion Materialized: A Study of London Fashion Week". *Sociology*. Vol. 40, No. 4, 2006. pp. 735-751
- Esther, Scott. "'Big Media' Meets the 'Bloggers': coverage of Trent Lott's remarks at Strom Thurmond's birthday party". Kennedy School of Government case program, Harvard University. 2004 www.ksgcase.harvard.edu
- "Even More Matt Drudge". *The Drudge Report*. Online. Accessed: September 2015. http://antipas.net/cool_drudge3.htm
- Evett, J. "Rethinking the Concept of Professionalism: The Case of Journalism". *British Journal of Sociology*. Vol. 54, No. 4, 2003. pp. 547-564
- Evett, J. "The Sociological Analysis of Professionalism". *International Sociology*. Vol. 18, No. 2, 2003. pp. 395-415
- Farhi, Paul. "The Washington Post closes sale to Amazon founder Jeff Bezos". *The Washington Post*. October 1, 2013. http://articles.washingtonpost.com/2013-10-01/business/42568774_1_jeff-bezos-washington-post-co-katharine-graham Accessed: October 3, 2013
- Faulkner, Robert R., and Andy B. Anderson. "Short-term projects and emergent careers: Evidence from Hollywood." *American Journal of Sociology*. 1987. Vol. 92. Np. 4. pp. 879-909.
- Feld, Lowell and Wilcox, Nate. *Netroots Rising: How a Citizen Army of Bloggers and Online Activists Is Changing American Politics*. Westport, Connecticut: Praeger Publishers, 2008
- Fengler, Susanne and Stephan Rub-Mohl. "Journalists and the information-attention markets". *Journalism*. London: Sage Publications Ltd., 2008. pp. 667-690
- Fenton, Natalie. "Drowning or Waving? New Media, Journalism and Democracy". In *New Media, Old News: Journalism and Democracy in the Digital Age*. Ed. Natalie Fenton. London: Sage Publications, Ltd., 2010. pp. 3-17
- Fenton, Natalie. *New Media, Old News: Journalism and Democracy in the Digital Age*. London: Sage Publications Ltd., 2010

- Fenwick, Alexandra. "ACORN's Family Tree: Was the Baltimore video journalism? Does it matter?" *Columbia Journalism Review*. September 18, 2009. http://www.cjr.org/behind_the_news/acorns_family_tree.php?page=1 Accessed: August 30, 2013
- Fink, Katherine and Michael Schudson. "The Rise of Contextual Journalism, 1950s-2000s". *Theory, Practice and Criticism*. Online First Version. 2013. Vol. 17. No. 2. pp. 1-18
- Flamm, Matthew. "Digital media takes home a Pulitzer". *Crain's New York Business*. April 16, 2012. http://www.crainsnewyork.com/article/20120416/MEDIA_ENTERTAINMENT/120419908# Accessed: April 20, 2012
- Foreman, Peter, David Whetten and Alison Mackey. "An Identity-Based View of Reputation". *The Oxford Handbook of Corporate Reputation*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012. pp. 179-200
- Freidson, Elliot. *Professionalism: The Third Logic*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001
- Freidson, Elliot. *Professionalism Reborn: Theory, Prophecy and Policy*. 1994. Cambridge: Polity Press
- Friedman, John. "Obama's New Best Friend: Huffington Post". CBS News. February 20, 2009. <http://www.cbsnews.com/news/obamas-new-best-friend-huffington-post/> Accessed: September 1, 2013
- Fuller, Jack. *What is Happening to News: The Information Explosion and the Crisis in Journalism*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2010
- Gans, Herbert. *Deciding What's News: A Study of CBS Evening News, NBC Nightly News, Newsweek, and TIME*. New York: Random House, Inc. 1979
- Gans, Herbert. *Democracy and the News*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2003
- Garden, Mary. "Defining blog: A fool's errand or a necessary undertaking?" *Journalism*. 2011. Vol. 13. No. 4. pp. 483-499
- Gavin, Patrick. "New Andrew Breitbart chapter tells Anthony Weiner tale". *Politico*. March 27, 2012. www.politico.com/news/stories/0312/74528.html Accessed: May 30, 2013
- Gillmor, Dan. *We the Media: Grassroots Journalism by the People, For the People*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: O'Reilly Media, 2006
- Gitlin, Todd. *The Whole World is Watching: Mass Media in the Making and Unmaking of the New Left*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980
- Glasgow Media Group. *More Bad News*. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1980

- Glasser, Theodore Lewis. *The Idea of Public Journalism*. New York: Guilford, 1999
- Glenn, David. "The (Josh) Marshall Plan". *Columbia Journalism Review*. September/October 2007. http://www.cjr.org/feature/the_josh_marshall_plan.php
Accessed: October 1, 2011
- Glynn, Mary Ann. "When Cymbals Become symbols: Conflict Over Organizational Identity Within a Symphony Orchestra". *Organization Science*. 2000. Vol. 11. No. 3. pp. 285-298
- Golding, Peter and Graham Murdock. *The Political Economy of the Media, Volume I*. Cheltenham: Edward Elgar Publishing Limited, 1997
- Goldman, Eric. *Rendez-Vous with Destiny: History of Modern American Reform*. 1st Edition. Chicago: Ivan R. Dee Publisher, 2001
- Gramsci, Antonio. *Selections from the Prison Notebooks of Antonio Gramsci*. New York: Smith and Quintin Hoare, 1971
- Granovetter, Mark. "The Strength of Weak Ties". *American Journal of Sociology*. May 1973. pp. 1360 - 1380
- Greenwood, Royston, C.R. Hinings and Dave Whetten. "Rethinking Institutions and Organizations". *Journal of Management Studies*. 2014. Vol. 51. No. 7. pp. 1207-1220
- Grigoriadis, Vanessa. "Maharishi Arianna". *New York Magazine*. November 28, 2011. pp. 40 - 46
- Gunther, Richard and Anthony Mughan. *Democracy and the Media*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000.
- Hall, Jim. "The Nature of the News". *Online Journalism*. London: Pluto Press, 2001
- Hallin, Daniel and Mancini, Paolo. *Comparing Media Systems. Three Models of Media and Politics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004
- Halperin, Mark and John Heilemann. *Race of a Lifetime*. New York: Penguin Books, 2010
- Halperin, Mark and John Harris. *The Way to Win: Clinton, Rove and How to Take the White House in 2008*. New York: Random House, 2006
- Hammersley, Martyn and Atkinson, Paul. *Ethnography: Principles in Practice*. London: Tavistock Publications, 1983
- Hardin, Russell. *Trust and Trustworthiness*. New York: Russell Sage Foundations, 2002
- Hartley, J. *Popular Reality: Journalism. Modernity, Popular Culture*. London: Arnold 1996

- Henderson, Peter. "Huffington Post top indy political blog for traffic". Reuters. October 22, 2008. <http://blogs.reuters.com/mediafile/2008/10/23/huffington-post-top-indy-political-blogs-for-traffic/> Accessed: November 10, 2012
- Hesmondhalgh, David. "Bourdieu, the media and cultural production". *Media, Culture and Society* 2006. Vol. 28. pp. 211–231.
- Hessels, Jolanda, and Siri Terjesen. "Resource dependency and institutional theory perspectives on direct and indirect export choices." *Small Business Economics*. 2010. Vol. 34. No. 2. pp. 203-220.
- Hiler, John. "Blogosphere: The Emerging Media Ecosystem". *Microcontent News*, May 28, 2002. <http://www.microcontentnews.com/articles/blogosphere.hm> Accessed September 1, 2012
- Hoffman, Andrew J. "Institutional evolution and change: Environmentalism and the U.S. chemical industry". *The Academy of Management Journal*. 1999. Vol. 42. No. 4. pp. 351-371
- Hoffman, Lindsay H., Carroll J. Glynn, Michael E. Huges, Rebecca Border Sietman, Tiffany Thomson. "The Role of Communication in Public Opinion Processes: Understanding the Impacts of Intrapersonal, Media, and Social Filters". *The International Journal of Public Opinion Research*. Vol. 1. No. 3. July 2007. pp. 287-312.
- Hovland, Janis, and Kelley. *Communication and Persuasion Psychological Studies of Opinion Change*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1964
- Howe, Quincy. *The News and How to Understand It*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 1940
- Huffington, Arianna. "Heartbroken in Manhattan: Remembering Nora Ephron". *The Huffington Post*. June 26, 2012. http://www.huffingtonpost.com/arianna-huffington/remembering-nora-ephron_b_1628842.html Accessed: August 3, 2013
- Huffington, Arianna. *The Huffington Post Complete Guide to Blogging*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 2008
- Huffington, Arianna. *Third World America: How Our Politicians Are Abandoning the Middle Class and Betraying the American Dream*. New York: Random House, Inc., 2010
- "Huffington Post". Quantcast. www.quantcast.com/huffingtonpost.com Accessed September 10, 2013
- Human, Sherrie E. and Keith G. Provan. "Legitimacy Building in the Evolution of Small-Firm Multilateral Networks: A Comparative Study of Success and Demise". *Administrative Science Quarterly*. 2000. Vol. 45. pp. 327-365

- “IFJ Declaration of Principles on the Conduct of Journalists”. *International Federation of Journalists*. March 14, 2003. www.ifj.org/en/articles/ifj-declaration-of-principles-on-the-conduct-of-journalists Accessed: April 15, 2013
- Isikoff, Michael. “Monica Lewinsky: Backstage at the Ultimate Washington Drama”. *Newsweek*. December 24, 2012. <http://www.newsweek.com/monica-lewinsky-backstage-ultimate-washington-drama-63497> Accessed: September 6, 2013
- Isikoff, Michael. *Uncovering Clinton: A Reporter’s Story*. New York: Three Rivers Press, 1999
- Jacoby, Russell. *The Last Intellectuals: American Culture in the Age of Academe*. New York: Basic Books, 2000
- Jackson, Nicholas. “Gawker’s traffic numbers are worse than anyone anticipated”. *The Atlantic*. April 20, 2011. <http://www.theatlantic.com/technology/archive/2011/04/gawkers-traffic-numbers-are-worse-than-anyone-anticipated/237594/> Accessed: January 20, 2013
- Jaeger, Paul, and Gary Burnett. *Information Worlds: Social Context, Technology, and Information Behavior in the Age of the Internet*. New York: Routledge, 2010
- Jamieson, Kathleen Hall and Joseph Cappella. *Echo Chamber: Rush Limbaugh and the Conservative Media Establishment*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2008
- Jenkins, Henry. *Convergence Culture: Where Old and New Media Collide*. New York: New York University Press, 2008
- Johnstone, John, Edward J. Slawski, and William W. Bowman. “The Professional Values of American Newsmen”. *Public Opinion Quarterly*. Volume 36, 1972. pp. 524-540
- Jones, Alex. *Losing the News: The Future of the News that Feeds Democracy*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009
- Karlsson, Tomas and Caroline Wigren. “Start-ups among university employees: the influence of legitimacy, human capital and social capital”. *Journal of Technology Transfer*. 2012. Vol. 37. pp. 297-312
- Kim, J., Wyatt, R.O., Katz, Elihu. “News, Talk, Opinion, Participation: The Part Played by Conversation in Deliberative Democracy”. *Political Communication*. Vol. 16, No. 4, 1999. pp. 361-385
- King, Brayden G. and David A. Whetten. “Rethinking the Relationship Between Reputation and Legitimacy: A Social Actor Conceptualization”. *Corporate Reputation Review*. 2008. Vol. 11, No. 3. p. 192
- Kovach, Bill, and Tom Rosenstiel. *Warp Speed: America in the Age of Mixed Media*. New York: The Century Foundation Press, 1999

- Kovach, Bill, and Tom Rosenstiel. *The Elements of Journalism: What Newspapers Should Know and the Public Should Expect*. New York: Crown Publishers, 2001
- Laclau, Ernesto. "Post-Marxism without Apologies". *New Left Republic*. Vol. 166. 1988, pp. 79-106
- Lasica, J.D. "Blogs and Journalism Need Each Other". *Nieman Reports*. Fall 2003. <http://socialmediacub.pbworks.com/f/blog%2520and%2520journalism.pdf> Accessed: October 15, 2012
- Lasica, J.D. "Transparency Begets Trust in the Ever-Expanding Blogosphere". *USC Annenberg Online Journalism Review*. August 12, 2004. <http://www.ojr.org/ojr/technology/1092267863.php> Accessed: October 2, 2012
- Leblebici, Huseyin, Gerald R. Salancik, Anne Copay and Tom King. "Institutional change and the transformation of interorganizational fields: An organizational history of the US radio broadcasting industry." *Administrative Science Quarterly*. 1991. Vol. 36. No. 3. pp. 333-363.
- LeBon, Gustave. *La Psychologie des Foules*. Paris: Olean, 1895
- Lee, MJ. "What's her age again? Obama says his 12-year-old is 13". *Politico*. June 29, 2011. http://www.politico.com/politico44/perm/0611/whats_her_age_again_b3ddff8f-2f9c-4902-9cd6-386dfea0984d.html Accessed: November 1, 2013
- Lippmann, Walter. *Public Opinion*. New York: Free Press, 1922
- Lipsman, Andrew. "Huffington Post defies expectations, reaches new heights post-election". *comScore*. June 4, 2009. http://www.comscore.com/ita/Insights/Blog/Huffington_Post_Defies_Expectations_Reaches_New_Heights_Post-Election Accessed: September 3, 2013
- Logan, Robert. *Understanding New Media: Extending Marshall McLuhan*. New York: Peter Lang Publishing Inc., 2010
- Lovink, Geert. *Zero Comments: Blogging and Critical Internet Culture*. New York: Taylor and Francis Group, 2008
- Lowrey, Wilson and Chang Wan Woo. "The News Organization in Uncertain Times: Business or Institution?" *Journalism and Mass Communication Quarterly*: Spring 2010. pp. 41 – 61
- Lloyd, John and Seaton, Jean. *What Can Be Done? Making the Media and Politics Better*. London: Wiley-Blackwell, 2006
- Mabweazara, Hayes. "The Internet in the Print Newsroom: Trends, practices and emerging cultures in Zimbabwe". *Making Online News, Volume 2*. Ed. David Domingo and Chris Patterson. London: Peter Lang Publishing, 2011. pp. 57-73

- Maier, Scott. "All the News Fit to Post? Comparing News Content on the Web to Newspapers, Television, and Radio". *Journalism and Mass Communication Quarterly*. Autumn 2010. pp. 548 – 562
- "Mapping L.A. Project". *The Los Angeles Times*.
<http://maps.latimes.com/neighborhoods/neighborhood/brentwood/> Accessed: December 18, 2011
- Martin, Jonathan. "Herman Cain accused by two women of inappropriate behaviour". *Politico*. October 31, 2011 <http://www.politico.com/news/stories/1011/67194.html> Accessed: January 10, 2013
- Marlière, Philippe. "The rules of the journalistic field: Pierre Bourdieu's contribution to the sociology of the media". *European Journal of Communication* 1998. Vol. 13. No. 2. pp. 219–234.
- Matheson, Donald. "Weblogs and the Epistemology of the News: Some Trends in Online Journalism". *New Media and Society*. Vol. 6, No. 4, 2004. pp. 443-468
- Mauer, John. *Readings in Organizational Theory: Open Systems Approaches*. New York: Random House, 1971
- McChesney, Robert. *The Political Economy of Media: Enduring Issues, Emerging Dilemmas*. New York: Monthly Review Press, 2008
- McChesney, Robert. "Farewell to Journalism". *Journalism Practice*. 2012. Vol, 6, No. 6. pp. 614-626
- McDermott, Terry. "Blogs can top the presses". *The Los Angeles Times*. March 17, 2007. <http://articles.latimes.com/2007/mar/17/nation/na-blogs17> Accessed: September 3, 2012
- McPherson, Miller, Lynn Smith-Lovin, and James M. Cook. "Birds of a Feather: Homophily in Social Networks". *Annual Review of Sociology*. Volume 27, 2001. pp. 415-444
- McManus, John. *Market-Driven Journalism: Let the Citizen Beware?* London: Sage Publications, 1994
- McNair, Brian. *Journalism and Democracy: An Evaluation of the Political Public Sphere*. London: Routledge, 2000
- McNair, Brian. "Trust, Truth and Objectivity". In *Rethinking Journalism: Trust and Participation in a Transformed News Landscape*. Ed. Chris Peters and Marcel Broersma. London: Routledge, 2013. pp. 75-89
- Merritt, Davis. "What Citizen Journalism Can Learn from Public Journalism". *Public Journalism 2.0: The Promise and Reality of a Citizen-Engaged Press*. Ed. Jack Rosenberry and Burton St. John III. New York: Routledge, 2010. pp. 21 - 55

- Meyer, John W. and W. Scott Richard. "Centralization and the legitimacy problems of local government". In J.W. Meyer and W.R. Scott (Eds.). *Organizational Environments: Rituals and Rationality*. 1983. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage
- Miel, Persephone and Faris, Robert. "News and Information as Digital Media Come of Age". *The Berkman Center for Internet and Society at Harvard University*. 2008
- Mills, Charles Wright. *The Power Elite*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999
- MinistryofTruth. "Breitbart to use SEX SMEAR on Rep. Anthony Weiner". *Daily Kos*. May 28, 2011. <http://www.dailykos.com/story/2011/05/28/979547/-Brietbart-to-use-SEX-SMEAR-on-Rep-Anthony-Weiner-UPDATEX2-Easily-Debunked-FRAUD-EPIC-FAIL#> Accessed: June 20, 2013
- Mintzberg, Henry. "An Emerging Strategy of 'Direct' Research". *Administrative Science Quarterly*. 1979. Vol. 24. No. 4. pp. 582-589
- Mischel, Walter, and Carolyn C. Morf. "The self as a psycho-social dynamic processing system: A meta-perspective on a century of the self in psychology". In *Handbook of Self and Identity*. Eds. Mark R. Leary and June Price Tangney. London: Guilford Press, 2003
- Moeran, Brian and Jesper Strandgaard Pedersen. *Negotiating Values in the Creative Industries: Fairs, Festivals and Creative Events*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011
- Mutz, Diana. "The Consequences of Cross-Cutting Networks for Political Participation". *American Journal of Political Science*, vol. 46, no. 4, October 2002. pp. 838 – 855
- Meyer, John W., and W. Richard Scott. *Organizational Environments: Ritual and Rationality*. 1983. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.
- "New Establishment List". *Vanity Fair*. November 2013. pp. 107-123
- Nahon, Karine, and Hemsley, Jeff. "Democracy.com: A Tale of Political Blogs and Content". *44th Hawaii International Conference on System Sciences*, 2011a. pp. 1-11
- Nahon, Karine, Hemsley, Jeff, et al. "Fifteen Minutes of Fame: The Place of Blogs in the Life Cycle of Viral Political Information". *Policy and Internet*. Volume 3, Article 2, 2011b. pp. 2-28
- Narasimhan, Anand and Jones, Brittany. "Tournament Rituals, Category Dynamics, and Field Configuration: The Case of the Booker Prize". *Journal of Management Studies*. September 2008. Vol. 45, Issue 6. pp. 1036-1060
- Narasimhan, Anand and Watson, Mary R. "Tournament Rituals in the Evolution of Fields: The Case of the Grammy Awards". *The Academy of Management Journal*. 2004. Vol. 47. No. 1. pp. 59-80

- Ng, Christina. "Publisher and Author Andrew Breitbart Dead". *ABC News*. March 1, 2012. <http://abcnews.go.com/US/andrew-breitbart-publisher-author-dead/story?id=15824337> Accessed: March 1, 2012
- Nibley, A. "The Internet and the New Generation of Newsreaders". *Historical Journal of Film, Radio, and Television*. Vol. 20, No. 1, 2000. pp.37-42
- Nielson Company. "Audience Analysis Behind the AOL *Huffington Post* Deal". February 18, 2011
- Nygren, Gunnar and Degtereva, Elena. "Russian and Swedish Journalists: Professional roles, Ideals and Daily reality." *Journalism Practice*. 2012. Vol. 6. No.6. pp. 732-743.
- Nygren, Gunnar and Stigbrand, Karin. "The Formation of a Professional Identity: Journalism Students in Different Media Systems". *Journalism Studies*. 2014. Vol. 15. No. 6. pp. 841-858
- "Obama corners the market in Hollywood". *USA Today*. June 23, 2008. http://usatoday30.usatoday.com/news/politics/election2008/2008-06-23-obama-hollywood_N.htm?csp=34 Accessed: May 5, 2013
- O'Donnell, Christine. *Troublemaker: Let's Do What It Takes To Make America Great Again*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 2011
- Olmstead, Kenneth, Mitchell, Amy, and Rosenstiel, Tom. "Matt Drudge: Small Operation, Large Influence". *Pew Research Journalism Report*. May 9, 2011. <http://www.journalism.org/2011/05/09/drudge-report-small-operation-large-influence/> Accessed: April 14, 2012
- Onatu, George O. "Building Theory from Case Study Research: The Unanswered Question in Social Sciences?" *Global Virtual Conference Workshop*. April 8-12, 2013. pp. 170-173
- "Online 'more popular than newspapers' in the U.S.". *BBC News*. March 1, 2010. <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/8542430.stm> Accessed: January 15, 2012
- O'Reilly, Karen. *Ethnographic Methods*. New York: Routledge, 2005
- Ostrander, Susan. "Surely you're not in this to be helpful: Access, Rapport, and Interviews in Three Studies of Elites". *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography*. Volume 22, April 1993. pp. 7-27
- Overton, Winston. *Wall Street Scandals: Greed and Trading on Wall Street The American Way*. Bloomington, Indiana: Xlibris. 2013
- Oxford English Dictionary*. Second Edition. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989

- Pappu, Sridhar. "Washington's new brat pack masters media". *The New York Times*. March 25, 2011.
http://www.nytimes.com/2011/03/27/fashion/27YOUNGPUNDITS.html?pagewanted=all&_r=0 Accessed: January 10, 2012
- Paterson, Chris and Domingo, David. *Making Online News: The Ethnography of New Media Production*. New York: Peter Lang Publishing. 2008
- Patterson, Michael Robert. "Sheila Davis Lawrence and the Presidential Sex Scandal". *Arlington National Cemetery Website*. January 22, 1998.
<http://www.arlingtoncemetery.net/abuse41.htm> Accessed: September 1, 2013
- Paulussen, S. & Pieter Ugille. User generated content in the newsroom: professional and organisational constraints on participatory journalism. *Westminster Papers in Communication and Culture*. 2008. Vol. 5. No. 2. pp 24-41
- Pavlik, John. *Journalism and New Media*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2001
- Pescosolido, Bernice A. "Of pride and prejudice: The role of sociology and social networks in integrating the health sciences". *Journal of Health and Social Behaviour*. 2006. Vol. 47. pp. 189-208
- Peters, Chris and Marcel Broersma. *Rethinking Journalism: Trust and Participation in a Transformed News Landscape*. London: Routledge, 2013
- Pew Research Center's Journalism Project Staff. "How Blogs and Social Media Agendas Relate and differ from the Traditional Press". May 23, 2010.
<http://www.journalism.org/2010/05/23/new-media-old-media/> Accessed: June 30, 2011
- Phillips, Angela. "Old Sources: New Bottles". In *New Media, Old News: Journalism and Democracy in the Digital Age*. Ed. Natalie Fenton. London: Sage Publications, Ltd., 2010. pp. 87-102
- Preston, Paschal. *Making the News: Journalism and News Cultures in Europe*. New York: Routledge, 2009
- Price, Vincent. *Public Opinion*. London: Sage Publications. 1992
- Rainey, James and Jessica Garrison. "Pulitzer winners span old, new media". *The Los Angeles Times*. April 17, 2012 <http://articles.latimes.com/2012/apr/17/nation/la-na-pulitzers-20120417> Accessed: August 12, 2013
- Rao, Hayagreeva. "The Social Construction of Reputation: Certification Contests, Legitimation, and the Survival of Organizations in the American Automobile Industry: 1895-1912". *Strategic Management Journal*. 1994. Vol. 15. p. 29

- Reagan, Ronald. "Appointment of Frederick J. Ryan Jr., as Assistant to the President". *Ronald Reagan Presidential Library and Museum*. November 4, 1987. <http://www.reagan.utexas.edu/archives/speeches/1987/110487e.htm> Accessed: October 12, 2012
- Reay, Trish and C.R. Hinings. "Managing the Rivalry of Competing Institutional Logics". *Organization Studies*. 2009. Vol. 30. No. 6. pp. 629-652
- Reese, Stephen. "Understanding the Global Journalist: a hierarchy-of-influences approach". *Journalism Studies*. Vol. 2, No. 2, 2001. pp. 173-187
- Reeves, Carla L. "A Difficult Negotiation: Fieldwork Relations with Gatekeepers." *Qualitative Research*. 2010. Vol. 10. No. 3. pp. 315-331
- Rettberg, Jill Walker. *Blogging (Digital Media and Society)*. Cambridge: Polity Press, 2008
- Richardson, J.E. *Handbook of Theory of Research for the Sociology of Education*. Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1986
- Rindova, Violina P., and Charles J. Fombrun. "Constructing Competitive Advantage: The Role of Firm-Constituent Interactions." *Strategic Management Journal*. 1999. Vol. 20, No. 2. pp. 691-710.
- Rindova, Violina, Ian O. Williamson, Antoaneta P. Petkova, and Joy Marie Sever. "Being Good or Being Known: An Empirical Examination of the Dimensions, Antecedents, and Consequences of Organizational Reputation". *Academy of Management Review*. 2005. Vol. 48. No. 6. pp. 1033-1049
- Robinson, Susan. "The Mission of the J-Blog: Recapturing Journalistic Authority Online". *Journalism*. Vol. 7, No. 1. pp. 65-83, 2006
- Rosen, Jay. "Bloggers vs. Journalists is Over". *Blogging, Journalism and Credibility Conference*. January 15, 2005
- Ross, Philippe. "Is there an expertise of production? The case of new media producers". *New Media & Society*. 2010. Vol. 13. No. 6. pp. 912-928
- Rozell, Mark and James Pontuso. *American Conservative Opinion Leaders*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 1990
- Rubin, Elizabeth. "Arianna: The Connector". *VOGUE*. September 19, 2011. <http://www.vogue.com/magazine/article/arianna-huffington-the-connector/#1> Accessed: September 20, 2011
- Ruef, Martin and W. Richard Scott. "A Multidimensional Model of Organizational Legitimacy: Hospital Survival in Changing Institutional Environments". *Administrative Science Quarterly*. 1998. Vol. 43. pp. 877-904

- Russell, Adrienne. "Digital Communication Networks and the Journalistic Field: The 2005 French Riots". *Critical Studies in Media Communication*. 2007. Vol. 24. Issue 4. Pp. 285-302
- Russell, Adrienne. "Innovation in Hybrid Spaces: 2011 UN Climate Summit and the Expanding Journalism Landscape". *Journalism*. 2013. p. 1-17
- Russell, Adrienne. *Networked: A Contemporary History of News in Transition*. Cambridge: Polity Press, 2011
- Russert, Luke and Dann, Carrie. "Weiner 'can't say with certitude that lewd photo isn't him". *NBC News*. June 1, 2011.
<http://firstread.nbcnews.com/news/2011/06/01/6764247-weiner-cant-say-with-certitude-that-lewd-photo-isnt-of-him> Accessed: September 1, 2013
- Ryan, Michael. "Journalistic Ethics, Objectivity, Existential Journalism, Stanpoint Epistemology, and Public Journalism". *Journal of Mass Media Ethics: Exploring Questions of Media Morality*. Vol. 16, Issue 1, 2001. pp. 3-22
- Saba, Jennifer. "New York Times rises on subscriptions". *Reuters*. October 31, 2013.
<http://www.reuters.com/article/2013/10/31/us-newyorktimes-results-idUSBRE99U0MW20131031> Accessed: October 31, 2013
- Sabato, Larry. *Feeding Frenzy: Attack Journalism and American Politics*. New York: The Free Press, 1991
- Sanders, Karen. *Ethics and Journalism*. London: Sage Publications Ltd., 2003
- Sandoval, Greg. "Breitbart.com has Drudge to thank for its success". *CNET News*. November 2005. http://news.cnet.com/Breitbart.com-has-Drudge-to-thank-for-its-success---page-2/2100-1025_3-5976096-2.html Accessed: July 20, 2012
- Savage, David. "Bill to protect journalists clears Senate panel". *The Los Angeles Times*. September 12, 2013. <http://articles.latimes.com/2013/sep/12/nation/la-na-shield-law-20130913> Accessed: September 15, 2013
- Schactman, Noah. "Blogging Goes Legit, Sort of", *Wired News*.
<http://www.wired.com/news/school/0,1383,52992,00.html> Accessed: June 6, 2002
- Scherer, Michael. "Inside Obama's Idea Factory in Washington". *TIME*. November 21, 2008. <http://content.time.com/time/politics/article/0,8599,1861305,00.html> Accessed: May 10, 2012
- Schudson, Michael. *Discovering the News: A Social History of American Newspapers*. New York: Basic Books, 1978
- Schudson, Michael. *The Good Citizen: A History of American Civic Life*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1998

- Schudson, Michael and Downie, Leonard. "The Reconstruction of American Journalism". *Columbia Journalism Review*. October 20, 2009
http://www.cjr.org/reconstruction/the_reconstruction_of_american.php?page=all
 Accessed: May 1, 2013
- Schudson, Michael and Fink, Katherine. "The rise of contextual journalism, 1950s-2000s". *Journalism*. Vol. 18. 2013. pp. 2-18
- Schudson, Michael. *Power of News*. London: Harvard University Press, 1995
- Schudson, Michael. "The News Media as Political Institutions". *Annual Review of Political Science*. Issue 5, 2002. pp. 249 – 269
- Schudson, Michael. *The Sociology of News*. New York: Norton Publishing, Inc. 2003
- Schultz, Ida. "The Journalistic Gut Feeling: Journalistic doxa, news habitus and orthodox news values". *Journalism Practice*. 2007. Vol. 1. No. 2. pp. 190-207
- Schultz, Julianne. *Reviving the Fourth Estate: Democracy, Accountability, and the Media*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998
- Schwartz, David. *Culture and Power: The Sociology of Pierre Bourdieu*. Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1998
- Scott, Esther. "'Big Media' Meet the 'Bloggers': Coverage of Trent Lott's Remarks at Strom Thurmond's Birthday Party," case study written for use at the *John F. Kennedy School of Government*, Boston: Harvard University, 2004
- Scott, Travers. "Tempests of the Blogosphere: Presidential Campaign Stories that Failed to Ignite Mainstream Media". *Digital Media and Democracy: Tactics in Hard Times*. Ed. Megan Boler. Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 2008. pp. 271-300
- Shear, Michael. "Cain Faces Allegations, And Now, the Possible Repercussions". *The New York Times*. October 31, 2011.
<http://thecaucus.blogs.nytimes.com/2011/10/31/herman-cain-faces-the-allegations-and-now-the-possible-repercussions/> Accessed: June 15, 2012
- Shoemaker, Pamela. *Mediating the Message: Theories of Influences on Mass Media Content*. New York: Longman Publishers, 1996
- Shoemaker, Pamela, Tim Vos and Stephen Reese. "Gatekeeping Theory". *The Handbook of Journalism Studies*. Ed. Karin Wahl Jorgensen and Thomas Hanitzsch. New York: Routledge Ltd., 2009. pp. 73-82
- Singer, Jane B. "Who Are These Guys? The Online Challenge to the Notion of Journalistic Professionalism". *Journalism*. Vol. 4. No. 2. 2003. pp. 139-63.

- Singer, Jane B. "The Journalist in the Network: A Shifting Rationale for the Gatekeeping Role and the Objectivity Norm". *IV International Conference on Communication and Reality: 'Communication Crossroads: Limits and Transgressions'*. Facultat de Comunicacio Blanquerna, Universitat Ramon Llull Barcelona, Spain, May 2008
- Slater, Don. *The Internet: An Ethnographic Approach*. London: Berg Publishers, 2000
- Snow, Nancy. "My Fellow Blogging Americans". *Communicator in Chief: How Barack Obama Used New Media Technology to Win the White House*. Littlefield, Maryland: Littlefield and Rowman Publishers, Inc., 2010. pp. 67-83
- Soloski, John. "News Reporting and Professionalism: Some Constraints on the Reporting of the News". *Media, Culture and Society*. Vol. 11, No. 4, pp. 207-228, 1989
- Speier, Hans. "Historical Developments of Public Opinion". *The American Journal of Sociology*, Vol. 55, No.4, 1950. pp. 376-388
- Steensen, Steen. "Online Journalism and the Promises of New Technology". *Journalism Studies*. Vol. 12. No. 3. 2011. pp. 311-327
- Stein, Sam. "Nancy Pelosi hired *Think Progress*' Faiz Shakir as Director of New Media". *The Huffington Post*. May 8, 2012. http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2012/05/08/nancy-pelosi-online-director-faiz-shakir-n_1500180.html Accessed: May 31, 2012
- Stephens, Joe and Carol D. Leonnig. "Solyndra Scandal. *The Washington Post*. December 25, 2011. <http://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/specialreports/solyndra-scandal/> Accessed: January 1, 2012
- Sternheimer, Karen. *Celebrity Culture and the American Dream: Stardom and Social Mobility*. New York: Routledge. 2011
- Stinchcombe, Arthur L., Mary Sexton McDill, and Dollie R. Walker. "Demography of Organizations." *American Journal of Sociology*, 1968. pp. 221-229.
- Suchman, Mark. "Managing legitimacy: Strategic and institutional approaches". *Academy of Management Review*, Vol. 20, 1995. pp. 571-610
- Sztompka, Piotr. *A Sociological Theory*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 1999
- Taranto, James. "Taking on the Democratic Media Complex". *The Wall Street Journal*. October 16, 2009. <http://online.wsj.com/news/articles/SB10001424052748704471504574451703003340362> Accessed: January 15, 2012

- “The New York Times”. *Encyclopaedia Britannica*. Online.
<http://www.britannica.com/search?query=the%20new%20york%20times> Accessed:
 September 1, 2013
- “The State of the News Media: An Annual Report on American Journalism
 2011”. *PEW Project for Excellence in Journalism*. [http://stateofthemedias.org/print-
 chapter/?print_id=148](http://stateofthemedias.org/print-chapter/?print_id=148)
- Thompson, James, D. *Organizations in Action: Social Sciences Bases of Administrative
 Theory*. University of Maryland: McGraw-Hill, 1967
- Thompson, John. *Books in the Digital Age: The Transformation of Academic and
 Higher Education Publishing in Britain and the United States*. Cambridge, United
 Kingdom: Polity Press, 2005
- Thompson, John. *Merchants of Culture: The Publishing Business in the Twenty-First
 Century*. Cambridge: Polity Press, 2010
- Thompson, John. *Political Scandal: Power and Visibility in the Media Age*.
 Cambridge: Polity Press, 2000
- “Top Political Blogs”. *Technorati.com*.
<http://technorati.com/blogs/directory/politics/uspoltics/> Accessed: December
 9, 2012
- Torring, Jacob. *New Theories of Discourse: Laclau, Mouffe and Zizek*. London: Wiley-
 Blackwell, 1999
- Trippi, Joe. *The Revolution Will Not Be Televised: Democracy, The Internet, and the
 Overthrow of Everything*. New York: Harper Collins Publishers Inc., 2004
- Troy, Levi. *Intellectuals and the American Presidency: Philosophers, Jesters, or
 Technicians*. Maryland: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, Inc. 2003
- Tuchman, Gaye. *Making News: A Study in the Construction of Reality*. New York:
 The Free Press, 1980
- Tuchman, Gaye. “The production of news”. In: Jensen KB (ed.) *A Handbook of Media and
 Communication Research. Qualitative and Quantitative Methodologies*. London:
 Routledge, 2002. pp. 78-90
- Tunstall, Jeremy. *Journalists at Work*. London: Constable, 1971
- Twain, Mark. *Mark Twain's Notebooks and Journals: 1855-1973, Volume I*. London:
 University of California Press, 1975
- Ueberbacher, Florian. “Exploring Legitimation Strategies of New Ventures”. *University of
 St. Gallen School of Management. PhD Dissertation*. 2013

- Ulicny, Brian and Ken Baclawski. "New Metrics for Newsblog Credibility". *International Conference on Weblogs and Social Media*. 2007. <http://www.icwsm.org/papers/paper55.html> Accessed: October 10, 2012
- Ulicny, Brian, M.M. Kokar and C.J. Matheus. "Metrics for Monitoring A Social-Political Blogosphere: A Malaysian Case Study". *Internet Computing, IEEE*. Volume 14, Issue 2, March – April 2010. pp. 34-44
- United States Military Code. "Policy Concerning Homosexuality in the Armed Forces". US Code Title 10, Subtitle G, Section 654. January 24, 1994 <http://web.mit.edu/committees/rotc/code.html> Accessed: November 20, 2012
- Usher, Nikki. " 'News media are targeted but audiences are not': Herbert Gans on multiperspectival journalism". *Neiman Journalism Lab*. March 2011. <http://www.niemanlab.org/2011/03/news-media-are-targeted-but-audiences-are-not-herbert-gans-on-multiperspectival-journalism/> Accessed: April 2013
- Van Maanen, John. *Tales of the Field: On Writing Ethnography*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1988
- Volkmer, Ingrid, and Amira Firdaus. "Between Networks and 'Hierarchies of Credibility'". In *Rethinking Journalism: Trust and Participation in a Transformed News Landscape* Ed. Chris Peters and Marcel Broersma. London: Routledge, 2013. pp. 101-114
- Von Drehle, David. "The Year of the Youth Vote". *TIME*. January 31, 2008. <http://content.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,1708836,00.html> Accessed: May 15, 2012
- Walker, Franklin and G. Ezra Dane. Mark Twain's Travels with Mr. Brown. <https://www.twainquotes.com/altaindex.html> Accessed: June 30, 2013
- Wall, M. "Blogs of War: Weblogs as News". *Journalism*. 2005. pp. 153 -172
- Watts, Duncan and Dodds, Peter. "Influentials, Networks, and Public Opinion". *Journal of Consumer Research*. Volume 34, December 2007. pp. 441-458
- Weber, Max. *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1958
- Weber, Max. *The Theory of Social and Economic Organization*. New York: The Free Press, 1964
- Weinberger, David. *Small Pieces Loosely Joined: A Unified Theory of the Web*. New York: Basic Books, 2003
- Weinger, Mackenzie. "Blogs rail over bill defining media". *Politico*. September 13, 2013. <http://www.politico.com/story/2013/09/blog-reactions-shield-law-96774.html> Accessed: September 15, 2013

- Wiik Jenny. "Identities under construction: Professional journalism in a phase of destabilization". *International Review of Sociology* 2009. Vol. 19. pp. 351–365
- Wiik, Jenny. "Journalism in Transition: The Professional Identity of Swedish Journalists." Doctoral Thesis. University of Gothenburg: Faculty of Social Sciences. 2010
- Wilkin, Peter. *Noam Chomsky: On Power, Knowledge and Human Nature*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1997
- Willig, Ida. "Newsroom ethnography in a field perspective". *Journalism*. 2012. Vol. 16. pp. 1-16
- Wiltz, Teresa. "U-Turn: The fabled D.C. street that played host to Duke Ellington and Pearl Bailey reinvents itself once more". *The Washington Post*. March 5, 2006. <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2006/02/28/AR2006022800947.html> Accessed: May 1, 2012
- Witschge, Tamara and Nygren, Gunnar. "Journalism: A Profession Under Pressure?" *Journal of Media Business Studies*. Vol. 6, No. 1, 2009. pp. 37-59
- Woods, Peter. *The Divided School*. New York: Routledge, 1979
- Yankelovich, Daniel. *Coming to Public Judgment: Making Democracy Work in a Complex World*. 1st ed. Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1991
- Yin, Robert. *The Case Study Anthology*. London: Sage, 2004
- Yin, Robert. *Case Study Research: Design and Methods*. London: Sage, 2013
- Zelizer, Barbie. "Journalists as Interpretive Communities". *Critical Studies in Mass Communication*. Vol. 10, No. 2, 1993. pp. 219-237
- Zelizer, Barbie. *Taking Journalism Seriously: News and the Academy*. 1st ed. New York: Sage Publications, Inc. 2004
- Zimmerman, Monica A. and Gerald J. Zeitz. "Beyond Survival: Achieving New Venture Growth By Building Legitimacy". *Academy of Management Review*. 2002. Vol. 27. No. 3. pp. 414-431