

Public Abstract

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Efforts to understand the relationship between technological change and organizational change in the journalism industry have taken on a new meaning over the past decade. The survival of professional news organizations may rely on their ability to strategically manage technological changes. This dissertation proposes the use of the mutual shaping of technology (MST) construct, based on the Diffusion of Innovations theoretical paradigm, as a means to examine the relationship between technological and organizational change in a news company. MST imagines a dynamic relationship between efforts to diffuse an innovation in an organization and efforts to shape that innovation's functions as well as perceptions about the innovation. I use the five levels of analysis from Shoemaker's hierarchical model to organize my discussion of an extreme case. Using data from in-depth interviews, I explore how MST functions in a news company developing a new technology for news while still working to publish a daily newspaper. I ask if the new technology is sustainable economically, and I also compare the model, which I call the "social journalism" platform, to the ideal models developed in the public journalism movement and to the model some scholars consider the highest ideal: Habermas' public sphere. I find that the mutual shaping of technology dynamic is most apparent at the organizational and institutional levels of analysis, and members of the public are prepared to help shape news platforms; however, the financial viability of this type of participatory model is by no means guaranteed.