

A DIGITAL JUGGLING ACT: A CASE STUDY OF NEW MEDIA'S IMPACT ON  
THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF LOCAL TELEVISION REPORTERS

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of the Requirements for the Degree  
Master of Arts

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by  
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The undersigned, appointed by the dean of the Graduate School, have examined the thesis entitled

A DIGITAL JUGGLING ACT: A CASE STUDY OF NEW MEDIA'S IMPACT ON  
THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF LOCAL TELEVISION REPORTERS

presented by Anthony Carmen Adornato, a candidate for the degree of Master of Arts in Journalism, and hereby certify that, in their opinion, it is worthy of acceptance.

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This work is dedicated in loving memory of my father, Dr. Dominick Carmen Adornato Jr., a man of great integrity and determination. From humble beginnings, he worked tirelessly to build an extraordinary family and career. My professional and academic endeavors would not have been possible without his guidance and encouragement. His accomplishments in life motivate me to achieve greatness.

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# A DIGITAL JUGGLING ACT: A CASE STUDY OF NEW MEDIA'S IMPACT ON THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF LOCAL TELEVISION REPORTERS

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## **ABSTRACT**

Budding journalists entering the field, or those trying to stay relevant in their job, will have to be able to assume a range of job responsibilities in the evolving media landscape. This case study explores the dramatic transformation new media is having on the daily job responsibilities of local television journalists. Through in-depth interviews with reporters and participant observation, the research reveals reporters' tasks and work routines are evolving in three areas: dissemination, newsgathering, and the relationship with the public.

Study participants expected new media to impact their dissemination process, ramping up job demands as they produce content for multiple platforms. However, they never anticipated new media, particularly Facebook and Twitter, would be so useful in the newsgathering process. In addition, the research details how the shifting relationship with audience has affected reporters' responsibilities. This case study is a useful snapshot along the convergence continuum, adding to our understanding of the fundamental changes taking place in the journalism field and, more specifically, to local television news reporters. Lessons learned from this research are helpful to others in the industry and journalism educators.

## Chapter I

### Introduction

From the printing press to computers, technology has always shaped how journalists perform their craft and where the public turns for information (Cottle, 1999). The Internet is no different; in fact, it has created “a crisis in the news media” (*The Post-Standard*, 2009). However, some, including scholars, could have hardly predicted the implications of the birth of the Internet. In 1997, Brill wrote, “While some media professionals worry that the Internet will usurp traditional media, most agree the Internet is not yet what it needs to be...It appears unlikely that online newspapers will soon replace existing media” (p. 3, 4). But, today, we are witnessing what was once thought to be unlikely.

The new medium has provided countless channels for people, who traditionally turned to newspapers or television for news, to consume information, and the resulting impact on the newspaper and broadcast industries has been seismic. Newspaper readership and television news viewership is dwindling as people increasingly turn to online resources, forcing massive layoffs of newsroom staffers and the closure of numerous media outlets. The recession has only exacerbated the situation by adding to the erosion of advertisers that began with the popularity of the World Wide Web.

Since the beginning of 2009 alone, at least half-a-dozen daily newspapers have disappeared. For instance, Colorado’s oldest newspaper, the *Rocky Mountain News* closed, ending a 150-year-old institution. And, the *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*, also falling victim to readers who are now flocking to the Internet, scrapped its print version in favor

of a web-only publication. These examples support the notion that “the history of journalism is in many ways defined by technological change” (Pavlik, 2000, p. 229). “It has become a cliché: The only constant in the media industry today is change. The cliché, however, is reality” (Sylvie et al., 2004, p. 41).

Even though the closures that the newspaper industry is experiencing have not been as pervasive in broadcasting, at least not yet, we would be naïve not to ask: what does the future hold for television news? Broadcast news outlets, in an attempt to remain competitive by responding to the demands of consumers, are integrating new media, commonly referred to as digital media or new technology, into their traditional news products. As a result, in television newsrooms across the country, new media is dramatically transforming the job responsibilities of reporters. In addition to reporting for traditional on-air newscasts, journalists are being asked to assume more day-to-day duties including shooting video, updating website content, and maintaining blogs. While there is a lack of scholarly articles related to the topic, particularly new media’s impact on local television reporters, trade publications have chronicled what are called “multimedia journalists,” a term used to describe a new breed of television reporters who are integrating new technology into their traditional job duties. In fact, a review of broadcast employment sites TVJobs.com and Medialine reveals a majority of postings for reporting positions now use “multimedia,” “social media,” or “new media” in the descriptions.

As a communications professional who intends to teach journalism, the author of this thesis is particularly interested in investigating the changing responsibilities journalists, specifically local television reporters, are tasked with. Educators must be

able to teach journalism students how to embrace new technologies and acquire cross-platform skills while upholding the basic principles of journalism in a democratic society.

In order to do that effectively, we must first understand the changing job duties of today's television journalists as well as the current and potential impact those changes are having on their ability to report. Future television reporters will be filling spots in local newsrooms across the country, so this descriptive study at the *local* level will allow these budding journalists to better understand and prepare for what they will encounter in the real world.

Accordingly, this case study will focus on how new media is impacting the work routines of reporters at WBCZ-TV, a local television station in a medium-size media market in the northeast United States. For purposes of this study, the organization's identity has been disguised. The results of this study will not only have implications for pedagogical practices in journalism instruction, but also for news managers and staffers as they tackle the changing landscape of the broadcast news business.

### ***Research Question***

This case study of reporters in a local television newsroom examines a research question that is relevant to journalism scholars, educators, and students as well as news practitioners: *What is the impact of new media on the daily job responsibilities of local television journalists?*

### ***Explanation of Terms***

#### *i. New media*

For clarification, it is important to define "new media" as it pertains to the research question. As opposed to traditional media such as print and television, "new

media” encompasses the Internet and its subsequent digital byproducts, including, but not limited to, websites, blogs, podcasts, online video, mobile text messaging, and social networking sites, such as Facebook and Twitter. Also noteworthy for the purpose of this study are several terms frequently associated with new media: multimedia and multiplatform, which refer to disseminating information across a traditional channel as well as at least one new channel associated with the Internet.

*ii. Responsibilities*

Responsibilities is not synonymous with related terms, such as roles and duties, mentioned in the literature review. Rather, responsibilities, as utilized in the research question, has a distinct definition for the purposes of this study. For any role in a newsroom there is a set of responsibilities attached. In other words, a role is defined by its responsibilities. Responsibilities are the items that roles are required to do. These responsibilities include the outputs that need to be achieved as well as recurring tasks such as reports to be written and meetings to be attended, as part of the role.

*iii. Local television journalist/Reporter*

For the purposes of this study, a local television journalist or reporter is defined as a member of a news organization in one of the 210 Designated Market Areas (DMA), established by Nielsen, whose daily job responsibilities are traditionally dedicated to the gathering and presentation of information via television.

## **Chapter II**

### **Theoretical Framework**

#### **Diffusion of Innovations**

Diffusion of Innovations, used as a foundation for thousands of studies that examine the adoption of new innovations, is an appropriate theoretical perspective to research the spread of new media through local television newsrooms. Everett Rogers (1995) defines “diffusion” as “the process by which an innovation is communicated through certain channels over time among the members of a social system” (p. 5). An innovation, according to Rogers, is “an idea, practice, or object that is perceived as new by an individual or other unit of adoption” (p. 5). Furthermore, when new ideas are invented, diffused, and are adopted or rejected, leading to certain consequences, social change occurs within a system (p. 6).

Because Diffusion of Innovations allows researchers to draw connections within a defined social system, the theory provides a useful framework to investigate television stations (social system) and, more importantly, reporters’ adoption and use of new media (innovation). As the process of implementing new media spreads rapidly in newsrooms across the country, this is an ideal time to employ Rogers’ theory. In fact, Diffusion of Innovations has been widely applied to studies of media audiences and practitioners. These studies have tracked technological changes through newsrooms, including Garrison’s (2000) study of journalists’ use of computer technology. In the 1980’s, researchers used Diffusion of Innovations to examine new computer pagination technology in newsrooms.

In studying how innovation occurs, Rogers argues that it consists of four stages: (1) invention, (2) diffusion (or communication) through the social system, (3) time, and (4) a social system, which involves consequences. The theory, taken as a whole, is valuable to the understanding of the phenomenon under consideration in this study. Roger's scholarly literature about the diffusion process through a social system and subsequent consequences in a social system are of particular interest to the research question. Before exploring these two elements in greater detail, the history of diffusion theory and its application to the study of mass communications are outlined.

### ***History and Application to Mass Communications***

Roger's scholarly work, entitled "Diffusion of Innovations," began as an analysis of the adoption of new agricultural methods by farmers—a study that did not at the time seem even remotely connected to mass communications issues (Lowery & DeFleur, 1995). He provided a better understanding of the process that took place from the time people found out about an innovation until they accepted or rejected it. Rogers built on the work of Bryce Ryan and Neil Goss (1943), rural sociologists who studied the factors in the adoption of a hybrid seed corn, an important agricultural innovation, in two Iowa communities.

The innovation was produced and sold to farmers during the depression of the 1930s. In many parts of the country, use of the seed corn spread among corn growers; however, little was known about the process of adoption on the individual level (Lowery & DeFleur). Ryan and Goss found the adoption was gradual; there was a gap, on average, of several years between the time farmers heard of the corn seed and when they actually planted it. While farmers identified a number of sources that brought the

innovation to their attention, neighbors were cited as the *most* influential even though neighbors were not named as the most frequent source of information about the seed. This finding is of particular interest because it suggests the influence that peers have on the adoption of new media in newsrooms.

“For students of mass communication, the study [Rogers] provided a foundation and conceptual framework for understanding the link between *awareness* of something new—often through information supplied by mass media—and *action* resulting in some form of adoption” (Lowery & DeFleur, p. 128). Rogers was instrumental in advancing the work of Ryan and Goss. In his 1962 seminal scholarship, Rogers reviewed 506 studies on the adoption of innovations, in environments such as medical practices, consumer products, and manufacturing techniques. Rogers provided conceptual clarity by defining diffusion and innovation in a straightforward manner.

### ***Diffusion through a Social System***

Diffusion theory centers on key elements of social change: the innovation itself, the channels through which the innovation is communicated, time, and the social system in which the process of diffusion occurs. “Adoption of new ideas, technologies, and practices take time in any social system, even small and highly focused professional system such as journalism,” (Garrison, p. 2).

New media is the innovation targeted in this study. Among other modern communications tools, new media includes blogs, mobile devices, and social media platforms. Media colleagues, new media suppliers, audience members, and mass media are just some of the various communications channels. Time refers to how long it took the newsroom in this study and subsequently journalists in the newsroom to adopt new

media. The social system is a local television newsroom. Most important to this study, “There is a final way the social system plays a role in the diffusion of innovations: it is involved in the consequences of innovations,” (Rogers, p. 31).

### ***Consequences***

Rogers provides an overview of the eight types of diffusion research: earliness of knowing about innovations, rate of adoption of different innovations in a social system, innovativeness, opinion leadership, diffusion of networks, rate of adoption in different social systems, communications channel use, and consequences of innovation. Because this study focuses on the *impact* of new media in a social system, the consequences approach, as outlined by Rogers, is applicable to this research project. He defines consequences as the “changes that occur to an individual or to a social system as a result of the adoption or rejection of an innovation,” (p. 31).

Even though the study of consequences has received less attention from diffusion researchers than other aspects of the theory, Rogers provides an improved understanding of the consequences of innovation by classifying them in a taxonomy. Three interrelated dimensions of consequences, according to Rogers, are: (1) desirable versus undesirable, (2) direct versus indirect, and (3) anticipated versus unanticipated. According to diffusion theory, “the undesirable, indirect, and unanticipated consequences of an innovation usually go together, as do the desirable, direct, and anticipated consequences (Rogers, p. 421).

#### *i. Desirable versus Undesirable Consequences*

While desirable consequences are the functional effects of an innovation for a social system (newsroom) or an individual (reporter), undesirable consequences are

dysfunctional effects of an innovation (new media). This research attempts to determine if the consequences of adopting new media are desirable or undesirable, or likely both, for local television reporters. The descriptive nature of the study will allow reporters to explain the impact of those consequences.

Rogers indicates that desirable effects of an innovation are typically weighed against undesirable effects of an innovation. However, he argues, adopters of an innovation typically cannot avoid dysfunctional effects. Therefore, the researcher expects reporters who are interviewed for this study will describe advantages of new media, such as convenience and efficiency, along with disadvantages, including increased workload and changes in the structure of the newsroom.

### *iii. Direct versus Indirect Consequences*

Direct consequences are changes that occur in immediate response to the adoption of an innovation. In the newsroom at the center of this study, the researcher expects to find direct consequences of new media such as additional tasks and changes in workflow, including the use of mobile devices to update social media platforms from the scene of stories. Indirect consequences are changes that occur as a result of the direct consequences. The researcher anticipates interviews will touch on the far-reaching effects of new media. These second-hand effects, which will likely be considered unanticipated and undesirable, may include an erosion of news values and a shift in the organizational structure of newsrooms.

### *iii. Anticipated versus Unanticipated Consequences*

According to Rogers, researchers studying the adoption of an innovation can expect to discover anticipated consequences, those recognized and intended by adopters,

and unintended consequence, changes that were neither intended nor recognized by members of social system. The unanticipated consequences are typically unknown at the time of adoption. Reporters interviewed for this study will be asked about unforeseen consequences that they are now experiencing as a result of the adoption of new media.

The researcher of this study also recognizes the importance of understanding the cause-and-effect relationship. According to “Diffusion of Innovations,” the researcher must pay careful attention to interviewees’ responses to make sure the changes they explain are the result of the innovation defined in the study. In other words, the changes would be unlikely to occur if the innovation were not introduced in a social system.

### ***Other Applicable Elements of Diffusion Theory***

There are other important parts of Rogers book relevant to this study and a greater understanding of the diffusion and adoption process. Rogers identified five major stages in the adoption process for an individual: knowledge, persuasion, decision, implementation, and confirmation. During the first and second stages, members of a social system, such as journalists, first learn about an innovation. An individual also forms a favorable or unfavorable opinion of the innovation, and if one’s interest is aroused after their initial awareness of an innovation, they may actively search for more information about the innovation. The individual then evaluates whether the innovation will meet the need that was a necessary condition in the previous stage (Lowery & DeFleur, p. 129). Journalists, for example, may evaluate whether the advantages of utilizing new media outweigh the disadvantages. In the decision and implementation phases, an individual usually tests an invention and decides whether or not to adopt and put to use. If he or she chooses in favor of adoption, they are added to the S-shaped

(sigmoid) curve. Finally, in the confirmation stage, an individual decides whether to continue use of the innovation.

Rogers utilizes an S-shaped curve to describe the cumulative process of adopting a new innovation; as the rate of awareness of an innovation increases among people, peer pressure sets in, which leads to an increased rate of adoption. In other words, according to diffusion of innovations, there will be “early adopters” or “leaders” of new technology and those who take on the innovations based on the experience and opinions of those “leaders.” Such a notion may help to explain where local television reporters fit along the continuum in relation to other adopters, as well as who influences them in their integration of new media. Does the “peer pressure” of newsroom colleagues who are experimenting with social media such as Twitter, for example, persuade them? Or perhaps they are instead tempted to jump on the bandwagon because national media outlets have done so.

Competitive pressures and economic imperatives can also fuel the adoption of an innovation (new media). An innovation may be diffused through a newsroom’s culture as a mandate by managers, who themselves may be following the lead of other companies that have adopted new media. From an audience perspective, television stations must meet the needs—follow the demands—of viewers who are turning to new media for news now more than ever before. Therefore, the public’s rapid adoption of an innovation (new media) plays a significant role in television stations’ and, subsequently, journalists’ adoption.

As a result, media companies must change their theory of business in order to remain competitive in today’s marketplace. As Drucker (1995) notes, businesses can

collapse if their theory of business—assumptions a business is based on, including customers, competitors, values and behavior, technology, and dynamics—is not revised to keep up with the changing marketplace. Indeed, many media companies are revamping their theory of business, which is having implications in newsrooms for journalists, their workflow, and daily job responsibilities.

Rogers indicates five stages of the innovation process in organizations: agenda setting, matching, redefining/restructuring, clarifying, and routinizing. Although it is too early to definitively state which stage the local television newsroom at the center of this study will fall, many scholarly and trade journal articles point to the clarifying and routinizing stages. Local media outlets are still trying to determine the exact role of new media, especially social media such as Twitter and Facebook, and how these innovations should become an ongoing part of a station's news product.

Accordingly, as previously noted, there is an innovation-decision process through which an individual unit—a reporter here—passes through, beginning with knowledge and ending with implementation and confirmation (Rogers). This research focuses on how reporters, the “innovation foot soldiers,” navigate through the process of integrating new media into their traditional job responsibilities.

### ***Limitations***

Despite the many strengths of and widespread use of Diffusion of Innovations, one of the most cited limitations of the theory is its pro-innovation bias, the assumption that an innovation will be adopted and not rejected by all members of a target group. Rogers defines pro-innovation bias as “the implication in diffusion research that an innovation should be diffused and adopted by all members of a social system, that it

should be diffused more rapidly, and that the innovation should be neither re-invented nor rejected” (p. 100). Unlike earlier diffusion scholars, Rogers urges researchers to recognize that some innovations should be re-invented, and researchers can gain insight by studying the reinvention process. In his later versions of *Diffusion of Innovations*, he acknowledges the limitations of diffusion theory. To counter the pro-innovation bias, Rogers suggests researchers study innovations that are not yet completely diffused, because such studies would not concentrate as much on the most successful innovations, which are often the focus of diffusion research.

In addition to the pro-innovation bias, he notes the issue of equality: the negative impacts of the theory are not considered. While the theory focuses on the positive outcomes, it overlooks negative consequences when an individual or organization chooses to adopt a particular innovation. Goss (1979), for example, observed that the application of innovation diffusion theory in developing countries had undesirable consequences. Goss described how the theory wrongly assumed that benefits resulting from the adoption of innovations spread and become homogeneous.

## **Chapter III**

### **Literature Review**

An analysis of peer-reviewed journalism and mass communications journals reveals a dearth of studies related to the daily job responsibilities—particularly those associated with new media—of local television journalists. As a result, a review of scholarly literature helps to lay the groundwork for this research, indicating that further investigation into how new media is impacting local television reporters’ daily job responsibilities will fill a void in communications research.

#### ***Gap in Scholarly Research***

Research in this area is lacking on several fronts. First, many of the studies focus on news *managers’* perspectives of how new media is transforming the workflow of reporters, without considering the attitudes of actual reporters. As previous research indicates, management views can be quite different from those of news personnel, a rarely studied population, making their viewpoints all the more important (Smith, Tanner, and Duhé, 2007).

Secondly, in almost all of these cases, the topic of this thesis is only *part*, not necessarily the focus, of these studies. Academic literature mentioning television reporters’ job responsibilities “often focuses on the coming together of previously separate print, broadcast, and online news organizations,” known as full convergence (Thurman and Lupton, 2008, p. 441). Full convergence is not representative of what is happening at local television stations across the country, so such studies are limited in their scope and evaluation of how new media is impacting the daily job responsibilities of

local television news reporters. Instead, “more media companies have done multiplatform reporting on their primary platform, such as newspaper or TV, and on their online news site” (Huang et al., 2006, p. 84). Because many of these studies fail to delve deep into this study’s research topic, it is clear there is a need for research focused specifically on the impact of new media on local television reporters—and from their point of view.

Additionally, there are limited published empirical studies that have examined how new media affects *local* news personnel (Smith, Tanner, and Duhé). Instead, much research related to this topic focuses on *nationwide* trends, again from the management perspective. As previously indicated, this case study with *local* reporters at the ground level, and in their natural environment, will shed light on how their daily responsibilities are impacted by new media. The resulting data will have implications for media scholars’ and professionals’ understanding of local television reporters’ duties as well as that of journalism instructors and their students.

Finally, much of the scholarly literature related to this study’s research question utilizes quantitative research methods, most notably surveys, which do not allow for a descriptive, detail-orientated understanding of the day-to-day job duties of local television reporters. And, given the pace at which new media has been evolving, some of the studies may be considered outdated.

### ***Conflicting Views from the Newsroom***

Despite these minor limitations, current scholarly research reveals interesting information about adoption and implementation of new media in newsrooms, including conflicting views of news manager and personnel as it pertains to the integration of new

media. According to Smith, Tanner, and Duhé, “news workers were significantly less likely than their bosses to have a positive opinion about convergence” (p. 564). In the study, no managers reported having a negative experience.

Indeed, most personnel saw multimedia journalism as an economic necessity, a business imperative. Journalists surveyed by Singer (2004) believed the changes were something their “bosses’ bosses” wanted and were not contestable—a sentiment echoed in other studies. “Most journalists accepted the logic of convergence, but some were still uncomfortable with multimedia and they struggled to acquire necessary skills to do well with all media” (Avilés and Carvajal, 2008, p. 230). These findings indicate a level of resistance among news staff as new media is adopted in newsrooms. That resistance may play a role in the time it takes for a newsroom to fully adopt the innovation and news staffers sentiments about how the new innovation is changing their daily job responsibilities.

### ***New Media and the Evolving Responsibilities of Journalists***

Even though previous research does not focus solely on local television reporters, the studies demonstrate that new media is changing the responsibilities of reporters in the newspaper, radio, and television industries. Smith, Tanner, and Duhé’s nationwide survey of the impact of convergence on television reporters and producers from a range of market sizes shows that “TV news staffers are doing much more than just ‘TV’” (p. 555). According to the study, nearly 70 percent of news workers who responded to the questionnaire perform tasks associated with new media; most notably, producing content for their station’s website. Cremedas and Lysak (2011), in a survey of network affiliate television stations, also found that nearly all newsroom personnel are expected to

generate web products, with reporters and producers bearing the heaviest burden.

Some of the most common tasks for the website “include writing summary stories, physically posting content, conducting question & answer sessions with viewers, and providing previously unaired video and sound bites for the Web” (Smith, Tanner, and Duhé, p. 562). A majority of television news personnel agreed that their workload was increasing because of multimedia activities. One respondent stated: “Convergence places a lot more responsibility on my shoulders. I have far more work to do here than if my station did not practice convergence” (Smith, Tanner, and Duhé, p. 567). The study also compares the views of news personnel to those of news managers that were gathered from a previous survey, indicating differing opinions regarding the impact of new media in newsrooms. It is important to note that the investigation did not focus solely on reporters, but also included other news workers such as producers.

There are a significant number of studies—including Lawson-Borders (2003), Dupagne and Garrison (2006), and Huang et al. (2004)—focused on newsrooms that have fully integrated television broadcast, newspaper, and online units. The Tribune Company’s, Belo Corp’s, and Media-General’s converged units in Chicago, Tampa, and Dallas, which were at the center of many of the scholarly investigations, were considered “convergence pioneers” at the time of these studies. While the full convergence in those newsrooms is quite different from the integration of new media into traditional platforms that is happening today in local print and broadcast newsrooms across the country, these studies shed light on how new technology can impact a reporter’s workflow.

Dupagne and Garrison’s study reveals, “the jobs and responsibilities have changed because convergence has brought additional new resources and duties” (p. 247).

Respondents described the impact in more detail. “Television reporters, for example, are given the opportunity to write for newspaper and vice versa. Print and broadcast photographers are asked to shoot images for both platforms” (p. 247).

Singer’s research, among others, corroborates much of the other scholarly research data on this topic, indicating that convergence “seems to bring with it a limitless number of potential new tasks for journalists to fit in their workday” (p. 3). In Singer’s research of print, television, and online journalists, the emergence and integration of new media demanded more from reporters as they produced content for more than one platform. Singer’s analysis is helpful, but only scratches the surface of precise responsibilities. On the other hand, Duhé et al. (2004) is one of the few researchers who described specifically what television reporters have morphed into: videojournalists, commonly referred to as multimedia, digital or backpack journalists. “This (videojournalist) describes an individual reporter who writes, shoots, and edits a story” (p. 87).

Alan Schroeder, a professor at Northeastern University, said “with the proliferation of the Internet, the reporter of the future could find himself or herself functioning as a digital journalist, telling stories with not only video and sound, but also graphics, still images, and text” (p. 87). That “reporter of the future” is the reporter of today in many newsrooms, who the researcher expects to encounter and gain a deeper understanding of. Duhé also backs up other scholarly findings that show the most common medium, aside from traditional news broadcasts, television news operations are producing content for is online. Such information is helpful because it indicates that, at least a portion of, the researcher’s fieldwork will be associated with reporters’ tasks

related to the production of online content.

### ***Diminishing and Enhancing Journalistic Routines***

Some news personnel who are adopting new media, whether voluntarily or through a mandate by management, have an obvious sense of frustration. One main reason noted by several studies is that some reporters believe the changing job responsibilities brought about by new media take away from their traditional journalistic routines—routines they deem important to carrying out their journalistic responsibility. For example, a number of reporters indicated they were spending less time contacting sources, fact checking, investigating leads, and developing their material—all part of their previous day-to-day routines—because of the time constraints associated with turning stories for multiple platforms and the added responsibilities they have had to take on due to job cuts in their newsrooms, which are connected to new technologies (Ursell, 2001). “...More and more journalists spend increasingly less of their time out in the field observing directly the events and processes on which they report” (Pavlik, 2000, p. 229).

On the other hand, Pavlik’s study, among others, brings up an interesting counterpoint that deserves more attention: how new media actually *aids* and *enhances* reporters in their daily job responsibilities. “Reporters can now effectively use online tools to gather news and information, check facts and even find resources...” (Pavlik, p. 230). Receiving and distributing information has been noted as faster with new media.

Journalists also said the new resources for storytelling allowed their news outlet to better serve audiences (Singer, 2004). Indeed, the audience is seen as a driving force behind organizational changes in newsrooms. Media managers and news personnel are increasingly recognizing the importance of changing with the times: keeping up with the

shifting demands of the audience, most notably the way in which they consume information via new media platforms such as Twitter and blogs. Sixty percent of Internet users now use some kind of new media, according to the 2010 PEJ/Pew Internet & American Life Survey. Accordingly, television newsrooms are adopting new media, which is impacting the daily job responsibilities of reporters (Cremedas & Lysak).

Sylvie et al. (2004) explains how the “innovation has transformed the consumer from a passive listener/viewer/reader of information to an active participant in the production process” (p. 124). Through this transformation, new media is used as a tool to gather information about stories as well as a channel for distributing news to audiences. Because of the collaborative nature of new media, news organizations are bringing audiences into a process that has been dominated by a top-down approach. Today, audiences are growing accustomed to being part of the conversation and newsgathering process. As a result, news organizations are moving away from the traditional notion of news that “lectures” -- news staffers deciding what they think is important to the public. This means reporters are now utilizing Twitter, Facebook, and blogs in an effort to connect with audiences.

In essence, new media is transforming the relationship between the journalist and the audience. “The Internet is the first medium owned by the audience...first medium to give audience a voice” (Gillmor, 2005, p. 26). With the explosion of new media and technology, average citizens are turning into roving reporters, snapping up videos and photos of newsworthy events as they unfold. An example of the changing relationship is CNN’s iReport, through which viewers record images of newsworthy events and then send them to CNN for airing online and/or on-air. The partnership with average citizens

is actually an opportunity to strengthen journalism because “an audience that participates in the journalistic process is more demanding than passive consumers of news” (Gillmor, p. 123). So, while the emergence of new media increases and changes the daily tasks of reporters, it also creates resources that may make their responsibilities associated with the newsgathering process easier and increases the connection to audiences. This thesis will attempt to shed more light on both spectrums of this noteworthy dichotomy.

### ***Economic Motives and Organizational Change***

Technology, the driving force behind the evolving daily job responsibilities of reporters, is the innovation at the center of this study. However, it is important to note new technologies connection with the changing economic models in the media industry. Ursell and Singer, for example, argue that the change toward multimedia news production is fueled by media companies’ desire to raise productivity and tighten production costs. Studies often cite new technologies as a mean of achieving this economic efficiency. As Deuze (2004), for example, notes: “executives in the media industry tend to see new media as a way to make staff downsizing easier – doing more with less people...” (p. 143; Devyatkin, 2001). Consequently, a television station’s business goals can be a significant factor in the diffusion and adoption of new media by reporters in a newsroom. The economic impetus, which reporters are cognizant of now more than ever before, is having a trickle down effect: creating substantial organizational change in newsrooms.

Research about reporters’ reactions to change is important to review for the purposes of this study, because it allows this study’s researcher to anticipate interviewees’ attitudes. As the impact of new media permeates through news

organizations, news managers are dealing with the consequences of adopting innovations, most notably the reaction of news personnel. This resistance is a normal response to change because of the threat to routines and traditions (Giles, 1995). In fact, "...It has been said that managing media professionals of any kinds is like trying to herd cats" (Sylvie et al., p. 35).

One particular challenge that news managers are addressing is reporters' concerns about the threats new media pose to the fundamentals of journalism. "Organizational change, underpinned by technological developments, towards multi-skilling, multi-media news production...is seen to convey a potential to compromise journalistic performance" (Ursell, p. 175). Because journalism is unlike any other industry, the plans to improve efficiency are being highly scrutinized by some journalists who see the innovation as a threat to journalistic integrity, according to Smith, Tanner, and Duhé. "...keeping an eye on the financial potential of convergence at the expense of editorial impact might spell more trouble for an already struggling industry. If quality of news content suffers further because of convergence local TV news viewership might continue its steady and well-documented decline" (Smith, Tanner, and Duhé, p. 571).

Therefore, it is crucial for news managers to gain a deeper understanding of the changes taking place inside television newsrooms, "the battleground of new technology," because they will affect news workers who "can have a significant impact on what information is ultimately disseminated to the public" (Smith, Tanner, and Duhé, p. 571). This thesis will shed light and help news managers better understand, from the reporter's perspective, how the adoption of the new innovation is changing the daily job responsibilities of local television journalists. Journalists are trained skeptics by nature,

so they are not necessarily convinced that convergence is driven by a desire to put the best news out there. Instead, many suspect an economic impetus that does not sit well with them (Singer, 2004).

Studies reveal that when journalists believe economics are the driving force behind staff changes, they become very unsettled, thus presenting a morale problem for news managers. "...While some workers enjoy the diversity of their multi-skilled role, it could be argued that it represents an intensified rate of labor exploitation and, moreover, detracts from the 'unitary core' of journalism principles and practices..." (Ursell, p. 176). Most journalists are happiest when they are about the business of journalism rather than the business of business.

In addition, organizational change has been shown to reduce job satisfaction and increase employees likelihood to quit, which presents another challenge for managers: as an innovation is diffused through a newsroom, how do they maintain valuable and experienced employees as well as recruit competent journalists, and thereby serve the public interest (Daniels and Hollifield, 2002). This concern is particularly relevant when it comes to older employees; Avilés and Carvajal note that the main resistance of adopting new media came from more experienced journalists "who were utterly opposed to being turned into multi-media professionals" (p. 230). Giles agrees with this argument: Organizational change is important to understand because it impacts the ability of newsrooms to retain valuable and experienced people and, in turn, serve the public. Aside from more experienced employees, journalists, as a group, tend to possess an individualistic and creative nature that is a major obstacle to implementing an innovation.

After recognizing the potential pitfalls that may take place when implementing change, managers must do certain things to help counter the negative impact. “These include involving employees in the process, clearly communicating how the changes will occur and what the future will look like, providing employees with continuous information, and making sure staff members understand how the changes relate to the company’s long-term goals” (Sylvie et al., p. 42). Diffusion within the complex social structures of newsrooms often hinges on training and other internal support from managers (Garrison, 2000). Wanberg and Banas (2000) argue that employees will be less apprehensive if they are brought into the change process early on.

### ***Role Convergence***

Ursell’s journal article is beneficial because it points to some of the positions, such as technical workers, that have been or could be eliminated as new technology makes it possible for one person, such as a reporter, to assume those duties. Huang et al. (2004) referred to this as “role convergence,” which is leading to managers to eliminate positions.

By mentioning newsroom positions that have been impacted, Ursell reveals what some of the additional job tasks of journalists might include. Journalists accustomed to performing certain day-to-day responsibilities are now assuming a number of tasks that would have previously been handled by several news workers (Pavlik, 2000). A BBC broadcaster describes her “converged role,” thanks to new technology:

“Now I come in and read the news, plus I write it because I’m a journalist and they’ve got rid of the early journalist post, plus I design the graphics because they’ve got rid of the graphics post and we can do that on the computer. And they’ve got rid of those two posts because they think I can design it on the technology – we couldn’t on the old.” (Cottle, 1999, p. 35)

## **Chapter IV**

### **Methodology**

To gain a deep understanding of how new media is impacting the job responsibilities of local television news reporters, this study utilizes several qualitative research methods: in-depth interviews and participant observation via a descriptive case study of reporters in a medium-size market's television newsroom. Since an analysis of scholarly articles related to this research topic reveals a lack of investigation into the changing role of television reporters in *local* news markets, this research was conducted on a local television station in a top 90, or medium-size, Designated Market Area (DMA). The station, disguised as WBCZ-TV, is located in the northeast United States. Local news is an important part of the national news landscape that has been impacted by new media, and this case study, through its descriptive nature of a phenomenon, can contribute to the understanding of how new media is impacting thousands of reporters across the country.

#### ***Case Study***

The case-study method is regarded as “a valid tool to analyze a complex issue, allowing one to explore a contemporary phenomenon in its own context” (Avilés and Carvajal, 2008, p. 226; Yin, 2003). As noted by Avilés and Carvajal (2008), this method focuses on the parameters of a specific case, using several sources such as observation, interviews, and written records to validate certain conclusions. It is an appropriate methodological tool to investigate the subject of this research: How is new media changing the daily job responsibilities of local television news reporters? A review of

scholarly articles also indicates that case studies have been successful in describing changes in the professional roles of journalists, examining the impact of newsroom convergence, and analyzing journalistic competencies in multimedia newsrooms (Avilés and Carvajal, 2008).

In addition, a case study is ideal because it provides a level of triangulation through the use of multiple methods. This study uses in-depth, open-ended questioning of and firsthand observation of eight WBCZ television reporters during a one-month time span, December 2011 to January 2012. The combination of multiple methods reveals a holistic understanding of the research topic (Jankowski and Wester, 1991). For example, by employing triangulation in his study of newspaper editors' work routines, Sumpter (2000) constructs a more encompassing perspective than if he had utilized a single method. In-depth interviews provide clarification to observations he made in the newsroom and vice versa. Furthermore, the use of multiple methods, as described in Dupagne and Garrison's (2006) case study about convergence, increases research credibility. In their research, document analysis supplemented with interviews provides corroborating evidence. Newcomb (1991) also gives support for the chosen methodology. According to Newcomb, the two primary methods of production research, which this study is characterized as, are interviewing and observation.

By reviewing literature about qualitative research theory and scholarly mass communications studies that utilize interviews and observation, the researcher of this study was able to consider the strengths and limitations of such methods, laying a solid foundation for the methodological framework of this study.

### *In-depth Interviews*

In-depth interviews, which were voluntary and lasted approximately 45 to 60 minutes, were conducted with eight WBCZ-TV reporters. One interview ended after 20 minutes because the reporter had to meet a deadline for a story. The researcher followed up via email with this reporter. In-depth interviews have been called “one of the most powerful methods” in qualitative research because they allow investigators to “step into the mind of another person, to see and experience the world as they do themselves” (McCracken, 1988, p. 9).

Utilizing the unstructured format with open-ended questions was most effective because it enabled the researcher to carry on a natural conversation with participants, an important part of building rapport. In other words, unstructured interviewing allowed the researcher to “‘come down’ to the level of the respondent and engage in a ‘real’ conversation” (Fontana and Frey, 1994, p. 371). The author of this study approached the interviews as conversations. This was an effective way of making the interviewees feel relaxed and less like they were being “questioned.”

In addition, this type of interview lends itself to probing flexibility and encourages thick narrative description because of the ability to ask follow-up questions, which may lead an interview down an unexpected and revealing path of information (Dupagne and Garrison, 2006). The spontaneous exchange offers possibilities of freedom and flexibility for researchers (Anderson and Jack, 1991). The benefits of in-depth interviewing are evident in a number of studies. In Dupagne and Garrison’s research of media convergence in a Tampa newsroom, the authors describe how, thanks to in-depth interviewing, the participants are able to discuss their convergence

involvement in detail. Huang and Heider (2007) found that in-depth interviewing was helpful because some information could not be obtained by observation.

To gather meaningful responses, the researcher started the interviews by posing the simpler and least probing questions before moving on to more sensitive ones. Drawing on previous experience and related literature, the researcher found this approach establishes a sense of comfort and trust with the interviewees, making them more likely to divulge their hidden feelings or attitudes. As Berger (1998) notes—in reference to Sigmund Freud’s *free association* method, “the more people talk, the more they reveal” (p. 57).

Interviews with *multiple* television reporters from WBCZ-TV were conducted in order to gain a deep understanding and complete picture of how new media is impacting the daily job responsibilities of reporters. “The primary strength of interviewing as a method is its capacity to range over multiple perspectives on a given topic” (Newcomb, 1991, p. 101). Throughout the interviews, the researcher initiated new questions that were not on the original scripted list of questions (See Appendix A, Interview Guide). This interview procedure enabled the researcher to get the most information possible as the participants responded to the questions.

The location of interviews should be taken into consideration. Instead of conducting in-depth interviews in the newsroom, Sumpter (2000) took most of his participants outside of that environment for lengthy, digitally-recorded interviews; a tactic the researcher utilized with half of the interviewees. The researcher interviewed four of the participants at the station; three of these interviews took place in a conference room and the other was held at the reporter’s workstation. Interviewing reporters at the

station did not seem to inhibit their willingness to share details about the impact of new media on their job responsibilities. A minor downfall was that one of the participants was pulled away so she could finish a story. Through follow-up communications, the researcher asked remaining questions.

Four interviews were conducted outside of the television station. These interviews took place in coffee shops and eateries. Sumpter notes the benefits of conducting interviews outside of the participants work environment. The participants—newsroom staffers—appeared to be more willing to share their true feelings with Sumpter because being away from the newsroom reduced any possibility of co-workers overhearing them.

Interviewees were granted confidentiality and anonymity to encourage openness and honesty. Prior to the interviews with the participants, the researcher provided an oral consent form outlining the details of the study, and all were given the opportunity to decline. Before research began, the University of Missouri-Columbia Institutional Review Board approved all questions and procedures. The researcher took notes during all interviews and all interviews were recorded with a digital recorder. The researcher transcribed all of the interviews from audio recordings to text and edited any identifying elements in order to maintain the anonymity of the participants and the station.

### ***Participant Observation***

Participant observation was meant to compliment and validate findings from the interviews. In the words of Jankowski and Wester (1991), “there is often a discrepancy between reports of attitudes gained through interviews and observations of the behavior related to those attitudes” (p. 61; Deutscher, 1973). By observing television reporters in

their natural environment—in the newsroom, the researcher was able to immerse himself in the culture of where their work takes place. The researcher watched reporters in order to provide a deeper, more convincing understanding of their job responsibilities related to new media. Observation, the craft of experiencing and recording events in social settings, took place on three occasions (Gans, 1999). During each observational period lasting approximately three hours—a weekday morning, early evening on a weekday, and a weekend afternoon—informal conversations took place with employees and notes were hand recorded. The researcher attempted to look for corroboration of themes that were emerging during in-depth interviews. He paid particular attention to reporters’ workflow associated with new media, how they utilized new media in their daily routines, and their interactions with colleagues, especially the web team staff. The researcher intended to accompany reporters in the field; however, time constraints were a barrier.

Huang and Heider (2007) found the observer role to be extremely effective in their case study of media convergence at a cable news station (Jorgensen, 1989). The validity of Huang and Heider’s study come from the fact that they observed many editorial meetings, and shadowed and helped producers in their daily job routines. One note of caution: as an observer, a researcher should maintain objectivity and not go “native” or change the natural dynamic of the setting (Berger, 1998). Despite those challenges, the “on the ground” nature of participant observation allows researchers to observe actual work routines and key elements of the production process at different levels (Newcomb, 1991). Pauly (1991) notes that you can become more of “an explorer” versus “a tourist” by actually observing your participants in as many of their natural surroundings as possible.

There are limitations, such as access and time constraints, that researchers are faced with and, at times, cannot avoid. The researcher of this study had intended to observe and shadow more reporters for a longer period of time; however, the researcher's time constraints and management concerns about disruption forced the researcher to modify the observation schedule. In the Limitations section of this chapter, the issues of access and time constraints are discussed in more detail.

### ***Data Analysis***

The researcher utilized the constant comparative technique to review all data gathered throughout the interviews and observation, and organized the information into appropriate themes (Wimmer & Dominick, 2003). The constant comparative technique requires the researcher to assign incidents to categories, elaborate on categories, search for relationships between interviewee responses and develop themes, and report a concise, well-organized summary of all data gathered (Wimmer & Dominick). A written thesis paper was produced that includes the researcher's analysis of data, conclusions, and selected quotes from interviews.

Interviews were reviewed throughout the research process to refine the line of questions for future subjects. Analyzing the first interviews helped guide and improve the remaining interviews and analyses. Though there was room for emergent design, the questioning remained as consistent as possible to help establish themes in the analysis process. In this approach, the data collection and evaluative processes overlapped at times to allow for small adjustments in direction based on what early interviews revealed about the area of inquiry (Gibbs, 2007; Creswell, 2009).

## ***Limitations***

### *i. Generalizations/Representativeness*

There are limitations to case study findings. The research results of case studies cannot be generalized; nor is that an actual goal of case-study methodology (Singer, 2004; Cottle, 1999; Dupagne and Garrison, 2006; Lawson-Borders, 2003). Because the sample is small, there is no way to establish the probability that data is representative of a larger population (Hodkinson, 2001). However, this case study is a useful snapshot along the convergence continuum, adding to our understanding of the fundamental changes taking place in the communications industry and, more specifically, television news.

### *ii. Access and time constraints*

Research is dependent on a number of factors, such as access to the environment under investigation and time constraints, which may be out of the researcher's control. In this research, time constraints included the researcher's limited time span to conduct a study and the limited duration of access allowed to the newsroom.

Building trust and clearly outlining the goals of the research was paramount to gaining access to the television station. It was highly effective to communicate details of the research project with potential participants prior to embarking on fieldwork. This took place via multiple email exchanges with participants. Indeed, Dupagne and Garrison (2006) found that a preliminary field study was helpful in preparing for their investigation. Since access can be "enhanced by specific knowledge of professional, organizational, and technical matters," the researcher believes his professional experience in television news was beneficial in gaining access (Newcomb, 1991, p. 100).

In addition, research limitations do not always allow for full triangulation, and it is important for a researcher to disclose such information. For example, Thurman and Lupton (2008) point out that they were only able to conduct in-depth interviews for their investigation into multimedia storytelling because of research time constraints. Although the researcher of this study was not able to spend as much time as he had planned to observe reporters in their natural environment, the limited observation offered a validity check to some information gathered during interviews.

*iii. Bias*

The researcher's professional experience as a former anchor and reporter in several local television markets has the potential to add a level of bias to the study. To minimize bias, the researcher—who at times felt a kinship with the interviewees because of his past experience as a journalist—constantly reflected and noted this potential source of bias throughout the research process.

Triangulation, achieved through interviews and observation in this study, can also raise researchers above the personal biases that stem from single methodologies, providing a system of checks and balances (Denzin, 1970).

On the other hand, as previously noted, the researcher's experience as a broadcast journalist can be viewed as a strength. The researcher's familiarity with the industry, including work routines and newsroom jargon, helped to forge a credible and trusting relationship with participants.

## **Chapter V**

### **Results**

This case study provides a detailed description and narrative of how new media—from a station’s website to social media platforms such as Twitter and Facebook—is impacting the daily job responsibilities of local television journalists at WBCZ-TV, a medium-sized television station in the northeast United States. WBCZ-TV was chosen, in part, because of its geographic proximity to the researcher and the station’s willingness to allow the researcher access to its reporters and newsroom.

In this study, eight reporters were interviewed to better understand—from their perspectives—the transformation of their responsibilities in the evolving media landscape. The participants’ experience in the broadcast journalism field ranges from one year to twenty-five years. Three of the participants anchor newscasts in addition to their reporting duties. The researcher also conducted limited observations of reporters in the newsroom. In order to maintain participant confidentiality, no names are used in this study.

The newsroom is staffed at or above typical levels for a station in this market size, and it has weathered industry downturns without having to downsize. Layoffs at other stations in the market serve as a reminder of the industry perils. The station’s digital platforms include a website, Facebook and Twitter pages, a mobile application, and email alerts. The newsroom has three web producers, which is unusual for a market of this size, whose sole tasks involve updating these platforms. Prior to interviewing reporters, the researcher met with the manager who oversees the digital platforms in order to gain a

better understanding of the station's new media strategy. This background information was important because it informed the researcher's understanding of the station's online platforms and how reporters fit into the overall plan.

In this chapter, the findings are detailed according to relevant themes. The results are also analyzed and discussed against the scholarly literature reviewed in Chapter 3 and through the lens of Diffusion of Innovations theory, particularly the theory's consequences taxonomy outlined in Chapter 2. This case study reinforces some findings of previous studies, but participants in this study also reveal evolving job responsibilities not previously reported in the literature review. In fact, some of the findings diverge from previous scholarly literature on the topic under investigation.

### ***Navigating an Evolving Organizational Structure***

The station's adoption and approach to new media have impacted the newsroom's organizational structure and, along with it, reporters' job responsibilities. Management places an emphasis on frequently updating the station's multiple digital platforms—web, Facebook, and Twitter—with new content. Unlike other stations, management does not require reporters have individual Facebook or Twitter accounts. However, most participants also maintain and regularly post updates to their own professional social media accounts.

Reporters are expected to, first and foremost feed, information back to the web team staff, which updates the station's new media platforms. "We are encouraged to think about the station first because they have a wider reach than an individual reporter. The first concern has to be that the station meets the needs of the viewers," said one reporter (personal communication, Dec. 7, 2011). As reporters gather facts and

interviews in the field, tasks associated with the traditional newsgathering process, they recognize the importance and immediacy of getting information to the web team. A reporter described it as an ongoing process of “feeding the beasts.” “We are expected to send in photos and information as soon as we get to the scene” (personal communication, Dec. 7, 2011).

The flow of information, from the reporter to the web team and then the station’s multiple online platforms, has increased the demands on participants. “The challenge of getting a live hit on the air now is equal to the challenge of getting a good picture and a web story as quickly as possible to break it on the web” (personal communication, Dec. 27, 2011). To accomplish the new tasks, reporters are navigating a fluid and evolving organizational structure—one that encompasses the digital and traditional broadcast platforms.

Reporters’ workflows are impacted by altered labor dynamics and power hierarchies in this emerging organizational structure. Television reporters traditionally called an assignment editor or producer to relay information from the field for news broadcasts. Participants explained how the web staff now also takes priority on the chain of colleagues—many times at the top of the “pecking order”—who need information about a story. In-depth interviews and observation reveal the web team has gained organizational influence traditionally held by others in the newsroom, a consequence of the adoption of new media at the station. This has manifested in several ways and has a direct impact on reporters’ responsibilities.

Web staff members have a visible and prominent space in the newsroom, and they are often first to answer the phone when a reporter at the scene of a story calls the

newsroom. A reporter, with 13 years experience in television news, described her first interaction with the web team when she recently started at the station:

I remember when the web team answered the phone on my first day at this station; I was really frustrated because I wanted to focus on what was going on in the field. It was a time issue, and I felt like I was going to miss something in the field while I was on the phone with the web folks. Having to devote not only time to telling them, but also critical time. You have to be available when the information in the field comes in. It was another thing that ties me up. (personal communication, Dec. 14, 2011)

She and other reporters described a cumbersome internal communications process and how it can be taxing on reporters. “I’ll talk to at least two different people before I get off the phone. It’s assignment desk and producer for the show, and then it’s the web writer on staff for the website” (personal communication, Dec. 15, 2011).

Navigating the process of getting information to multiple colleagues—those who update new media platforms and others who focus on producing traditional television newscasts—was a recurring theme when reporters were questioned about the transformation of their daily responsibilities. The newsroom did not appear to have a uniform process of getting information back to the web unit, assignment desk, and producers. Reporters saw the need for more efficient internal communications, and most took it upon themselves to integrate tactics into their daily workflow to overcome the obstacles. To save time associated with talking to multiple co-workers, some reporters decided to send periodic emails about their stories to the newsroom staff distribution list.

In fact, one of the unexpected findings of this study was the overwhelming discussion focused on the challenges associated with email, even though this technology has been part of newsrooms for more than 15 years. “Before only the assignment desk was vetting through [general] emails. Here I get everything. That demands that I spend

time on my day off checking into email” (personal communication, Dec. 14, 2011).

Because reporters are included on the list of staff members who receive emails sent to the main newsroom email address, their inboxes are flooded with hundreds of emails per day.

Some reporters arrive to work 15-20 minutes early to sift through emails; many of them also check emails from home during off hours. “...even when I leave for the day at 12:30, when I check email before I go to bed, I have 200-300 emails. Some of the information is great background that I’ll have for me the next morning when I’m reading copy on-air. But, nine out of ten times it’s emails that don’t pertain to me” (personal communication, Dec. 7, 2011). After returning to work after two days off, one reporter mass deleted emails: “I pray I didn’t miss anything. If I don’t clean my inbox, I am going to have a full inbox and miss the stuff I need for that day” (personal communication, Jan. 8, 2012).

Staff members back in the newsroom communicated frequently via email with reporters in the field. This was troublesome because of the risk that these higher-priority emails could get lost in the sea of other messages. “The other day I was in the middle of a story and interviewing someone. They [producer] emailed me to say you are being assigned to another story. You can’t email me something like that. It has to be more direct...I’ve missed a ton of important emails because of this process” (personal communication, Dec. 16, 2011).

Despite the daily challenges of navigating an emerging organizational structure associated with the station’s multiple platforms, most participants expressed relief that web colleagues assumed the task of updating the station’s Facebook and Twitter pages in addition to its website. Indeed, reporters repeatedly recognized the benefits of the

station's robust staffing levels, especially the unusualness of having a web team in a market of this size. "I think because we have a very good web team, there is less stress on reporters here than at other stations our size that typically don't have such a well-staffed web team" (personal communication, Dec. 7, 2011).

On weekdays, the web team typically writes online versions of reporters' broadcast stories, which came as a surprise to some reporters. "At the beginning, I started writing my own web stories not even realizing that the web team does that. In school, I was prepared to tweet twice a day, get my story on [air], and have a web version," said a reporter who recently graduated from journalism school (personal communication, Dec. 16, 2011).

Although the web team writes most online version of reporters' broadcast stories, participants are still heavily involved in the process. In fact, many reporters have trouble relinquishing ownership of their stories to the web team. They describe the web versions of their broadcast stories as a reflection of their overall reporting quality. As a result, reporters spent as much time revising web versions of their stories than they would have if they had wrote them on their own.

The web staff will take the broadcast script and basically copy it for the website. But this is a bit dangerous and there have been so many mistakes that they started now having the actual reporter look over the web copy. I typically do that at the end of the day, and I like to add information I couldn't get into a minute-twenty news report. (personal communication, Dec. 14, 2011)

The process takes about an hour, depending on how many stories—typically two—a reporter covers in a day. Many reporters carve out this time at the end of their workdays, when broadcast duties are complete. This requires some to stay past their scheduled shifts. "A lot of times something that makes sense for a broadcast news script

does not make sense for an article on our website,” said a reporter, adding “some things get lost in translation when your broadcast copy is used for the web” (personal communication, Dec. 15, 2011).

To accommodate the web team and reduce the chance of mistakes, the recent journalism school graduate modifies how she formats her broadcast scripts. “I’ve had to adjust...I put everything that is needed for the web quote as well, such as the person’s full name and title. I’ve made it easier for them [the web team]” (personal communication, Dec. 16, 2011).

### ***Self-imposed Pressures and Transformation of Responsibilities***

Reporters were unaware of a formal new media policy at the station. If there was one, they say, it was not communicated to them. Instead, reporters learned what was expected of them through informal changes in the newsroom culture, especially the evolving organizational structure. In addition, the study found many of the new responsibilities reporters took on were self-imposed and not mandates from management. Participants said they assumed additional duties because they felt it was necessary to keep up with peers at the station and across the industry.

In other words, job security. Reporters adopted a new media approach because they saw it as a means to “professional longevity.” As one reporter put it: colleagues and managers will view them as a valuable resource for the station. During the research period, the newsroom was in a management transition, and participants were anxious about what the future may hold at the station. “Social media is part of staying up-to-date. We have a new boss coming in and what if he is like, ‘Why aren’t all of you tweeting?’ Suddenly, everyone who has been is like, ‘Oh we have.’ And everyone who hasn’t,

looks worse” (personal communication, Dec. 16, 2011). A new boss arrived shortly after fieldwork was complete.

These self-imposed pressures, combined with informal expectations from within the newsroom culture, led to a transformation of daily job responsibilities. One reporter summed it up this way:

There’s a lot of pressure to pump out multiple stories for on-air, so it is difficult sometimes to think about also constantly updating new media platforms. There are so many platforms that people rely on us for information, and they want that constant trickle of even tiny bits of information. This puts pressure on us...to get information back to the newsroom. (personal communication, Dec. 7, 2011)

In addition to sending information, photos, and sometimes video to the newsroom for *dissemination* on the station’s digital platforms—website, Twitter and Facebook, mobile application—, new media also transformed their *newsgathering* responsibilities.

Verifying tips on social media sites, tracking down sources through online platforms, and managing online relationships with audience members became part of the tasks associated with newsgathering. As will be discussed in more detail, the research found reporters job responsibilities associated with *dissemination* and *newsgathering* changed drastically.

In a surprise finding, the station has not yet experienced the role convergence, chronicled in trade publications and scholarly literature, that has become an industry norm. In large and small markets, television journalists are morphing into “one-man-bands” or “backpack journalists.” These do-it-all journalists work alone in the field, shooting and editing their own reports. Reporters at this station still cover stories in traditional two-person teams, but they are preparing for this phenomenon to hit close to home.

I think it is definitely going to happen here—the one-man-band thing...When I see those poor reporters out in the field trying to carry everything, it's crazy. I don't know how you do it without losing your mind. To worry about how you look and how you sound, then getting all your information and video, and then dealing with Twitter and Facebook and calling back—that is too much for one person. (personal communication, Jan. 8, 2012)

A veteran reporter, who was the victim of downsizing at another station, took matters into his own hands. In the months prior to the study, he started periodically shooting and editing his own reports.

You can't be walking around with blinders on, thinking I report and I only report and I leave all the other stuff up to the people who have that job. Shame on me if I'm part of this business and don't know how these things work. I think it is vital for every journalist to know how to use those tools and not just say, 'I don't do that so therefore it is not something I have to worry about.' (personal communication, Dec. 27, 2011)

His colleagues took notice. They repeatedly mentioned the veteran reporter as a newsroom innovator and leader when it comes to digital media. Some even described having to “catch up” or “keep up” with him. This research finding corroborates diffusion theories notion of “early adopters” and “leaders” of new technology in a social system.

However, in contrast to previous literature about the diffusion and adoption of innovations, this case study found the integration of new media into the daily job responsibilities is not generational. The veteran reporter is a perfect example. Newsroom elders at the station are as willing, if not more, as younger reporters to embrace digital media.

This also was evident during an exchange between two reporters and anchors who have been at the station for more than 20 years. They discussed how best to use their individual Twitter accounts to promote an exclusive interview with the figure at the center of a high-profile story. The live interview was scheduled to take place during the

6 p.m. newscast. The colleagues did not want to tip off the competition, but they also saw the need to tweet early enough to encourage their followers to tune into the broadcast. “She turned to me at 4:30 and said, ‘I think I’m going to tweet now.’ Here we are, two journalists who’ve been in the business awhile, turning to each other to figure out the best time to tweet. I never would have imagined that 25 years ago” (personal communication, Dec. 15, 2011).

### ***The New Responsibilities***

For these veteran reporters and their younger counterparts, new media has led to a considerable change in the way they *gather news* and *disseminate* information. The lack of constraints on the web combined with an active audience disrupted the routines participants had grown accustomed to. Reporters did not view this disruption as necessarily negative. Morale remained high in the newsroom, and reporters did not have the dismal outlook on broadcast news that is pervasive in many local newsrooms.

Reporters continually weighed the desirable consequences of new media against the undesirable ones. Most reporters said the new tools enhance and aid their work, even though the pace of the job has increased as a result of new media. On the one side, reporters did not anticipate new media would so valuable and commonplace in the newsgathering process. “I think it is definitely easier, as a reporter, to connect with people than it was in the past, when you used a phonebook or knocked on a door. You get your finger on the pulse of what’s going on and what other news organizations are reporting” (personal communication, Jan. 8, 2012).

On the flipside, the constant updates reporters are expected to feed to multiple platforms have increased their responsibilities and pace of the job. “...we have to have a

mindset that it isn't only for the news at 6 o'clock tonight. We need it right when you get to the scene because a web article needs to go up or it needs to go on the Facebook page" (personal communication, Jan. 8, 2012).

It is important to note that the dissemination process is not discrete. Dissemination occurs in tandem with the newsgathering process, especially in breaking news situations. During developing stories, reporters gather information in the field and almost simultaneously feed that information to the web team. At the same time, they also have to juggle the demands of preparing for multiple on-air newscasts.

*i. Newsgathering*

Reporters' use of new media in the newsgathering process exploded, and caught many by surprise. Over and over again, reporters said they initially underestimated the power of new media as a tool to track down stories—a tips line, of sorts. This was an unanticipated, yet desirable, consequence of the adoption of new media that has not been chronicled in scholarly literature. "I didn't expect it to be so useful," noted a reporter who has been in television news for 13 years (personal communication, Dec. 14, 2011). She recalled when she used to start her day by making beat calls to police agencies, checking in via phone with other sources, and sifting through news releases.

Today, she scours the station's and her own social media pages—mostly Facebook and Twitter—for potential story ideas. She is not alone. This was a recurring theme, and often the first point mentioned, when the researcher asked reporters about the impact new media has on their daily job responsibilities.

Reporters provided countless examples of how their monitoring of social media sites became standard operating procedure. "We are pretty dependent on it [social

media]” (personal communication, Jan. 8, 2012). After checking emails, social media sites were often the first “place” reporters visited prior to editorial meetings. One reporter said, “Just a few years ago, we never did anything with Twitter. Here I find we get half our news tips through Twitter” (personal communication, Dec. 15, 2011).

“I just do a search for our city on Twitter every morning. It’s been surprisingly amazing, even very little things” (personal communication, Dec. 16, 2011). One day the reporter noticed an online complaint about paint dripping along a street after city workers painted new traffic lines. During a public meeting a few days prior, the mayor discussed how the city planned to save money by purchasing a different type of paint than it had previously used. The online complaint led the reporter to uncover a noteworthy story. She investigated whether the new paint was actually as cost effective as the city had presumed.

Another post on the station’s Facebook page tipped a reporter off to layoffs at a local company. He spent three days covering different angles to the story. Another reporter keeps her Twitter feed open on a laptop as she anchors the morning newscast. She follows the tweets of major media outlets, such as Associated Press and CNN, to keep track of developing or breaking stories. She then integrates relevant information into the newscast. Her twitter feed, she said, acts as a newswire.

In addition to finding story ideas through new media, reporters said they never expected new media would be so useful for tracking down sources. “The good thing about Facebook and Twitter is when you need to talk to someone” (personal communication, Dec. 14, 2011). A reporter was working on a story about parents who were concerned about costly school supplies. The story began with an offline tip; she

turned online to track down parents to interview.

So I posted on our Facebook page, ‘Hey any moms about to go to shopping?’ That is how I connected with a mom. Before you just had to kind of stumble upon people like this, and now you can look for them online. And, it gave me options because I had a number of moms respond. I had three moms who had different scenarios. That is where it created flexibility for me. (personal communication, Dec. 14, 2011)

In this regard, new media has saved reporters the time it used to take to locate potential interviewees in the field, including victims’ family members and friends.

When covering tragedies, reporters altered the way they tracked down and attempted to connect with victims’ families. A phone call or knock on the door used to be routine. Now, many reporters are turning to Facebook. When a father died in an alcohol-related crash, one reporter got in touch with his family by going to the victim’s Facebook page and searching the victim’s “friends” list for people with the same last name. “I ended up messaging his son and daughter. I got a response from the daughter; they were willing to talk to me. Boom. I had the interview” (personal communication, Jan. 8, 2012). She also uses Facebook and other new media platforms to search for photos of victims or other people involved in stories. This was a very common practice among reporters in the newsroom.

Several reporters were experimenting with social networking sites Foursquare and LinkedIn as part of their newsgathering routines. One reporter uses Foursquare to track down people who have “checked-in” at a location that is part of a news story. “For example, if park hours were going to change, you could use Foursquare to find someone who goes there all the time” (personal communication, Dec. 16, 2011). She also taps into LinkedIn’s people search feature in order to find local experts on newsworthy topics.

Reporters' interactions with traditional sources in the newsgathering process, such as public information officers of police departments and local companies, are also changing as a result of new media. Traditional sources are increasingly posting information online prior to or in replacement of contacting media outlets. As a result, reporters must routinely check the online platforms of these traditional sources. "We don't even expect a news release anymore from some agencies. That's how we find a lot of information, from going to the police department's Facebook page" (personal communication, Dec. 7, 2011).

Another noteworthy finding is how new media has become an invaluable tool to track the competition. Reporters have made it part of their daily routines to check other local news outlets' online platforms to make sure they are not being scooped on a story. "We say, 'Oh my gosh, here it is before it is on their website or broadcasted on air.' They tweet this and it is giving us a tip" (personal communications, Dec. 27, 2011).

For example, one night a reporter noticed the local newspaper posted on its Facebook page that there was another victim who had come forward in a high-profile abuse case. The reporter and other colleagues were able to verify the information and deliver it on the 11 p.m. newscast. "...we are now clued in and we can now catch up on a story rather than waking up in the morning and seeing it on the front page [of the paper]," said the reporter (personal communication, Dec. 15, 2011).

Reporters are undoubtedly using new media in the newsgathering process—to find story ideas and sources as well as keep tabs on the competition. It has become part of their daily routines. In many ways, new media has made newsgathering easier for reporters. With a few clicks and searches of social media sites, reporters can track down

information that used to take longer to find.

However, because of the interactive nature of new media, reporters faced a new challenge in the newsgathering process. Reporters described how their daily newsgathering routines are sometimes at the will of online chatter, particularly on Twitter and Facebook. Participants understand why it is necessary, and beneficial, to bring an active audience into the conversation and pay attention to what there are talking about online. But many reporters said it has gone to an extreme. “Sometimes you are chasing tweets, and in that regard it can be frustrating” (personal communication, Dec. 27, 2011).

Some reporters said colleagues—producers and the web staff members—monitoring online chatter were too quick to assume it was a story. In response, reporters were increasingly being asked to verify information that people were posting online; sometimes, this meant they were chasing down rumors. “Twitter news comes in and somebody [newsroom staff] says, ‘Can you confirm this?’ And then you are distracted and you are pulled away from whatever you were thinking about” (personal communication, Dec. 14, 2011).

One reporter, covering the story of a teenager killed in a car accident, expressed her frustration with the dizzying pace of tracking down online chatter. A Facebook memorial page was established in honor of the teenage victim. More than 3,000 people “liked” the page, and many of them began posting comments stating the other driver involved in the accident was intoxicated. “My newsroom sees this and keeps wanting me to check...Then I have to suddenly fact check suspicions, when I have fact in front of us,” said the reporter (personal communication, Dec. 16, 2011). “I’m at the will of the people posting.”

Indeed, audience members have become influential in the newsgathering process. The bottom-up approach of new media has allowed them to be active participants, which has resulted in a shifting relationship with reporters. For reporters, managing these new relationships is now another major part of their daily job responsibilities (see *Managing the audience*).

*ii. Dissemination*

Reporting the news has become a constant, never-ending cycle. News is now an ongoing process that transcends time and space, transforming the participants' daily job responsibilities. Reporters did not—and could not—wait for the 5 p.m., 6 p.m., or 11 p.m. broadcasts to deliver information about stories. Reporters recognized the audience expects information in real-time and across multiple online platforms.

The end user has already established the fact that they don't want to wait for news. They are going to consume news on their time. Getting it out quicker serves the audience...I believe the organization that gets it out fastest and most accurately will hopefully, at the end of the day, get people to watch... (personal communication, Dec. 27, 2011)

Another reporter explained it this way: "We operate almost like the AP [Associated Press] alerts that newsrooms use for breaking news. Well now the everyday person is expecting those types of alerts for stories, especially for breaking news" (personal communication, Dec. 7, 2011).

Accordingly, reporters' daily job responsibilities increased as they disseminate real-time information beyond traditional broadcasts. This was an anticipated, yet mostly undesirable, consequence of the adoption of new media. Reporters changed their workflow to accommodate these new tasks—so their news products could occupy the station's multiple platforms, including its website, Twitter feed, and Facebook page. In

addition, most reporters updated their professional Facebook and Twitter accounts.

While out on a story, especially breaking news, reporters had to call or email the web team with details, including a photo of the scene. “Everyone knows whenever there is an opportunity to update social media sites, send it back to the newsroom ASAP” (personal communication, Dec. 7, 2011). Since the web team is responsible for updating the station’s new media platforms, its work is dependent on the reporters. The reporters relay the information back to web staff members. In turn, the web staff updates the station’s website, Twitter feed, and Facebook page. In breaking news situations, the web staff also sends out text and email alerts.

Reporters recognized they are a critical part of the equation, so most of them assumed a “digital first” mentality. “In my mind, first and foremost, it is getting information back for the website...I know getting them information is just as important as it is for producers working on the on-air shows” (personal communication, Dec. 15, 2011). A 25-year veteran reporter and anchor at the station compared her duties associated with the station’s new media platforms to a live radio feed. “The web is like a separate newscast. It kind of reminds me of my days in radio when I used to go out and as soon as I got something I would file it from the scene” (personal communication, Dec. 15, 2011).

It became habit, as was apparent when a reporter was sent to breaking news one morning. He used his iPhone to snap a photo of the house fire and send it back to the station. The reporter also frequently uses his iPhone to record video reports, which the web team posts to the station’s website and social media sites. While snapping photos and relaying information to the web unit was commonplace, recording video with mobile

devices had not yet become widespread among participants.

As previously detailed (see *Navigating an Evolving Organizational Structure*), reporters found the process of getting information to the web team and others involved in the traditional news broadcasts cumbersome. Because of the lack of a coherent internal communications, reporters often had to carve out critical time to relay information to two to three different co-workers—web staff member, producer, and assignment editor. This proved challenging for reporters.

“At some stations, your web person might also be producing the 6 or 11 o’clock news. So by speaking to that producer, you are killing a couple of birds with one stone. Here, we are fortunate to have so much staffing. It’s great to have, but it means I have to decide whom I go to first and move on to the next” (personal communication, Dec. 27, 2011). For efficiency sake, some reporters decided email was better than multiple phone calls. They used their mobile devices to send a summary of the situation to the newsroom listserv.

On weekdays, the web team repurposed reporters’ broadcast scripts for the website. While reporters said they appreciated the effort of the web staff, reporters often found themselves spending more time editing the web articles than if they had wrote the original version. Following one interview, the reporter spent 45 minutes tweaking the web version of her broadcast story. Reporters viewed the digital manifestations of their broadcast stories to be a reflection of their overall reporting quality and reputation. So they were hard-pressed to relinquish control of the story to the web team. Instead, they spent a significant amount of time editing the web version of their stories or writing the web story on their own.

The web staff is not in the newsroom 24-hours a day, so reporters and producers are responsible for managing all of the station's online platforms during overnight and weekend shifts. In the early morning hours, one of the morning anchors described how she handles this responsibility. She posts the Question of the Day to the station's Facebook page, updates her own Facebook page to give fans a preview of the morning newscast, and she also tweets. "From there I go over copy of all the stories and write stories before I go on-air. It is much more time intensive" (personal communication, Dec. 7, 2011).

With web articles now part of the daily responsibilities, reporters had to become skilled at writing for both broadcast and print. "It's two totally different ways of writing. That [writing] is more important now more than ever" (personal communication, Dec. 15, 2011). In addition to stylistic changes in writing for web, reporters noted how their online stories had to convey a sense of immediacy—even more than they are used to for on-air broadcasts. "We really have to think about how we write even more now to make sure it's always new. People are online all the time looking for updates, so it needs to be very new" (personal communication, Dec. 15, 2011).

While reporters were not required to have their own Twitter and Facebook pages, most do. Participants acknowledged that it is industry standard for reporters to maintain professional accounts on social networking sites, and they expected the incoming news director to make this a requirement. Therefore, in addition to feeding information back to the newsroom for dissemination to the station's social media sites, reporters frequently posted to their professional Facebook fan pages and Twitter accounts.

Tweeting, reporters said, also required a new way of thinking about how they write and frame information. The brevity of a tweet—a limit of 140 characters—combined with real-time dissemination presented a challenge: “If you make a mistake on social media, it can grow on its own. That makes me nervous” (personal communication, Dec. 14, 2011). Reporters struggled with what information to tweet and how often, since the brevity of tweets does not allow for a detailed explanation. “You have to be careful delivering news piecemeal because you don’t want it to be misinterpreted either by people at the station or by your audience” (personal communication, Dec. 7, 2011).

The new responsibilities associated with getting information across multiple platforms as quickly as possible was a notable challenge for reporters. “I can’t miss something because I’m tweeting. I’m constantly faced with a choice between tweeting and getting the interviews and facts I need. I, of course, put the facts first” (personal communication, Dec. 14, 2011). In other words, the research found that reporters were trying to figure out how to best balance the values of the online medium, such as immediacy, with those of traditional journalism, specifically verification and accuracy.

Most reporters said the pressure to constantly disseminate new information led to an emphasis on quantity of news product, which sometimes compromised the quality of their stories. “I’m always facts first. So if I can’t double or triple check something, I’ll leave it out. I’m not going to put it out as a fact when I can’t confirm it. And, yes a couple of times, it has been true and my story has been a little bit weaker because I didn’t have time to check it. I didn’t have time to check it so this story ends up being worse” (personal communication, Dec. 16, 2011).

Despite the race to disseminate information quickly and the transformation of daily job responsibilities that went along with it, reporters still placed an emphasis on traditional journalistic values. Participants also believed newsroom management maintained these values while trying to meet the demands of the audience's appetite for constant information, as was evident during the station's coverage of a high-profile murder case. During the trial, one reporter was assigned to cover the proceedings for the television newscast; another reporter handled tweets of the case. A reporter's task of tweeting during news events was unheard of just years ago.

From inside a courtroom, the reporter assigned to tweeting the trial text messaged the information back to the web team. The web team would check the text messages for accuracy and then post the information to the station's Twitter feed. "...people back at the station were able to look at it and say 'every name is spelled right and everything was a complete thought that couldn't get misinterpreted'" (personal communication, Dec. 7, 2011). This emerging workflow achieved real-time dissemination while maintaining accuracy of information.

### *iii. Managing the audience*

Reporters are spending significantly more time managing relationships with the audience as a result of new media. "The growth in terms of audience interaction has grown exponentially" (personal communication, Dec. 7, 2011). Reporters said this increased interaction with the audience in the virtual world was an unanticipated, yet a mostly desirable, consequence of new media. Reporters are accustomed to the periodic emails, phone calls, or letters from viewers. But new media has taken the audience contact to a new level.

Gone are the days of the traditional one-way, top-down flow of information from news outlets to the audience. The newsroom's audience has become an active and influential part of the news process. Reporters monitored online audience chatter and fielded emails, Facebook messages, and tweets from audience members. Trending topics and newsworthy tips online often influenced reporters' selection of stories they pitched in editorial meetings and then covered. "It used to be that we told them [the audience] what was happening. Now, because of social media, they are trying to tell us...Who online 10 years ago was telling us what our top story was going to be?" (personal communication, Dec. 14, 2011).

Nearly every participant agreed that the collaboration with the audience is beneficial. There was a level of excitement about the shifting relationship with the audience. "It broadens our ability to reach more people and hear what is on their minds—stories that affect them directly" (personal communication, Dec. 15, 2011). In many ways, this audience engagement aided reporters in the newsgathering process because it provided a useful way for reporters to track down stories and sources. One reporter added that audience input helps create a better understanding of a story and can only lead to better reporting of that story. "...we [the media] used to be the owners of the information. But, I've never liked or wanted that concept" (personal communication, Dec. 16, 2011).

This two-way relationship demands more of reporters. Participants said they always have to be "on." Reporters dedicated much more time during non-work hours to managing Facebook and email messages from the audience as well as keeping up with tweets. "The expectation is that when they [audience members] have a question I will

answer it. That has increased so much” (personal communication, Dec. 7, 2011). Most reporters felt they had to immediately reply to these virtual messages, or else they might lose an audience member. Waiting even a matter of hours to respond was not good enough.

In addition, the research reveals reporters are now interacting with the audience in what one participant called “non-journalistic ways.” Because new media allows immediate and anonymous access to reporters, participants said they are receiving more personal requests and are trying to figure out the best way to respond. For female reporters, this was a recurring challenge. “I get friended by men in particular and they ask if I am single and looking. It does create another avenue of access. You have to manage that daily” (personal communication, Dec. 15, 2011).

Reporters seized on the interactivity of new media. They used it to lift the veil on their work, giving people an insider’s look. “I like letting people in on what we do and how we do it. I think there was so much mystery surrounding the media from back in the day. I love demystifying it for people...” said one veteran reporter (personal communication, Dec. 27, 2011). He frequently posts behind-the-scenes photos of the newsroom and of his newsgathering process in the field. Another reporter posted photos on Facebook showing the difficulty, due to winter weather, she and her photographer had when setting up a live shot. “If they see how it is done, I tend to think it can win people over. So they see that sometimes it takes slogging through mud to get video or knocking on a few doors to get a sound bite” (personal communication, Dec. 27, 2011).

Reporters believe these ongoing interactions built a level of trust and credibility with the audience. “The more people I interact with, the more they ask for information.

They don't care that it is already on there [station's online platforms]. They expect us to be at their service. I think it's because they think of us as an authoritative source and they trust that we did our research" (personal communication, Dec. 7, 2011).

In other words, audience members are relying on reporters to navigate through the "noise" and make sense of it all. A reporter used the example of a recent earthquake to drive home this point:

People online are saying, 'Was it an earthquake?' That's the question. The answer they find on the news site. So it is like, 'I think I felt an earthquake; did you feel an earthquake? Then it's like channel so and so says it's an earthquake.' That is how the conversations went. Something gets a conversation going and they still think the answer is with the news outlet. Who else is going to be able to call up the earthquake center? (personal communication, Dec. 16, 2011)

This was an encouraging sign. Some reporters believe it shows their journalistic skills are of value now more than ever before. "We have the experience as journalists. You hope people say, 'they have steered me in the right way and I'll spend my precious time with them'" (personal communication, Dec. 27, 2011).

### ***Tools to Tackle Emerging Responsibilities***

The traditional reporter's notebook, pen, news vehicle, microphone, and desktop computer are no longer sufficient enough to tackle the emerging responsibilities. Add smartphones to the reporter's toolbag. Reporters relied heavily on these devices in order to carry out the evolving tasks expected of them. However, the station did not provide participants with this technology. Instead, reporters took it upon themselves to purchase these devices or used their personal ones for work. One reporter spent almost a thousand dollars on an iPad and external keyboard to use while in the field.

It was not a matter of whether or not reporters needed these devices. They were essential. Without these tools, reporters wondered how they would send photos and information as well as respond to e-mails, among other tasks. “Before I was wasting time because I didn’t have these tools. I knew I had to get these to streamline things” (personal communication, Dec. 14, 2011). The devices provided a level of efficiency, allowing reporters to carry out the myriad of new tasks associated with new media.

They used mobile devices to manage the flood of emails from colleagues, sources, and the audience; check and post to social media sites; dictate notes; and take photos and record video reports for online platforms. In addition, many reporters in the field wrote stories on their mobile devices.

I then email myself the script and copy and paste it into our newsroom computer system. I don’t even need a paper and pen anymore because when I’m on a story I keep all my notes on my mobile device. I feel like I have to because every moment counts. I log my interviews and write my script in the car while my photographer is driving back to the newsroom. In a half hour it takes to get back to the station, I can be done logging my sound and writing most of my story. (personal communication, Dec. 15, 2011)

The use of mobile applications also came in handy. On his way into work, the morning reporter often used an iPhone dictation application to script the anchor lead-in to his story. “I talked right into the iPhone, copy and pasted the script into our news computer system, and that was done. It comes out on this app in printed text, which is beautiful” (personal communication, Dec. 27, 2011).

Using smartphones to access resources such as directions and websites is also a big advantage for reporters. Gone are the days of paper maps. Now, reporters use GPS to find their way to a story. “The other day we were at FedEx on a story and then they needed me to go to a town hall, so I pulled out my iPad to get directions and a map. That

is incredible. Something I couldn't have done five years ago" (personal communication, Dec. 14, 2011).

## Chapter VI

### Conclusion/Discussion

This case study explored the dramatic transformation new media is having on the daily job responsibilities of local television journalists. Through in-depth interviews and participant observation of reporters at a medium-size television station, the research chronicled how their work routines and tasks have been dramatically altered by the rise of digital media, including a station's website and social media such as Twitter and Facebook. It is important to point out that this case study was not meant to evaluate or judge the competency of reporters or the station managers.

This research contributes to a much needed and growing body of scholarly literature that is critical to understanding the changes taking place in the news industry. Many studies focus on nationwide trends or managers' perspectives of how new media affects newsroom staff; however, there is limited research from local television reporters' points of view. In addition, researchers have focused heavily on the dissemination aspect of television reporters' digital media responsibilities, creating content for multiple platforms. Such an approach does not fully capture what broadcast journalists are facing in today's digital newsrooms. This case study fills the gap in scholarly literature by creating a practical and emerging framework to view the impact on local television reporters' responsibilities. The framework includes three main categories in which tasks are evolving: newsgathering, dissemination, and managing the audience.

Case studies provide a level of descriptive detail, so lessons learned from this research are helpful to others in the industry. The research sheds light on the myriad of

responsibilities broadcast journalists are assuming in a changing media environment. Reporters will find these results insightful as they try to stay relevant in the industry. For news managers, the case study will help them better understand the challenges reporters are facing and the support they need as new media is integrated into the newsroom culture. In addition, educators will find the results useful as they teach budding journalists how to embrace new technologies and acquire multimedia skills while upholding journalistic standards. The case study provides a snapshot of what these future television journalists will face in the real world.

As the results section showed, reporters are weighing the positive and negative impacts of new media on their job responsibilities. All should not appear so dismal, as seems to be the case when so many conversations with journalists turn into how new media is “ruining the business.” While many in the industry view the evolving media landscape with dismay, most reporters in this study believe the changes are for the better. They generally embraced new media and are excited about the opportunities it presents despite the additional job pressures. In fact, morale remained high in the newsroom at the center of this study. “I understand you want to hold firm to things of the past, but the reality is you have to understand where things are going” (personal communication, Dec. 14, 2011).

The research first described the integration of new media into the newsroom culture and how reporters fit into this plan. New media led to organizational changes in the newsroom, which directly impacted reporters’ tasks and workflow. Reporters had to navigate an evolving organizational structure—one in which the web team gained prominence. Reporters were used to relaying information about their stories to the

assignment desk and producers. Now, reporters must also feed information back to the web team so it can update the station's multiple online platforms—website, Twitter, Facebook, mobile applications, and text alerts. Reporters, crunched for time now more than ever, found the internal communications process to be cumbersome. There was no uniform way of getting information to those who needed it at the same time. Many times reporters had to relay the information in separate phone calls to multiple colleagues—web team, assignment desk, and producers.

Reporters were not aware of a formal new media policy at the station. Instead, they learned what was expected of them through informal changes within the newsroom. In addition, the research found that some of the additional responsibilities reporters took on were self-imposed and not necessarily mandates from management. Many reporters took it upon themselves to assume new responsibilities because of job security concerns. One veteran reporter referred to it as “professional longevity.” The station maintained robust staffing levels and had not experienced downsizing, but study participants were very aware of the industry perils. Within the newsroom, “innovators” emerged—those who colleagues repeatedly mentioned as newsroom leaders when it comes to new media. Veteran reporters were as aggressive as their younger counterparts to embrace digital media. In contrast to most studies about the diffusion and adoption of innovations, this case study found the use of new media was not generational.

Surprisingly, and also in contrast to past studies, reporters had not morphed into “backpack journalists” or “one-man-bands” that have become an industry norm, even in much larger television markets. Reporters in this study continue to cover stories with a videographer. Many believed it was only a matter of time before they would have to

shoot their own reports. Even though reporters still have the “luxury” of working in traditional two-person teams, new media is significantly transforming their job responsibilities in three areas: newsgathering, dissemination, and managing the audience.

Reporters never anticipated new media would be such a useful resource in the *newsgathering* process. New media has made newsgathering easier for reporters. Consider it a new tips line. Reporters are finding story ideas and tracking down interviewees through social media platforms. Study participants’ routines include monitoring their professional Facebook and Twitter accounts as well as those of the station for story ideas. As the descriptive case study details, online posts led to meaningful stories—from layoffs at a local company to the possibility that the city’s new street paint is not as cost effective as originally thought. Reporters also provided countless examples of how they use new media to secure interviews. One reporter posted on Facebook that she was working on a back-to-school shopping story. She lined up three interviews from the post. When covering tragedies, it was common practice for reporters to use Facebook to track down photos of victims and send interview requests to victims’ family members. There was a downside, however, to how new media impacted reporters’ newsgathering tasks. Reporters said newsroom colleagues were too quick to assume certain online posts were worth pursuing as news stories. As a result, reporters were sometimes at the will of online chatter. Colleagues were increasingly asking reporters to confirm the accuracy of tweets and Facebook posts—a task that became part of the evolving responsibilities.

Reporters anticipated new media would be used to *disseminate* information to the public. But reporters underestimated how this would increase the demands on them. In

the never-ending news cycle, they no longer waited until the traditional television newscasts to deliver information about stories. Reporters provided real-time updates across multiple platforms including the station's website, Twitter feed, and Facebook page. When covering a story, reporters were expected to send information and photos to the web team as soon as possible. Most reporters, although not mandated by management, also posted this content to their own social media accounts. Even though the web team is responsible for creating website articles from reporters' broadcast stories, reporters spent considerable time on the digital manifestations of their stories. One of the more interesting findings is that reporters had a difficult time giving up control of these stories to the web team. Reporters viewed the web stories as an extension of their journalistic reputation, and they were compelled to protect it. So they would rewrite or edit the web version of their stories, which required them to become skilled at writing in broadcast and print style. In this race to disseminate information, reporters struggled with balancing traditional journalistic values, such as accuracy, with the immediacy of the online medium.

Another unexpected, yet mostly desirable, consequence of new media is the time dedicated to *managing the audience*. Because social media allows the public to connect directly to reporters at anytime, the relationship with audience members has changed drastically. During the workday and non-work hours, reporters are spending significant time keeping up with messages and online posts as well as answering questions from audience members. Although this two-way virtual relationship increased reporters' responsibilities, they found the collaboration to be beneficial. Of particular note, reporters believed the online engagement builds trust and credibility with the audience.

And there were signs of this already happening. Reporters noted they have been fielding more audience members' questions, asking for clarification and verification of online chatter.

### ***Limitations***

As outlined in Chapter IV, the nature of any case study involves inherent limitations in generalizing and reproduction of results. The sample size was not large enough to determine any statistically significant trends concerning the impact of new media on reporters' responsibilities. However, this case study provides a useful snapshot, adding to the understanding of the changes taking place in television newsrooms.

### ***Suggestions for Future Research***

We are only at the beginning of providing an encompassing picture of the ever-evolving media landscape. The qualitative results of this study could be coupled with quantitative data to provide an even more powerful and holistic understanding of the research question. This study also lays the groundwork for future research that should look into such issues as the impact of changing responsibilities on the quality of output, news content. For example, are the demands preventing reporters from digging deeper into a story, thus compromising journalistic performance? Are added responsibilities preventing reporters from conducting investigations?

Reporters in this case study indicated that multimedia journalism forces them to spend less time on fact-checking information because of an emphasis on the quantity of content. Content analysis could be utilized to determine the impact on quality of news content. Perhaps, such an analysis might compare the quality of content in newsrooms that rely heavily on new media versus those that have not been as progressive.

Another area of inquiry could be whether written digital media policies actually make a difference. Reporters in this study said they did not know of any formal policy at their station. Some noted that the lack of a policy caused a bit of confusion in terms of what was expected of them. A study could compare newsrooms that have formal policies with those that do not. One might assume reporters who work in newsrooms with written policies would have a clearer idea of what is expected of them. However, past research indicates formal policies do not necessarily make a difference. For example, Boeyink's (1994) research on codes of ethics indicated that written guidelines alone were not as beneficial as first thought. Rather, a newsroom culture—one where the topic of ethics was discussed openly—made an impact. Interestingly, several reporters said there would be value in holding periodic meetings on social media best practices.

Reporters and news managers are increasingly selecting stories that are the talk of social media sites. Gatekeeping theory could be used to investigate how newsrooms in a multimedia environment select stories. What is the frequency of selection based on social media chatter and how does that play into where the story is placed in a traditional newscast?

It is crucial that we continue to gain a deeper understanding of the changes taking place inside television newsrooms, which have been called the battleground of new technology, because they affect news workers who “can have a significant impact on what information is ultimately disseminated to the public” (Smith et al., 2007, p. 271).

### ***Practical Purposes of Research***

This research has important practical implications for journalism professionals and educators.

#### *i. Journalism professionals*

News managers must create digital media guidelines that holistically address the evolving responsibilities detailed in this study: newsgathering, dissemination, and managing the audience. Reporters at this station enjoyed the freedom of a hands-off leadership style that is necessary in creative environments such as journalism. However, they did not understand what was expected of them in terms of new media or how their digital tasks tied into the overall success of the station and served the audience. In fact, most participants were looking for direction—waiting for the development of more formal guidelines. Therefore, management must initiate the process.

Reflective practices are needed within newsrooms to assess the current state of a station's new media approach and develop or enhance a policy. A critical component is to allow rank and file—not just managers—to envision the station's digital media future. Managers can empower reporters by bringing them into the process, instead of developing a plan behind closed doors. When the process is collaborative, workers are more likely to accept ownership of new tasks and feel obligated to see them through. The newsroom, despite a lack of digital media guidelines, is fortunate to have a number of innovators who could lead the charge as “change agents” or “digital media ambassadors.” Managers should envision these innovators as playing a key role in educating their colleagues.

For example, these innovators can help lead professional development programs, held after guidelines are established and then at regular intervals. The forums would show employees that the station is committed to digital media endeavors and the success of its workers. Managers can also assess employees' digital media skills and comfort levels through these sessions, and determine the type of training needed in the future. Stations must give reporters the physical tools to carry out their job responsibilities as well. Mobile devices, now just as important as a station-issued video camera, should be provided to reporters.

In establishing a clear vision, journalistic standards must be a top priority. If a policy does not place an emphasis on commitment to traditional journalistic values, buy-in from newsroom staff will be unlikely. Study participants repeatedly stressed the importance of maintaining these values despite the immediacy of the online medium.

Newsrooms also need to address internal communications processes and evolving organizational structures associated with new media. Instead of reporters wasting valuable time relaying the same information to multiple colleagues from the web team and traditional newscasts, there is a need for simpler approach. A better method is to have reporters send information to newsroom staff via a listserv, or whoever receives the information over phone from a reporter should then pass details to the appropriate colleagues. To prevent reporters from being bogged down with emails, it is recommended that the assignment desk vet general emails to the newsroom. Currently, all emails—hundreds per day—are ending up in the inboxes of reporters in this study.

Finally, newsrooms would benefit greatly from better integrating online staff with the rest of the newsroom. A digital first mentality requires that new media and traditional

media not be viewed as two separate entities. Web staff should be part of editorial meetings, for example, so the entire news team can strategize how best to tell the days news, gather information, and connect with the audience across all platforms.

*ii. Journalism educators*

Just as reporters must step out of their entrenched routines to be successful in a digital environment, journalism curricula must be flexible enough to prepare budding journalists for the real-world scenarios they will encounter. This approach does not, however, render the basics of journalism education obsolete. Traditional journalism skills—such as clear writing, compelling storytelling, and verification—are more important than ever as the public increasingly turns to journalists to make sense of the deluge of information. “Journalists as curators” is a phrase often used to describe this emerging role. Making sense of all the “noise” requires students to critically assess the credibility of online information and its sources.

The two-way flow of information between journalists and an active audience is perhaps the most significant change in journalism that educators need to address. The traditional one-way model of journalism, news that lectures to the audience, is dead. To better understand this open system of communication and the technology fueling it, students should be required to take interdisciplinary courses related to information science and technology—with an emphasis on technology and society as well as computer-mediated communication.

By integrating digital media across all courses in journalism curricula, students will be able to gain a better understanding of the collaborative nature of new media. Infusing new media into lesson plans goes far beyond teaching students how to create

multimedia stories and disseminate content over multiple platforms. A more holistic approach is to use social media tools such as Twitter or Pinterest, for example, to create virtual learning environments that augment the classroom experience. This recommended method requires that journalism instructors experiment with the tools their students will be expected to use when entering the job market. Innovation should be encouraged, if not rewarded.

Educators and journalists, working collaboratively, can lead the industry on this momentous journey. Their success will be dependent on taking a less cautious and more experimental approach to new media. Journalism's task should not be to lament the dying of the old way.

## **Appendix A**

### **Interview Guide**

How long have you been at the station? How long have you been in the journalism profession?

Describe your daily job responsibilities.

What new media tools do you use on a daily basis? Which for newsgathering? Which for news dissemination?

Do your managers require you to use new media tools? If not, why do you use them?

Has your job title changed to reflect the integration of new media into your work?

How has new media changed your daily responsibilities since you first started in the news business?

How do you see the ways in which you gather information and tell stories changing? What impact has this had on your responsibilities?

Has new media added more responsibilities to your daily routine? Please explain.

Has new media impacted your job responsibilities in a negative and/or positive way?

Please describe a specific example of how new media has been beneficial to your daily job responsibilities.

Please describe a specific example of how new media has had a negative impact on your daily job responsibilities.

What are the main issues you face with the integration of new media into your daily job responsibilities?

What are some of the unanticipated and undesirable consequences, if any, as a result of the adoption of new media?

Has new media made you more efficient? If yes, please describe in detail.

What percentage of your job responsibilities is focused on broadcast? New media?

How has new media impacted the quality of content?

How has new media impacted your relationship with the audience?

How has new media impacted your relationship with managers? With co-workers?

Because of the instant nature of new media, are you making more decisions today independent of news managers or other colleagues, such as producers?

How did managers implement the use of new media in the newsroom?

Did you feel you were adequately trained on new media and how did that training, or lack of, impact your job responsibilities?

How has the structure or organization of your newsroom changed with new media?

Do you understand why you are integrating new media into your responsibilities?

Do you believe the station has a clear vision and direction about the integration of new media? Has it been communicated?

Has managerial styles changed with the emergence of new media. If so, has this impacted your daily job responsibilities?

Do you understand how the changes with new media are tied to the station's long-term goals?

How much input do you have in regards to the use of new media tools?

Has the integration of new media into your newsroom and job responsibilities impacted morale here? If yes, please explain.

How do you expect new media to impact your job responsibilities in the coming years?

Do you have any additional comments regarding new media and your job?

## **Appendix B**

### CONSENT FORM

Thank you for your participation in this interview. This research project will analyze how new media is impacting the daily job responsibilities of local television reporters.

The interview will take about one hour to complete, and it will be audiotaped. Your participation is strictly voluntary, and you may end the interview at any time. You will also be observed during the course of the workday in the newsroom.

Your participation will help the news industry understand the issues employees and managers face when adopting and integrating new media into the newsroom. Your personal information will remain confidential. Only the investigator will have access to the data in its original form, and after the analysis is complete, it will be kept in a locked file cabinet for seven years from the completion of the project.

Aggregate data collected from this research will be shared with [redacted]. The findings may be published in an academic forum or shared with those in the media industry.

Any questions about this research methodology may be answered by Anthony Adornato, at (315) 269-5587, or through e-mail, at [acap86@missouri.edu](mailto:acap86@missouri.edu).

Questions or concerns about research participants' rights may be directed to MU Campus Institutional Review Board, 483 McReynolds, University of Missouri, Columbia, MO 65211. Phone: 573 882-9585. Fax: 573 884-0663.

## Appendix C

### **PARTICIPANT #1**

**December 7, 2011**

Five years experience in journalism

AA: Since you started in the business, how have these new tools impacted your job responsibilities?

I'm young, and I'm fairly tech savvy. I've been using Facebook, for example, since its inception. Some things never change. But, the way we get and give out information has changed. Twitter has really changed things. A tweet from a basketball player or anyone else for that matter could spark something – information you wouldn't get before. Information is immediate, and it's in a shorter form. You have to figure out what it means and how or whether you disseminate to the audience.

The big question we struggle with is how fast to give this information out to the audience. You really need the time to check it before you give it to audience. But there is this pressure to give it to the audience before anyone else. It's not enough anymore to be the first person to post it on your website. You have to tweet it first, get it on Facebook first, and get as many likes and shares from your followers on Facebook. That is a big impact on not just an individual level, but also a station level. At the station we focus on it more as an overall brand than we do on the individual level.

AA: Who is verifying this information that comes through these tools?

The way it works is that whoever sees a tweet of interest will forward it to the station email list—that gets disseminated to everyone in the newsroom. Reporters will then call so and so to verify and get comment on it. It is really a group effort. The accountability comes from communicating with everyone electronically. You are not going to yell all this stuff across the newsroom.

AA: Is there an overall station new media policy and how do reporters fit into it?

There have been great efforts to create an overall plan. There has been a lot of research done and the information gets disseminated to the reporters piecemeal. Could someone in the newsroom say this binder contains a formal policy? No, no probably not.

We are not required to have a personal Facebook page or Twitter account. I think it benefits to have them though. I've had a professional Facebook page. One thing I struggle with is how do I separate my professional life with my personal life. I go by different names on and off air, and I do the same with my personal and professional social media accounts. I do get weird messages from people.

AA: How do you manage the changing relationship with the audience? What is that interaction like?

There is a sense of a responsibility—a sense of duty—to interact and engage in a way that is not necessarily journalistic. For example, my daughter celebrated her first birthday. I'll go ahead and give her a birthday shout-out and post it on my Facebook page. People post all sorts of nice things, and I respond to those the best I can.

At the same time, I'll get other messages. I recently got a message from someone who tipped me off to an investigation that the station hadn't reported yet. It gave me a level of details that I couldn't have gotten from authorities, even off the record. So, it's a great source for that.

AA: What have been the positive and negative consequences of social media on your job responsibilities?

The positives are that it is another source for tips, for news, for what's happening in your community, for staying connected to people in your community. You can actually see your followers' feeds and monitor them to see what is important to them in the community. For example, a few weeks ago a young woman was murdered. It just so happened that someone in my feed popped up a message about her. That was a possible source for me. It's probably not anyone I would have encountered otherwise – if we didn't have these new tools. It's a very valuable tool in that way. It gives people a way of contacting you in a way they feel is private and reliable. People are much more comfortable sending you private messages on Facebook than they are even sending an email to the station. In fact, our stations emails aren't even published. So to some extent we are asking people to communicate with us through these channels.

On the negative side, a lot of it is personal. There are strange people in the world and we report about them everyday. It's another place where you have to take a deep breath and say I am a public persona. People are going to give feedback and the new medium gives them another avenue. That can be tough to some extent.

AA: When you are out on a story what is the workflow to get items back to station to post to the website and social media sites?

We are expected to send in photos and information as soon as we get to a scene. What is the most important information – tell me now. You have to be careful delivering news piecemeal because you don't want it to be misinterpreted either by people at the station or by your audience. There is an expectation more so now of getting that information back to the station immediately because it needs to get online. The on-air stuff—the crafty part of journalism—has almost become secondary to getting the information out there.

AA: In the editorial meetings is there planning around what the expectations are for the day social-media wise?

The morning meeting is still pretty traditional. It's what going on today, who is covering it, what are we going to cover today. Then logistically when are you going to have this information and when can you get it to us by.

AA: Are you updating the station's new media platforms?

Occasionally reporters actually have the task of updating the website. We take our website very seriously, so we have a web team that actually oversees it. They'll draft many of the online versions of reporters' stories, get tweets out, and post to our Facebook page. That said, our web team isn't there 24 hours a day. So if something happens during the morning news hour, I'm responsible for getting the news online.

I typically have a laptop on the anchor desk with me to keep Twitter open. I follow breaking news accounts like the Associated Press so I can see if there is a big story that breaks and we need to get into the newscast. Or if we have a story that is developing while we are on-air, you want to be advancing that story. The easiest way to get that information from online to on-air is by alerting my producer and saying that we need to get what is unfolding online onto our on-air newscast.

AA: In terms of more autonomy – Because of the instant nature of new media, are you making more decisions today independent of news managers or other colleagues, such as producers?

Tweeting from your personal account or updating your Facebook page from the scene of a story is not yet a priority. It is more the whole that we are concerned about—the station's Twitter feed, the station's Facebook page. Generally things that go out to our audience go out through the station's main feed. That being said, there are reporters who tweet while out on a story and in my experience they are great reporters who would not put anything out there that would be questionable. The need to be monitored certainly exists; in practice, I never encountered a situation where it really became a problem.

AA: What is the routine for reporters to get the information back to appropriate people so it can be posted to online platforms?

We rely heavily on email. The web unit prefers to be the first to know. The web unit starts drafting right after we give them the phone call. They send an email to everyone else. Everyone always has email open. We are constantly staying on top of email. We have to. Because even when I leave for the day at 12:30, when I check email before I go to bed, I have 200-300 emails. Some of the information is great background that I'll have for me the next morning when I'm reading copy on-air. But, nine times out of 10 it's emails that don't pertain to me.

The other change with technology is that we receive so many emails about possible stories, and it makes it hard to check the newsworthiness of the emails.

AA: Describe in more detail how you believe the job has changed since you started at the station?

In 2007, the website was my responsibility on the weekend when I worked the morning shift. I had to have everything up there right away and keep it looking fresh. I've always had the sense of urgency about the website though.

There is a lot of resistance, especially from people who have been in the business a long time. First of all, it is another responsibility. It is time intensive. I get it in the morning. I log in and check the 60 plus emails that were sent between the time I went to bed and got in the morning. I then post the Question of the Day on the station's Facebook page. I then go over to my personal page and let all of my followers know about what is coming up on the morning newscasts. Maybe, if I remember to, I'll post something similar on my Twitter page. From there I go over copy of all the stories and write stories before I go on air. It is much more time intensive now.

AA: Has morale changed with these new tasks?

I don't think morale has changed. You'll definitely hear cranky comments from people of a different generation. Newsrooms nowadays are pretty young places. A lot of us just think this is part of the job, and it is.

AA: Do you feel like the interaction with audience is invigorating and is beneficial to you as a reporter?

It depends on the kind of interaction that you are getting from people. It's exciting to be able to advance these stories through these mediums, whether to find stories or tell stories. The goal of journalism is to put a face to a story. If you are doing a story about online dating, are you going to stand in the mall and ask someone? No, you can send out a solicitation on a Facebook page and get plenty of people to weigh-in and then set up interviews. That is exciting and cool. It makes our job a lot easier. I've used it heavily during sweeps periods – about the danger of online dating or also used it to ask people about dangers of having an online profile.

You are trying to engage them because you want to get them involved and interested. Are their responses always relevant to your work and what you do? Not necessarily.

AA: Do you understand where the station is trying to go with new media and how do you fit into that mix?

The trajectory is harder to map. As far as where technology or the next big thing exists, I think we are all trying to figure that out.

AA: Are there people in the newsroom who are considered early adopters or heavy users of new media?

He [name redacted] is a leader in the newsroom when he comes to that stuff. Not only does he tweet and Facebook, he also takes his iPhone and records his own web report and emails it to the web unit. It's incredible. It's hard enough to turn around your TV packages for the day. He's turning around more and more, plus he's tweeting about it when he is out there. He is very ambitious. This could be to his own detriment because then it becomes expected of us. No one else comes to that level.

AA: Any unforeseen or negative impacts?

I don't think we've had any of those "oops" moments. Not everything you do is going to be well received from an audience, for example the emphasis on the online product. Many people in the market are very traditional and they don't like change. Don't want to alienate them.

AA: Where do you see things going?

In the immediate future, I see more responsibility being put on reporter to be more credible by pursuing and being active in new media. We are encouraged to think about the station first because they have a wider reach than an individual reporter. The first concern has to be that the station meets the needs of the viewers.

AA: How has new media impacted the type and quality of content you work on during a typical day?

Because of the immediacy with all these new tools, it is far more difficult—in some cases prohibitively difficult—to do the kind of journalism that the industry was known for, the journalism that you aspired to. It is far more difficult to get the opportunity to pursue that kind of stuff or have the time, because you are far more consumed with the immediacy of getting information.

You want to be known for breaking news and breaking big stories that wouldn't have broken on their own; it's hard to do that when you are busy tweeting about what is happening now.

## Appendix D

### **PARTICIPANT #2**

**December 7, 2011**

Six years experience in journalism

AA: Give me a broad picture of how you think new media is being utilized at the station, and then I'll ask more specific questions.

Even five years ago, we didn't have a Facebook or a Twitter account. The station has really only been digging into the social media aspect for the past three years. The competitor was overwhelmingly ahead of us. So we felt like we were behind and needed to catch up. And then earlier in 2011, the station took six months of data about usage of Facebook page and they came up with a strategy about how it was going to be used at the station. I know the web team targets specific things such as number of posts and type of content. A lot of our focus has been on Facebook. We do live tweeting in certain situations but we put an immense amount of effort into Facebook.

AA: How was it getting you and your colleagues on board? They do say getting journalists on board with something is like herding cats.

The structure of our newsroom is set up in a way that it is different that most of station. We have an actual web unit – three web producers who do much of the actual posting to the station's Facebook and Twitter sites and website. The web unit creates a version of the reporters' on-air product and then the web unit touches base with us to fact check and review the story. What they do is try to get reporters out in the field to check back in frequently with information and photos. Is there something worth sharing with the audience? We are asked to get stuff back to the web unit as efficiently as we can.

AA: Are you doing it via email? How are you getting this information back to the web team?

We have distribution lists that are utilized heavily. In some cases, the web team then shares the information with the entire newsroom via email, especially during a breaking news situation. We've gotten to a point to where even the most veterans will snap photos and send them back in for our digital platforms. [Redacted] is a perfect example. He will actually snap video with his iPhone or even tape mini reports via the iPhone and will email the video the web team. Everyone knows whenever there is an opportunity to update social media sites, send it back to the newsroom ASAP.

AA: So the web team does most of the updating of the station's website and social media pages? Are reporters?

The web team tries whenever possible to get us to review the story before it goes live because we try to also focus on accuracy. In TV now many station falter when it comes to accuracy and getting information out quickly. The station puts a heavy emphasis on

accuracy, especially when it comes to something like sending out a tweet. It's so easy to get something wrong because there isn't time to go back and review something at times.

That's why we want to do live tweeting of breaking news we have a team out in the field. For example, a big murder case last year. We had one reporter in the courtroom just for tweeting purposes. He sat in the courtroom. Instead of having him tweet from the courtroom, he would text message the web team who then would check the message for accuracy and the post on the station's Twitter feed. The difference in time was maybe 30 seconds in getting it out to the public, but the difference is that people back at the station were able to look at it and say 'every name is spelled right and everything was a complete thought that couldn't be misinterpreted.' That is something corporate is pushing – so we've found ways to be fairly efficient and quick while ensuring the accuracy is there. We don't want to be in a position where we have to issue an apology over a tweet.

AA: That is interesting because interactive media tends to be so decentralized. So the station is still doing the vetting to some extent. The focus is to put an emphasis on the station brand?

Yes, the station doesn't actively promote reporters' pages. Even with this approach, I never feel like we are behind in getting the information out. Usually it's not a question of we do it this way and we are behind. I have my own Twitter account, and the web team may retweet me. But the stations doesn't promote our Twitter handles or Facebook fan pages on the station's website.

AA: How have these tools impacted your job responsibilities?

I think that if you compared it to five years ago, with digital media there is the mentality of get to the scene, take a picture, and send it back. Now, it's automatic. It's not even a question and no one complains about it. I think I am trying to do it in little steps to work these aspects into the daily routine so they become automatic. There is an expectation we have photos, always have photos that need to be posted with breaking news. It's automatic. I realize that is not groundbreaking, it's pretty common now. But, it's much different than five years ago. It's automatic for us out in the field to email in with bullet points, so we can get the information out right away.

AA: How are you using new media as a resource, as a tips line? For example, as a source for stories.

We get a ton of comments on the main Facebook page and the web team manages many of them. I think we are reaching a tipping point. In the next couple of years, it's not going to be something only the web team can do. I suspect they'll starting introducing this responsibility into the reporters' job responsibilities because you know so many more people have smart phones and are connecting with the station. The growth in terms of audience interaction has grown exponentially.

Another big impact on our job is the fact that stories take on a life of their own via digital media. We operate now almost like the AP alerts that newsrooms use for breaking news. Well now the everyday person is expecting those types of alerts for stories, especially breaking news. We also have text alerts and email alerts to get information to our viewers. So there are so many platforms that people rely on us for information, and they want that constant trickle of even tiny bits of information. This puts pressure on use, the reporter, to get information back to newsroom.

AA: Do you feel a pressure to cover stories that will draw more likes on Facebook?

Yes, I know what ends up on Facebook is select. More and more we are creating content on our website that only exists so we can put it on Facebook. While it might not be hard news content, it is the water cooler community stuff that people are talking about. It fills those gaps, those gaps that the Facebook audience wants. People on Facebook don't really want the breaking news.

There are times that we wouldn't normally cover something, but then we notice something that people online are talking about and that changes what we cover for the day. Then they think it's a story worth covering. Then we try to justify on-air why we covered it, often mentioning it was a buzz online. In the past few weeks, I can think of several stories we covered only because of the response we saw online.

AA: Do you have to manage comments after your stories on the website?

The amount and quality of comments to website stories became so overwhelming that the station actually got rid of that function a few months ago. There would be hundreds of people and not enough time to respond to those comments. You would wake up in the morning and have 500-700 comments and many times reporters would have to field the comments relevant to stories they covered. It got out of hand. The station I was glad couldn't justify it anymore.

AA: Has there been resistance to new technologies in the newsroom?

I think each individual person is a unique case. I don't see any general trend in our newsroom. We do have some older folks who are intrigued by the tools but don't use it as much as others. But, they seem eager to learn. [Redacted] is a perfect example of how reporters could be aggressively using these tools. I don't think us reporters have really had resistance. It's unfolding organically.

AA: So do you think digital first, and then worry about the broadcast side?

In breaking news situations, it's digital first. There is never any question about that. I'll even send in photos and if the news is unfolding during the newscast, they'll show the photo I emailed in right off the desktop on the set. On the day-to-day stuff, we are still unsure about how much should be dedicated to reporting via Facebook and Twitter. There still seems to be an emphasis on worrying about your package for the traditional

newscasts. There's a lot of pressure already to pump out multiple stories for on-air, so it is difficult sometimes to think about also constantly updating new media platforms. At this point it is imperfect. I think because we have a very good web team, there is less stress on reporters here than at other stations our size that typically don't have such a well-staffed web team. I have friends who work in Top 50 markets and they definitely have more expected of them.

AA: You read a lot lately about the demise of journalism. Do you think these tools are actually helping and aiding you in your daily job responsibilities?

There is an excitement in what you are doing, and it definitely is hard to get bored. And, I don't think there is a huge risk of failure and you are encouraged to try these. But, on the downside, it doesn't take a whole lot to piss people off. If you do something wrong once, you can do a lot of damage. For example, if you post something hastily, especially because we are so brand centric in how we do things.

You really have to be very careful. I'm very careful too because once you post something digitally it is always out there. There is no real undo. Having said that, the station has always have been way out in front when it comes to our website. They don't hesitate to post new information before we have it on air. However, when social media came along, I don't think we were initially as aggressive. You can see we are not social media leaders in this market. And, I think there is a hesitance to spend resources on new tools such as Google plus because we don't know where it is going and think our resources could be better spent somewhere else.

I also spend more time thinking about, for my personal twitter, what the most appropriately hashtags are. That can make a big difference. For example, when the case involving [redacted] broke, we had this major national story. It made such a difference whether I used one hashtag versus another. Those little decisions make a big difference because using the correct hashtag meant national media were relying on you for the information about a national story happening in your backyard. You have to make these quick decisions, but also be consistent.

AA: So do you or other reporters here at the station blog?

Others and I tried blogs but it didn't work out. I think now people want such immediate information and blogs don't provide that, so I focus more on getting information back for Twitter, website, and Facebook. It's so much easier on election night, for example, to get a tweet out on my personal account and the station account. The more I use Twitter, the more I see its benefits.

AA: You've expressed how the interaction with new media has changed the relationship with the audience. How has that shift in relationship impacted your daily job responsibilities?

I'm finding that the audience is turning to us to answer questions, even when the answers are right there on our website or on Facebook. The expectation is that when they have a question I will answer it. That has increased so much. The more people I interact with, the more they ask for information. They don't care that it is already on there. They expect us to be at their service. I think it's because they think of us as an authoritative source and they trust that we did our research. They also don't expect to go through any effort. It's not a bad thing that they trust us and there is no barrier, but that becomes an immense responsibility. And if you miss someone, they can become angry. The audience doesn't seem to want to make any effort. It also shows they don't want to wait until the evening news.

When people have these questions it is good to know they are going to traditional journalists such as myself.

AA: Where do you see things going?

I think everyone is going to have mobile phones before you know it, so more people are going to be expecting that information and that is going to make it more important for me to get information back to the station so they can get it out via digital media. And, more pressure to get it out via my digital media accounts. So, I also think the audience for traditional newscasts are going to erode more and digital first will be more imperative.

AA: Give me an example of a story that new media proved beneficial?

We had received word of a small plane crash north of here. Folks in the newsroom were making calls and my immediate reaction was to check Twitter and Facebook to see if anyone was talking about it.

AA: Are sources, such as police agencies using new media to get out information? If so, how does this impact how you gather information?

We don't even expect a news release anymore from some agencies. That's how we find a lot of information, from going to the police department's Facebook page.

AA: Can you think of some of the unexpected and expected consequences of adopting new media?

I think the one thing we never anticipated it as such a newsgathering tool. For example, when I am on my way to a scene that is a distance away and we are trying to track down information. Trying to tap into that socialsphere has been important. The positives have even been little things. Someone on Friday made a small post that I noticed about being laid off at a local company and next thing you know that is my story. For three different days we had angles on this story. Just a tiny nugget made such a difference.

Also, it has been so unexpected that people are now relying on us for photos of news stories, especially breaking news stories. A great example is when there was an

emergency landing of a military helicopter. We also feel like we have to keep track of what the other station's website and social media sites have and compete with them.

Also, people now know that we are on top of breaking news so it has helped us because they will reach out to others or me with breaking news tips. I get a lot more of that than I ever used it. They come to me as a source. So this adds an extra pressure.

AA: Across the country, we are seeing reporters now shooting their own video. Many of them are called multimedia or backpack journalists. Do you or any other reporters you work with fit into this category?

No. We have been very fortunate and still have not adopted that model. There was some fear we would because others in the market have. But, I think management realizes that we are doing very well and have been leery in changing to that model

## Appendix E

### **PARTICIPANT #3**

December 14, 2011

13 years experience in journalism

AA: You've been in the business awhile. Give me your perspective on how you've seen things change from when you started to now.

When I started, we didn't worry about the web at all. We just worried about our story. We had to do one story. Yesterday, I did three. So going from a time when I did one story to an era now where I am doing three stories, and there is the web. Probably the biggest challenge for me at the station was when I first started. They have a web division, which is great because there are stations now that want the reporter to be 100 percent responsible for web stories as well. So, in that sense I feel a bit lucky that there is a team dedicated to web and social media.

But, my biggest challenge on day one was when I went out to a story and called back to tell them what I knew, and I got the web folks. So, they wanted to know all the details. Especially, if it's a big story, you just want to focus on getting the story in the field, but they want to get it on the web and social media immediately. I never had that before in the business. I remember when the web team answered the phone on my first day at this station; I was really frustrated because I wanted to focus on what was going on in the field. It was a time issue, and I felt like I was going to miss something in the field while I was on the phone with the web folks. Having to devote not only time to telling them, but critical time. You have to be available when the information in the field comes in. It was another thing that ties me up.

AA: How do you manage the chain of command? What is the order of who you call when you are in the field? Typically, it used to be the assignment editor.

I've had to draw a bit of a line since I first started here. I said eventually within the first week, I need to talk to the assignment editor now and I will call the web team back when I get a chance. But, that is difficult for someone who is just starting and so the pressure is definitely increasing to get on the web. If you are older and more experienced, you can draw the line. But you have to keep in mind that is not a line they want drawn as much anymore. But I have tried to work it out so I say, 'let me talk to the assignment editor first and then I'll get back to you.'

I recognize this is important though and I have tried to find ways to adapt. Before I worked here, I never owned an iPad or iPhone. My first five months there, I got both of those pieces of technology because I knew it was important to them. I bought them myself. It would be great if that was a technology they would supply to us. It would be great if that technology became a part of what the station supplies you – just like a camera, a news vehicle, and a microphone. But, we're not there yet. Wow, what a difference for me though. I knew I needed something to simplify things. One of the big

things they want is pictures. But, they don't supply digital cameras to the reporters. Also, helpful with the iPhone is the tweet function and email function.

Now I take a really nice photo with my iPhone and with a click of a button I send a photo back to the station. Before I was wasting time because I didn't have these tools. I knew I had to get these to streamline things. It also made me more likely to tweet because I can click a photo, write a line, and send it off. The iPad I use to write my notes and scripts in the field, and then I email the script back to the station. Before, I had to write it down on paper and then call the station and read it to them verbatim. So now I email it to everyone. The web people will also have what I know. Technology has really helped me tackle all we have to do.

AA: This some thing you came up with? This workflow?

Facebook and tweeting are not necessarily mandated by the station. I know it is something they like, of course. When I went down to Kennedy Space Center for the launch of the final space mission, I asked if they wanted me to live tweet. They actually weren't even to that level where they wanted me to do that. I was more wanting to explore this; they probably would be more open to it now. But, the social media is not required for the individuals. The social media is not required for the individuals. The emphasis is on the station's web and social media platforms. They definitely want to get the website updated and at the end of the day they want your full stories updated quickly.

AA: Do you have to actually update the web?

On the weekends, the reporters and anchors will have to update the web. During the week though, the web staff will take the broadcast script and basically copy it for the website. But this is a bit dangerous and there have been so many mistakes that they started now having the actual reporter look over the web copy. I typically do that at the end of the day, and I like to add information that I couldn't get into a minute-twenty news report. But, if it's a complicated story, I typically add information to the web story. The great thing about the web is that it does allow me to tell a more robust story in some ways. Of course, that is when I have the time to spend on the web stories. They have recently implemented that system—of having reporters review the web version of their story.

Right now, we are in a management transition, so there isn't a firm sense of where things are going here in terms of social media.

AA: Are there any other tools, apps perhaps, that you are utilizing?

Let me get out my iPhone as we are talking here. I'm still learning it. I use maps on here constantly; that has definitely been more efficient. We used to use paper maps! Now I constantly check here to navigate where we are going. This has been such a fantastic tool.

I also got a built in keyboard for my iPad. The other day we were at FedEx on a story and then they needed me to go to a town hall, so I pulled out my iPad to get directions and a

map. That is incredible. Something I couldn't have done five years ago. I instantly have Internet now on my devices.

AA: At breaking news scenes are you using these tools to keep up with what the competition is posting?

To some degree. The trend I see though is that more of us are checking tweets to see what people are talking about. Producers in the newsroom are really watching twitter and then they are calling me in the field to confirm. It's usually 'so and so tweeted this; can we confirm it?' When I'm out in the field, I am still coping with keeping up with what is going on my phone and tweets because I am still focused on the people who I can build the story around. I still have that old school mentality. And, what I've realized how quickly things are moving now. They are not real concerned about it being about people now.

AA: So how do you feel like it's impacted content?

Twitter news comes in and somebody says 'can you confirm this?' and then you are distracted and you are pulled away from whatever you were thinking about. Info is constantly coming. In every direction the new media is pulling your attention away. I had a friend tell me she just had to sit back and put a white flag on her desk and surrender. She said, 'I am not going to be happy with what I put together for the day. It's basically I got in what I could and that is the best I can do.' Now I find that I basically grab whoever I can who is available because I need to move on to another story. So, it is quantity and also the distractions of the duties of the web and other things.

The disappointment of feeling like we are regurgitating what is in front of us, is really depressing. You don't feel like you have the time to find important points and tell them. You are just responding to things. You feel like where did the journalism go? When I started, I had two weeks sometimes to work on a story. I learned how to research and that is unheard of now.

AA: Why do you think this is the case?

Well, we can't ignore that money is the bottom line. But I don't think that social media has helped that because it's another distraction. I would say money is the main cause and then the added responsibility takes away again. You are already doing more with less and new media just makes it worse.

AA: Has social media changed your relationship with your audience as well as sources? If so, how?

With Twitter and Facebook, they are very accessible now. I get friended by men in particular and they ask if I am single and looking. It does create another avenue of access. You have to manage that daily. Before they would have to jump through more hurdles to reach out. At my old station we were seeing emails that were more direct and intimate, so

they brought in a security expert to teach us how to respond. I try to keep it as distant as possible and don't sign just my first name.

My Facebook page only has things that are meant for mass audiences. I don't put personal things, such as photos of my nieces. I've tried to keep more of a distance than some others. I try to keep as professional as possible, with glimpses of our work behind the scenes.

AA: This has opened up an avenue of lifting the veil on the news process?

The tweets or Facebook posts that show lighter moments behind the scenes get more reaction than links to my stories. So I do try to feed that a bit. I look for those fun moments to post because I know that seems to be what people like. At the same time, finding a hot topic for Twitter, I'm still learning about that.

I'm also compelled to tweet about hot stories when I'm off schedule. For example, when a major story broke, I watched everyone else tweet about it so I did the same as I watched the press conference. But, if I had been working, I don't know if I'd been able to tweet that conference because I would have been busy with the story. The people things want, I can't accomplish yet because I feel like I have to protect the bread and butter, my story for broadcast. Maybe it's my age. I'm a little older than some in the newsroom.

AA: Outside of your work hours, how connected are you? Do you feel compelled to keep track of stories as they develop? More so than previously?

When I noticed that they opened up all emails to the newsroom to reporters, that changed things. Before only the assignment desk was vetting through emails. Here I get everything. That demands that I spend time on my day off checking in to email. It's definitely more time consuming on my days off. Before, I'd check the paper and a few websites to stay up to date. Now, I have to check email, Twitter, and Facebook. I feel the pressure to post something, even on days off. It's difficult terrain to navigate.

Some of the positives are that it is a way to engage people. I remember when I started thirteen years ago, I would respond to viewers with hand written letters. You keep them connected now even more with what you are doing. On the flipside, there are the people who just write in bizarre comments. It's like a new telephone. People used to call every night, now they just write constantly.

AA: Do you think journalists are needed now more than ever to help people make sense of all the noise out there?

I think that may be true. But, I also think it is disappointing because you don't have the time to vet that stuff. If you want there to be credible journalists who vet that stuff and then make sure get what we need to know, you have to invest in them. We've reached a time when people get so much information from different directions and they don't know what to believe. A good example is of the young girl who died the other day. All over

Facebook and Twitter, people were speculating whether or not she had died or not. It used to be that we told them what was happening. Now, because of social media, they are trying to tell us. But they are not always right. So it is confusing that role of the audience and media. Not only are they delivering it to us, they have an expectation that we are going to lead with this. Who online ten years ago was telling us what our top story was going to be?

AA: How much of what you cover is determined by what people are saying online? Are the stories you are assigned determined by this? Are they determined by the number of clicks or responses they might receive?

The one time there was a story about a child who died in a football game, those stories were getting a ton of hits. The producers and web staff is much more aware of this. I will hear people talking about the number of hits on stories, so I have to admit it made me approach stories differently. When I think that a story is over, oftentimes people are still talking about it on the social media platforms. I thought we should have moved on to another story, but the interest online showed differently. The producers are more likely to go with things people are talking about online, and that means it is what I have to report that day. That is part of the producer function.

I don't ever feel pressure to be aware of the number of hits, but the producers are aware and that drives what I do.

AA: Your station has a web unit that many other stations in markets this size and larger don't have. Do you believe having a team of web and social media producers alleviates certain responsibilities from your plate?

Having people devoted to it does make a big difference because many other stations reporters are taking on even more web and social media tasks than we are. A lot of the pressure is self-imposed. I know that I have to adapt, and you know, when I call and they say 'can you tell us what's going on?' I want to help and deliver. But I still have to protect what we are doing on TV that night. I would say after the first week they really didn't bother me that much. I don't think that it takes away from the overall news product but I still can't say it doesn't impact me. Having to worry about another thing, whether it is the website, or Twitter, or Facebook. And knowing that is the direction everything is moving in.

AA: Tell me more about the self-imposed pressure? Do you find that people are utilizing new media in their job responsibilities as a form of job security?

I have to admit I entered the new media sphere with reluctance. But I have to admit I sort of like it. Even though no one was making me open my personal Twitter account or Facebook page, I knew I had to do it. Even just from the perspective of being responsible in knowing about this technology that my viewers are using and keeping up to date on what they are saying. I had to. My one colleague shoots his own side videos on his phone at scenes and the web team will use them. It's interesting because some of us cringe when

he does that, because it may mean we all have to do that soon. Of course, it depends on your shift and story, if you have time or not. There are times, I have to admit, that instead of sending back a photo, I have sent back a video.

The good things about Facebook and Twitter, is when you need to talk to someone. We got a lot of letters from parents who had issues with back to school shopping lists. They said that schools were wanting more and more, and it was just getting too expensive. I needed to find a mom who I could tag along with while she was shopping. So I posted on our Facebook page, 'Hey any moms about to go to shopping?' That is how I connected with a mom. Before you just had to kind of stumble upon people like this, and now you can look for them online. I had a bunch of people respond. And, it gave me options because I had a number of moms respond. I had three moms who had different scenarios. That is where it created flexibility for me.

Also, I ended up having a story with a local college about new research before it was released formally in a press release. When it came time, when it was ok to talk about this research, a PR person actually tweeted me a private message. It was the first time that was a means of communications from a PR person about a story. So PR people are now finding you on Twitter and using that instead of email.

It's also helpful to communicate with people inside of a scene you can't get to or a scene you are on your way to.

AA: Are you finding that police and other agencies are using social media to get information out to you and public? Do you regularly check these pages?

Not only do the organizations have Facebook pages, but also so do the PR people, such as the public information officers for the police. And that is where it gets weird. A lot of reporters are friends with the public information officer's personal Facebook page. I had always been taught that you keep a certain distance from these sources. Then it becomes tricky: do I become Facebook friends and is that appropriate?

I am not Facebook friends with the public information officer from the police department, but other reporters in this market are. Does that give them an advantage? I'm not sure how to tow that line yet. I don't know what it means to be Facebook friends with him. Is it like following him on Twitter, which is less personal? That has become difficult terrain. And, also is it appropriate for me to be friends with people from other stations. It's tricky. I'm still figuring that out. It puts you in a position you never had before.

In terms of competition, I also find myself in the old school mentality of why should I tweet this if I am the only one on a scene and the other station might not have the information. I might tip them off. Will they then show up? Another day I might just say, 'I got to go with what I got.' I never know sometimes if I should tweet certain things or wait until broadcast time. I found myself trying to figure out what am I going to blog about. Twitter and Facebook are much more useful, I think.

AA: Do you think in terms of broadcast or digital first?

If there is a story that people are really in to, Twitter is a tease or a way to keep them interested. You can't get all your info through Twitter. I think Twitter can actually attract people to your broadcast platform because they will want more about something they saw on Twitter. I think Facebook and Twitter are actually ways to get people back into the broadcast reports.

I like to protect my TV story. So if I have a choice between getting a fact and tweeting, I will get the fact because it is instinctual. And when I go live and the anchor asks a question, I better know the answer. I can't miss something because I'm tweeting. I'm constantly faced with a choice between tweeting and getting the interviews and facts I need. I, of course, put the facts first. If a news director said they expect something different, then I may make a different decision. I have the luxury of not having it rammed down my throat. It's different at other places.

Overall, they do want good stories here. They do want to approach stories in a way so we protect ourselves but don't fall behind. I feel they are worried about the brand and keeping it strong.

AA: With new/social media do you feel as though they were some unexpected consequences on your job?

I expected the frustration of feeling like I had to carve out time for web. I didn't expect it to be as useful as it can be, if you know how to use it. I didn't expect people to use Twitter as much as they do. Then, when I got involved, I hated it. I didn't expect it be so useful. I think it did kill a part of journalism because we can't do in-depth stories anymore because people expect a constant flow of information. The instant gratification of it has harmed what we do as a craft. On the flipside, it has helped us gather information. It's another way to bring in viewers and set up interviews. This is another avenue for tips. The problem is the more avenues you have, the more they come in. You can't just report them; you have to look into them. I can remember when people used to leave messages on our tips line that I'd listen to. This has gone to a new level. We have so many emails and posts to keep up with. There are so many more things to filter through and you don't have time to verify much of this. You get more information but it is hard to process.

AA: How do you think new media has impacted your daily responsibilities?

You can't say it is bad or good. There are pitfalls and there are plusses. My instinct is to say it is bad and taken away from time I didn't want to give up, but then I remember that story I set up because of a post I made on Facebook. The other thing that I have to think about is liability when posting. Am I a representative of a station when I tweet? Am I taking on a personal responsibility? Am I representative of the station with everything I tweet? Am I protected the same way I am when I report things on air? If you make a mistake on social media, it can grow on its own. That makes me nervous.

I would say it has definitely stolen some of the time from crafting pieces that require time and energy—important pieces. It has maybe simplified the stories we do, ever so slight. It has made them more basic because time is of the essence. It has also made journalists responsible for things they could have or would have ignored before. We would have more reluctant to go in a certain direction. Now we have people tweeting stories and it gives them a voice, which forces us to respond to things we may not have before.

AA: Do you feel that you have a clear sense of where the station is headed with new media?

I think they are using it because they felt like they would be left off the bus. The reality is that you don't want to be left behind. You want to be on the cutting edge. You want to be where people are going. In the future, boy, I think, as we start to understand the positives and the pitfalls, I think it is hard to determine where it goes. Journalism is constantly changing based on new media. So we will continue to go where the trends are going. Unfortunately, you used to be the people who created the trends. Sometimes you want to protect that part of journalism. I understand you want to hold firm to things of the past, but the reality is you have to understand where things are going.

As I have been deciding what I want to do when I grow up, I find myself putting my social media stuff at the top. Before it wasn't even on there. I make it clear that I maintain Twitter and Facebook pages, deal with web stories, and I even did a blog on my own that wasn't news related. Blogging is tough because it requires much time and careful consideration. I feel like that would really take away from my reporting duties.

## Appendix F

### **PARTICIPANT #4**

December 15, 2011

Four years experience in journalism

AA: Describe how you have seen things, in terms of new media, change since you began in the business?

I think Twitter is the big thing. Just a few years ago, we never did anything with Twitter. Here I find that we get half our news tips through Twitter. We find people through Twitter. Where we get our news tips from has changed dramatically, at least in terms of kicking off something.

AA: How do you manage the tips coming through Twitter and other new platforms?

It's just a step off point. It's about finding a source and then finding all information through traditional means. We use it a lot when trying to locate friends and families of horrific accidents. There are a lot of Facebook memorial pages where you can find people to interview. Before we would have to try to track someone down in the neighborhood, or at the school. So this is a way to go to social media to find people. It's a great way to find people to talk with, because everyone is on these places all the time.

Of course, everything needs to be confirmed. We never report anything just from Twitter, let's say. It has to be confirmed through the traditional and official routes, whether it is police or a company.

AA: So you think it is a great way for finding sources and getting information. Are there negatives?

Yes, it is time consuming. I'm still getting used to Twitter. I'm probably not utilizing it as much as I should be. I do check in periodically throughout the day. I'm trying to get a hold on it and see how I can use it to better the station. I use it mostly as a way to send people back to our website or broadcast. I use it heavily as a tease—to drive people to our website or TV broadcasts, which are more mainstream.

AA: How do you communicate with the newsroom when on a story? Do you contact the web team first? What is the flow to get info back to newsroom?

In my mind, first and foremost, it is getting the information back for the website. So send the picture and details to the web team. Then, I may do a quick tweet if I'm waiting around. I would never put anything on Twitter than I wouldn't put on the web or TV. It's everything has to be confirmed. We never put anything out there that we feel is just up in the air.

What we'll do is call the assignment desk to say what we have and then I'll need to talk to the web because I know getting them that information is just as important as it is for producers working on the on-air shows. I'll talk to at least two different people before I get off the phone. It's assignment desk and producer for the show, and then it's the web writer on staff for the website.

AA: Does the station issue you the tools you need for getting photos, tweeting, etc.? How do you use technology to gather stories and get information back to newsroom?

I got this mobile device when I started here because we get 150 to 200 emails a day. I also write my entire story on this while on the way back from stories. I then email myself the script and copy and paste it into our newsroom computer system. I don't even need a paper and pen anymore because when I'm on a story I keep all my notes on my mobile device. I feel like I have to because every moment counts. I log my interviews and write my script in the car while my photographer is driving back to the newsroom. In a half hour it takes to get back to the station, I can be done logging my sound and writing most of my story. I save valuable time with this device. And, the Internet on this is so helpful. Directions on my mobile device are very valuable.

AA: Are reporters updating the website themselves?

We do have a web team that writes many things. For my story, they will write it, but I need to go back and review. A lot of times something that makes sense for a broadcast news script does not make sense for an article on our website. I may have to add details that they didn't know.

AA: Reporters here don't have to shoot their own video? You have a photographer who goes out with you on stories?

Yes, I couldn't imagine having to shoot my own video. It's scary to think that it is going that way.

AA: What has new media done in regard to your relationship with your audience?

The audience it seems knows just as much as we do sometimes about a story going on, because they are going online and looking on Twitter and Facebook for information. We can't just run with what is new since noon anymore. We have to go with what is new since the last time we updated our story. We really have to think about how we write even more now to make sure it's always new. People are online all the time looking for updates, so it needs to be very new. That has changed how we think about writing.

AA: Do you think new media has impacted content?

I'm always complaining about this. I'm a big complainer about having to turn out so many stories because of our web. I haven't seen the quality change that much since my time in the business. I never had enough time since I started. Things change so quickly.

AA: Describe how new media has been beneficial? How has it been disruptive?

People are on Facebook all the time, so it has been great for finding people. They may not be at home, but they always have a phone. They can see your messages from there. It's much easier than having to go circle around and find someone you need to interview for a story. It saves time because now you don't have to waste time out in the field looking for someone. You can stay in the newsroom and setup the interview, then go meet the person. Finding people has been a lot easier.

On the flip side, it is just one more thing at the end of the day to do. At the end of the day, I post links to my story on Twitter, after I rewrite web copy of my story. I'm here for about an hour after my shift typically ends doing stuff. It's just one more thing you are expected to do with an already loaded schedule.

AA: How is the amount of email impacting you? How do you keep up?

It's a gain because you know everything going on and you have story ideas coming to you from every different angle. But, then again you have to sort through 200 emails about what is important and what isn't. It's a good thing and a bad thing all at the same time.

AA: On your days off, are you tuned out?

I try not to look, but it's hard. Your email will just overflow and shutdown. I try to check once a day to stay in the loop. I feel like you have to know everything all the time now. If you get behind, it's hard to catch up. I have to clean it out at least once a day.

AA: You hear people talk about the demise of journalism. What do you see as the future of your job responsibilities? Do you think people need journalists to make sense of all the noise?

Because we are looked at as a credible source, with all that noise, what we choose to do puts importance to it. I hope people will say since we are doing a story, this is what we deem as news. So I guess there is importance to what we cover and trying to make people recognize what is news or not.

AA: Are the types of stories driven by the chatter going on social media?

A lot. A lot. What drives our editorial meeting is what are people talking about and what do they want to know. At the end of the meeting, we think about what people are talking about. A lot of it is the tips from public.

AA: Does management require you to use social media?

Something odd that I found here...when I came here I totally expected them to want me to set up a professional Facebook page and Twitter account. When I came in two years

ago, no one was really using Facebook. It's different here I think. Because if you look at other stations, it is mandatory for reporters to tweet so many times a day and shoot video from their iPhone. I think we are different in that aspect, because management never has said we require this. I just set up my Twitter account recently because everyone does it. Also, I feel like we have to keep up with everyone else.

It's not necessarily forced on us. I still think they want us reporters focused on good content. That's why when I see one of my colleagues go above and beyond by shooting small reports with his iPhone, I say 'what are you doing to us? I can't keep up with what I have to do now.' But, he is so savvy; he is great. I feel like he is so good with sources and people via social media.

I think it helps as a reporter to have these tools, but photographers are worried about these tools because so many stations are doing away with photographers.

AA: Do you get a sense of where things are going in general with new media here at the station?

I may be doing my reporting on my phone. It's cheaper; it's easy. You don't need a photographer when you have cameras on these small devices that shoot HD video.

AA: Has new media impacted how you communicate internally in the newsroom?

I feel like people don't talk anymore. You'll be sitting three desks away and someone will send you an email to ask a question. I think people are doing that less because we've realized how silly it is to do that. But, yes, there were full conversations via email.

A lot of time they will email me out in the field just because they know I have a smart phone. They won't call me. I ask 'why didn't anyone call me? I kind of missed this important email about my story that is mixed in with the 200 other emails.'

AA: In terms of how you were trained in school, do you feel prepared for what you are doing now?

Uh. It was kind of like this is where it is going, but everything was still in its infancy. It was more about traditional journalism, even when I went to school four years ago. We didn't really focus on social media. Online, the website, was a big focus though.

AA: Do you feel like the station has a clear idea of why they are using new or social media?

I feel like they don't. Social media hasn't been totally pushed on us. I know people who still don't tweet. The web team takes care of the main channels for our station, and they rely on us for that information. But, there is not pressure from management to tweet in the field.

When I interviewed here, I asked about that. And to this day, some reporters have Facebook and Twitter accounts but only check it for story ideas or sources. They don't use it to post stuff consistently.

AA: What skills do you find are more important now than previously as a reporter?

We were always told in school that you need to know AP style because you have to write web. You have to be able to know how to write for the web, which is different than broadcast. It's two totally different ways of writing. That is more important now more than ever. On the weekend, when you don't have a web staff, that is really important. When I was on the weekends, my job after anchoring was updating web. Web, web, web. You have to know how to write. Some things get lost in translation when your broadcast copy is used for the web, so that is why it's important for reporters to review.

AA: When you are out on a story are you using the Internet or apps?

I can't say I don't use my phone while out on a scene to check what the other stations are reporting. In breaking news, you don't want to be scooped. I'll look at other news outlets to make sure they don't have something I don't. For example, yesterday I showed up on a scene after another crew did, and I checked their website to see if they had anything I didn't know about.

AA: Are you giving additional elements on your web stories that you don't have time for on-air?

You can't fit everything into 90 seconds on air, so I try to add more details online. We always try to put more information in a web story that can't fit in the traditional newscast.

AA: How are you staying up to date with new media?

I think I am learning the most through my peers because I am not the savviest when it comes to technology.

We aren't too focused on reporters having their own FB or Twitter pages. But, the more we tool around in it, the more we realize what a resource it is. I guess it's something that may be we expected, but not to this extent.

AA: Do you think new media is impacting news values? If so, how?

I try to uphold traditional news values. I might see opinions on things that you might not normally say on air. For example, saying it is such a sad story. I try to stay away from getting too personal on social media. I have seen other reporters weigh in a bit more.

AA: In summary, how would you say these tools are impacting you on a daily basis as you are doing your job?

You check Twitter in the morning and you check the stations' Facebook page, as far as a tool to see what is happening and being talked about. In terms of thinking what is new, it is thinking about what is on the web, what people are talking about on Twitter. It's a way to gain more information and new leads to sources and stories. And, it's a way to drive people back to the traditional newscast—check this story out at 6. I think because we are losing viewers of our newscasts, it's a way to use the tools to drive them back to TV.

## Appendix G

### **PARTICIPANT #5**

December 15, 2011

25 years experience in journalism

AA: How long have you been in the business?

It has been 25 years. So we go back 25 years and things have changed dramatically as far as technology goes. When I first started, we used typewriters. There were no computers, and our news rundowns were something we did on paper. We actually wrote down on paper what the stories were, how long the stories were going to be, and we had sheets that would block each section. We would have to figure out mentally how long each segment was. Computers didn't calculate it for you.

I remember my fingers getting very stained each and every newscast because we would have script pad. After we would write our stories on script pad, we would line them up and we would have to tear them. We'd have an assembly line. We would rip the paper and then put the blue, pink, yellow and so on in different piles. The directors would get the pink copy. The anchors would get the white copy of the scripts. The CG operator would get the yellow copy. At the end of that process, our fingers would be all stained with carbon because of the type of paper. That took a lot of time, so you had to have scripts ready about a half hour before show. Now you can print scripts within a minute or two.

AA: So you seem to say technology has made the process more efficient?

Yes, for sure. Also it was very hard to correct mistakes in your script back then. If you had something you had typed that was a mistake, the anchor would have to from memory ad lib the correction because there wasn't time always to type up a new script on a typewriter. The teleprompter wouldn't always update the script as conveniently and quickly as now. There was room for some more error. You had to be a lot sharper as an anchor back then. You couldn't rely as much on the teleprompter then as you do now. For anchors, you really had to read over scripts back then.

AA: You have seen the evolution of email as well. What are the negatives and positives?

The positive, to some extent, is how in touch you are now with your viewers. If they don't like something, they will email you directly, whether it's something personal—about the color of your sweater or hair color—or about the content on-air. For example, just minutes ago we received quite a number of emails from viewers who didn't like the fact we took 14 minutes to have [redacted] an accuser and his attorney on the air. They didn't think that was appropriate. They felt it was inappropriate, they felt it was taking up valuable time because they wanted to get other local news. They thought that we were giving too much airtime to his attorney, that it was like a commercial for her. So that is

good that viewers can tell you right away what they are thinking about your newscast. We get great stories this way too. In any minute perhaps, we could get an email from someone saying they are a victim of [redacted] who was watching that interview. The beauty of the online forum is being able to put viewers directly in touch with us and getting stories on air right away. We could spin right around and go interview someone who got in touch with us and could provide a fresh new angle to a story we had on the air. They may say, 'hey, I just saw your story on air about a scam. Well guess what? I was a victim too.' It has really broadened our coverage and made us better journalists in being able to tell more people's stories. It broadens our ability to reach more people and hear what is on their minds—stories that affect them directly. So I see a lot of advantages.

AA: On the social media front, how are you seeing things unfold as an anchor and reporter?

I think Twitter is huge right now. It's funny because prior to [redacted] doing the interview, we were chatting about what types of questions she was going to ask [redacted] accuser and the attorney. We were going over what I thought she should ask and I was giving her suggestions. Then she turned to me and said, 'When do you think I should Tweet about this?' This was at 4:30 and I said 'I don't think you want to tweet about it too early because you don't want to tip off the competition. However, you do want tweet about it early enough so they'll want to tune in and watch when your interview starts at 6 o'clock.' So we decided the best time to tweet was at 4:30. We came to that conclusion. She turned to me at 4:30 and said, 'I think I'm going to tweet now.' Here were are, two journalists who've been in the business awhile, turning to each other to figure out the best time to tweet. I never would have imagined that 25 years ago.

AA: With all these new media tools, including social media, what are viewers expecting from you in terms of storytelling? How has this impacted your job?

Photos and videos right away. There are disadvantages. You have to be sensitive to victims. When we show up to a car crash, families haven't even been notified yet. We're there before police can even identify them, and we are showing a picture of the loved one's car in a wreck. I think you have to be careful about this because you don't want to find yourself in a position where you are the one notifying family members who don't know they lost a son or daughter in car crash.

We saw this recently in the case of the young football player who died because of a concussion. I saw a lot of kids at the game already posted it on their Facebook pages and the mother hadn't even been notified yet. She had found out through social media that this had happened to her son. How heartbreaking is that? That's some of the downside of social media.

AA: There is a lot of information and noise out there for people to filter through. Do you feel a responsibility to help people make sense of all the information? If so, how are you doing this? How is it impacting your job?

This is true. A lot of stuff is now coming out now and you don't know if it is true. You have to track all that down, even when it is coming from other media outlets. For example, the paper just posted on its Facebook page that there is another accuser. So now we have to go chase that down. We end up chasing down things that are posted and we didn't know about. In a way that is good because now we are clued in and we can now catch up on a story rather than waking up in the morning and seeing it on the front page. You don't have to wait anymore. They are posting it right away. So for those readers who may wait for the paper the next morning, we can get stories sooner because at night the paper is posting stories on its website that will run the next morning.

AA: The pace of news and reporting has always been fast, but certainly things are speeding up even more. In your experience, how would you describe the pace of your job since new media has taken hold?

It has gotten a lot faster because now we are not just filing for the evening newscast, but also for the web. So as soon as you have enough information, or video, or a picture you can send, you need to file that information right away. Call in right away. The web is kind of like a separate newscast. It kind of reminds me of my days in radio when I used to go out and as soon as I got something I would file it right from the scene. It's kind of like that. It's almost like this is a live radio; it's kind of interesting. It's good, but I think there is the pressure to get things on-air before you can even verify it. That can be dangerous. So you show up and it looks like people are being evacuated from a hospital, and we report 'Oh a hospital is being evacuated.' Then it turns out it was just paint fumes. You are making a big deal out of something that isn't. And then that is already out there. You then realize, geez, this is not a story. So there is danger in wanting to be first and wanting to be fast and wanting to beat the competition to get the information out quickly. Sometimes I think accuracy pays a price.

AA: Do you use Twitter? How do you use it?

I know colleagues use it for news. I kind of like to put more personality on there so viewers can get to know my personal side. I'll post funny things that might happen—What is the biggest sale this week, for example? When I have something really big, I will post or tweet.

## Appendix H

### **PARTICIPANT #6**

December 16, 2011

One Year experience in journalism

AA: What motivated you to get into TV news?

I had a combination of interests that came together to get me interested in news. I was always big on writing and on history. I was always the person at parties who would end up with the 50-year-old men talking politics and economics. I was that kind of person. But, the more I got into journalism the more I realized what good you can do. I really like the stories that change even one person. I've been huge on community service my whole life, so this was just a combination of everything. Add my interest in musical theater on to that.

AA: Do you feel the curriculum in your school prepared you for what you are encountering now as a reporter—fresh out of school? Especially in terms of social media.

I like how it built up—how you had one class focusing on writing, one class focusing on the camera, and then combined them. But, I never ended up shooting my own stuff at the station. I definitely learned how to write to video because of it though. What did help, I'd say, is that the professors pushed me to do more outside of class. I had professors encourage me to apply for national awards. That ended up helping a lot.

AA: Is being a reporter now what you expected?

Not really, because a lot of the classes you have a week to do a story. And, yeah, that seems like a lot, but you still have a lot of time to think about it. You think you are going to change the world and you get sent out on, oh never mind.

AA: What is interesting about your station is that you don't have to shoot your own video. You still go out with a photog. Other stations in the market have their reporters doing that. What's your take on that?

In our own company [redacted] though, at a station in a bigger market, all the reporters one-man-band.

AA: How are you using social media?

One of the first things I do to look for stories is search on Twitter. I just do a [redacted] search for our city on Twitter every morning. It's been surprisingly amazing, even very little things. For example, someone was complaining about the City painting street lines, and then it rained and paint was everywhere. That wouldn't be a lot. But just the other day in a meeting with the Mayor, she was talking about how the City was saving money with new paint. We were able to run over there and get the video. That's incredible.

AA: That is interesting. I left news in 2007 and these tools were not around.

Other little things, like rumors that a local eatery was opening again. I made some calls and figured out, yes it is in the works. A lot of other things I learned in school, I actually use all the time. When I'm looking for experts, I go to LinkedIn and do an advanced people search. There are also ways to use Foursquare to find the mayor of a certain area or business. So if something happens, you don't just have a random person but you can talk with someone who goes there all the time. For example, if park hours were going to change, you could use Foursquare to find someone who goes there all the time.

AA: So in that sense, it has been a real tool for story ideas and tracking down sources, it seems.

I don't have that many followers. But, it is so much easier to track someone's interests and someone without having to make cold calls. It actually helps a bunch that way.

Here's my issue: I don't know before, because I'm new in the business. I've heard. Our managers are so young that what they think is important is probably what is on Twitter and Facebook already. I mean we have people who are all in their 20s. So if they are talking about something, odds are it is being talked about on Facebook. Like the other day, there was a rumor that [redacted] a famous basketball player was coming to town and that is what they saw on Facebook and Twitter. So all of a sudden they wanted that in the newscast. That became what our news is about. I didn't quite like that.

AA: How is new media impacting audience engagement?

For me it has been something to get over. People talk on forums about how I sound like a 5 year old. They also pick apart my stories. It's only one person, and I say yeah that is true. But before you would never have this. I do a lot of stories about families and heartwarming things—I'm getting really good at that. So I feel comfortable sending the link to families afterward. They will give me feedback. Usually it is very positive. They sometimes also tell me about another angle they forgot to mention. It's interesting interaction after the interviews.

AA: Does the station supply the tools you need to keep up with emails and social media platforms? Are you mandated to snap photos at scene and if so, are you using your own device?

The other stations in the market were supplied with smart phones. We have station phones that we can take when we go out on a story, but they are miserable. Just the other day, my manager said, 'Did you get that email on your phone?' I said, 'I don't get work email on my phone.' It's 600 emails, and I am not going to get that on my personal device. She said, 'Oh, you need to get that.' It was an offhand comment, but I am not going to unless you pay for my data plan. I will send pictures back. I have an unlimited data plan, but it is just the principle. I'm in on that, and it is definitely expected.

And they will ask to put the work email on my personal phone. I told them, 'I have Gmail. If you want to contact me, you can send something to that account.' I just don't want the entire assignment desk email to come to me on my personal phone. I go in 15 minutes early every day to delete all the emails from the night before. I've missed a ton of important emails because of this process. People say they have tried to contact me. It's awful.

AA: When you are out in the field, how are people back at the station communicating with you?

They expect us to call back, of course. I call back on my cell phone. They have been starting to call me more on my cell phone. I don't like when they'll email me something to do, because I might miss it. And, I don't have the station email account setup on my phone anyway. So they have to email my personal account if they want me to get something important in the field.

The other day I was in the middle of a story and interviewing someone. They emailed me to say you are being assigned to another story. You can't email me something like that. It has to be more direct. I did three full packages on Tuesday that didn't run.

AA: Are you calling into the assignment desk or web team?

Web is picking up the phone more than the assignment desk. When you call the newsroom phone, it's the web team who will pick up oftentimes. So they'll type up everything and send it out to the assignment desk. And for the web, I double check all of my stories. I find so many fact errors. I don't know how you can take my script and make it incorrect.

AA: So the web team transfers your package into a web story?

At the beginning, I started writing my own web stories not even realizing that the web team does that. In school, I was prepared to tweet twice a day, get my story on, and have a web version. So I was ready to do it. We have a lot of waste. Because it gets messed up so much, I'd rather be taking care of my web stuff. They take my script and put it online. When I was in school, I had to have a different angle for online. I will send them extra information for the web story because maybe it didn't make it in the show.

AA: The station has strong brand recognition and established Facebook and Twitter accounts. Are you required to have your own?

When I started, they didn't tell us to have a fan page or Twitter account. I did that all on my own.

AA: Do you have a clear vision what the station's new media policy is?

No. I know they had a meeting and it trickled out that we should be “tweets are my own.” I had no idea they even had the meeting. I heard from other people. Somewhere people know what they are doing, it just didn’t get to us.

AA: How is new/digital media impacting your overall job responsibilities?

Like I said, it helps. It’s all I’ve known, so I’ve been able to cultivate and use it. I’d say it is much more positive than negative. It’s like the ‘why aren’t you on Twitter’ thing is still there. I still need to make a Facebook fan page, because I get so many requests from people on my personal page. I even changed my name on my personal page. This is a downside. Automatic and unnecessary feedback from people also really hurts. I haven’t changed my way yet. But they do make you second guess yourself. The fast-paceness has always been there, but I think it is kind of embarrassing to pitch a story if it was on Twitter just two hours ago because it seems old and may seem like everyone knows it. In the newsroom, it is hard to pitch something that co-workers even saw two hours ago because they think it is already old, even if it is a good story.

I like diversity and helping people, but we aren’t doing those stories.

AA: Do you find the use of social media invigorating?

It’s getting people back interested again. There are guys that never were interested in politics and suddenly they are don’t even realize it’s economic or politics, it’s just what people are talking about. Then it makes them interested in learning more. I really don’t see the total demise. I understand though from photographers who have been here for 30 years, that we used to be the owners of information. But, I’ve never liked or wanted that concept. Just go with it. Quit whining.

AA: How do you keep up with trends in new media?

I don’t think anyone knows about certain tools or the way I am using certain tools. For example, I don’t think anyone in the newsroom knows about the LinkedIn expert search. We don’t have a forum or the time to spread that. I am coming from school where we were able to discuss how to better use these tools. I feel like I could help people in the newsroom, especially being the youngest and knowing how to integrate this stuff. That is an issue though. Because when you get out of the trendy college life, you can get out of the loop in terms of technology fast. I see it already with me and Google Plus.

It’s also very hard because I did three stories the other day, and I don’t have time to innovate.

AA: What do you think new media is doing to the type or quality of content?

I think the bigger thing is how much news we have to put on. I think that is a huge issue with content now. I don’t have time to double check some information in a press release. We have so much information in front of us. We are going to have to use it and go with

it. Social media's quickness helps with generating content, but the quality of the content is more the issue because we have so much news to fill.

AA: What has new technology done to news values?

My stories definitely have suffered sometimes. I'm always facts first. So if I can't double or triple check something, I'll leave it out. I'm not going to put it out as a fact when I can't confirm it. And, yes a couple of times, it has been true and my story has been a little bit weaker because I didn't have time to check it. I didn't have time to check it so this story ends up being worse. It sucks.

Here's a social media story. Last week, this girl was killed in an accident. I met with her family and ended up doing three stories on it. The family was positive that the driver had driven drunk. Their Facebook page had over 3,000 people like it. They were talking as though it was a common fact that the driver was drunk. That is the first thing people said to me, 'Oh yes, drunk driver.' Nowhere in the file was that. They didn't charge him with that. There is still an investigation. Three thousand people already think he was driving drunk, because of social media. My newsroom sees this and keeps wanting me to check. They'll even allude to it and say things like 'Has the drunk driver been charged?' Without social media, no one would even have that suspicion. We had no reason to believe the driver was drunk, except for the family and then it goes on the Facebook page.

Then I suddenly have to fact check suspicions, when I have fact in front of us. Then the family posts that they have the records to prove she wasn't texting. So you have this whole spinoff story unfolding on Facebook. Now everyday I'm checking to see if the file has been updated. I'm at the will of the people posting.

AA: People are saying a lot of stuff online. To some extent, don't you think this is a reason why journalists are needed more?

Yes. Without my version of the story and fact, this guy's reputation is ruined by 3,000 people who think he is drunk. To have someone who has a relationship with the police, and can call everyday wanting to find out if the file has been updated, is the voice of credibility. I think that is huge.

For example, the recent earthquake. People online are saying, 'Was it an earthquake?' That's the question. The answer they find on the news site. So it is like, 'I think I felt an earthquake; did you feel an earthquake? Then it's like channel so and so says it's an earthquake.' That is how the conversations went. Something gets a conversation going and they still think the answer is with the news outlet. Who else is going to be able to call up the earthquake center?

AA: Are you interacting with traditional sources, such as police and local companies, through new media?

Companies will say go to our Facebook page. They sometimes send us an email and tell us to check the company's Facebook page for more information.

AA: So describe your daily routine?

I do a city search for Twitter. Facebook, I always check the news feed. For example, I saw a few posts on Facebook about a rat infestation this morning. They loved that story at the station.

The biggest thing is that the web people get so many facts wrong and don't see certain things that you need for a web story but don't need in a script for TV. A huge issue is that for TV scripts, we don't always put the name for every sound bite. When the web team takes those sound bites and turns them into quotes, a lot of times they don't know who to quote. I've had to adjust. Where you put the sound bites in the my TV scripts, I put everything that is needed for the web quote as well, such as the person's full name and title. I've had to make it easier for them.

AA: How do you manage the personal and public aspects of social media? I think you mentioned you only have a personal Facebook page and a professional Twitter account.

I don't have a separate work and personal Twitter account. I think I should, because there are times when I want to tweet something personal but the professional stuff will hold me back. The friend requests on Facebook, on my personal Facebook page, can be strange—like from 50-year-old men

AA: Do you find the use of new media is generational? I know you have a veteran reporter who is actually using new media quite well.

I think he is worried about what happened last time. He is up on everything. He is up on shooting and editing. So that is very worrisome. Social media is part of staying up to date. We have a new boss coming in and what if he is like, 'Why aren't all of you tweeting?' Suddenly, everyone who has been is like, 'Oh we have.' And everyone who hasn't, looks worse. So you never know. He's one of the people who is up-to-date on everything that is new. Right now, I wouldn't see it as job security. But the idea that peers see it as job security, keeps you doing it. This new boss has us freaking out.

## Appendix I

### **PARTICIPANT #7**

**December 27, 2011**

25 years experience in journalism

AA: When it comes to what is happening now compared to when you started in the business, how would you characterize those changes, especially in terms of new technology?

I think in terms of immediacy of things, the tools have allowed use to get things on-air much quicker. The demand to have it on the air is obviously that much quicker too—the expectation from the audience. It's a change that I definitely think is for the better in terms of technology. The technological side used to be the biggest hindrance, the biggest drawback. The job of gathering facts hasn't necessarily changed. But the way we transmit the information has changed dramatically.

AA: What motivated you to start using the tools you are using? Certainly they are becoming common practice in the industry, but it is my understanding the station doesn't mandate you have your own iPhone or to have your own Twitter account. So what has motivated you?

Just the need to stay relevant in an ever-changing world, especially as an older guy. You can't cast this stuff aside. You have to embrace it. So, if for no other reason, to stay relevant and current. And also to stay ahead of the game because these tools make it easier. There are some drawbacks to them, but I think it makes the job of what we do much easier. For example, the ability to pull out a smart phone to do research on the scene of a story. Before, you had the newspaper clipping or the background information from the assignment desk. Now, that ability to have the information on a smart phone is tremendous.

AA: Do you feel that some of what you are doing with new media is self-imposed?

I think most of the new people hired in this business are comfortable with the new media tools because they've grown up with social media. There's never been a mandate here that you must tweet or post something on Facebook. We've discussed though when we've covered a presidential visit that we'll tweet throughout the visit. There are certain times when we plan on doing this. But, more times that not, it is a matter of habit. You have your phone with you, you are at the scene of something that you think to be interesting, and so why not send out an item on Twitter. I'll send it out on my Facebook page too.

My Facebook page has become a bit unruly because I haven't separated my professional and personal Facebook pages. I have not done that. They exist in the same world for me. So, along with being an interesting fact for someone, it allows my family to keep up with what I'm doing. There's that fine line between too much and not enough.

AA: One of the interesting aspects of new media is that the veil has been lifted and the barrier with the audience has been taken away. What are you finding in terms of audience engagement and how do you manage that?

First of all, I welcome it. I think it is exciting. This used to be a one-way transmission of the message. Now, it has become two ways and in some cases more than two ways when you are able to take in tips and information from an audience that may be watching you. They are feeding you information in real time. I think there is still that process involved in gathering facts. The more information you get when putting together a story, helps create a better understanding of that story and can only lead to better reporting of that story. I think it is incredibly valuable.

Again, from a technical side it can get in the way. For example, in terms of knowing when to send that tweet out or to post on Facebook. This morning when I was on a scene of a fire, the first thought is television side of things. But, I still realize I want to take a photo in case we can't get a live signal out of the location. That photo also serves the website. You are always thinking first and foremost about getting it on-air and then how do I serve the multiple platforms beneath that. Sometimes it happens at the same time. Sometimes you have to decide how much time you spend on feeding the web and how much time you spend on feeding the beast—the broadcast side.

AA: How do you decide that?

It's all a matter of when the time presents itself. I don't approach a scene and think, 'first I am going to tweet and then I'm going to Facebook.' I size it up to see how visual it is and how important it is. If it is an important story and a lot of people are going to be affected, I'll be more diligent about getting it out to the social media sites. We're still making our money from the TV side though. We're not making the money from the webpage, Facebook, or Twitter. We have to do those to stay current, but TV side is where we are measured in terms of people watching us. And, we have to be cognizant of that.

AA: Reporters would typically call back to the assignment desk to relay information back from a scene. Now, you have the web and the web team. What is the workflow for you when out on a story? Do you contact the web staff first? It may be a bit different for you than dayside reporters.

Here, more than any station that I've worked at, we rely on email. We rely on distribution lists. So what happens, as opposed to wasting time calling back and speaking to multiple people, I'll encapsulate everything in an email and send it out. Hopefully they can extrapolate what they need—the producer knows what my story is and what is going on for broadcast, the web person get details to update the website, and the assignment editor cares about staffing and knowing how things are going. That way you can communicate with all three at once. But, more often than not, you'll find that the web team is the first you are talking to because they are the ones who—in terms of getting breaking news out there during non-broadcast news times—are the first line of defense. At some stations,

your web person might also be producing the 6 or 11 o'clock news. So by speaking to that producer, you are killing a couple of birds with one stone. Here, we are fortunate to have so much staffing. It's great to have, but it means I have to decide whom I go to first and move on to the next. But, if it has to go in a pecking order, typically the web person is at the top.

AA: You are on most of the email distribution lists. How do you keep up with emails?

I'm the first to admit that I check emails from home for a couple of reasons. First and foremost, we get so many emails—25 percent are vital and important, 75% are for Viagra or 'checkout this viral video.' If you don't stay on top of email, it will become filled and then I won't be able to receive anymore. It's almost like I take that abuse because if I don't take the abuse, I get more abuse. You want to clean that out; you don't want to be the person who gets the message that your email box is full.

There has never been a mandate here to check email on weekends or vacations. I have a number of people who work here and won't. Now that I have this iPhone attached to the end of my arm, it becomes too easy to do if I'm sitting in the living room, at the grocery store, or waiting in line at the post office. You've got the ability to do it; it becomes a part of the business.

AA: When you are out on the field, how are they contacting you? Calling or email?

If it is close to news time, typically a phone call. If there is a lot of time, it will be email. It really is dictated by the reporters who are most comfortable with email. Not all of our reporters are equipped with smart phones, oddly enough. The assignment desk gets an indication of who is checking email and who can they can trust to send an email to and they will get it. As opposed to someone else who might not look at email for 20 or 30 minutes, which is a lifetime.

AA: Are you using Twitter and Facebook to find stories or potential interviews? Are you chasing down items that pop up on social media platforms?

I'll be honest; I think we use it to chase the competition. We'll see the newspaper tweet something or the competitors tweet something. There used to be a time in this business when you wouldn't even want to give away anything on the two-way radio in the cars. You would speak in coded language. Now we are giving it away. The need to beat the other guy with a tweet is also tipping off the competition to other stories taking place. I still think the traditional news tips means—such as a police scanner—still hold weight. I think the tweets that catch our attention are from other news organizations breaking stories. We say, 'oh my gosh, here it is before it is on their website or broadcasted on the air.' They tweet this and it is giving us a tip. We don't miss many stories, but it helps on the ones we do.

The [redacted] story is a prime example. There were people out there who had sources and would tweet out new tidbits that would give the other stations information. Then

crews would be sent over to this house or down to another location where authorities might be searching for files. It's a double-edge sword. It is great because the information can get out there instantly, but it also tips off the other guys. If you truly want to beat the competition, you would think you would hold off. You can't though in this day in age.

People are expecting this constant update beyond 6 or 11 o'clock. The appetite for information is 24/7.

AA: How does that impact you, the reporter, trying to gather the facts and verify information?

It makes it difficult. Let's say you arrive on the scene and someone on Twitter is saying, 'two people are dead.' I haven't been able to verify it myself, so do you go with that just because someone is reporting that or do you do the responsible thing—make sure it is accurate? Sometimes it is the tail that wags the dog. Sometimes you are chasing tweets, and in that regard it can be frustrating.

AA: With new media, the industry is seeing role convergence. That hasn't happened as much at this station. What are your thoughts on this?

It's only a matter of time. As much as we like to think that it is great that we have a two or three person web unit and a crew of a reporter and photographer that goes out on stories, I just don't know if—because of the way the business is changing—that is something that will continue on. There are only so many advertising dollars out there. It's no secret that stations are hurting for revenue. Until the next biggest national disaster, God for bid, drives people back to the set to watch newscasts, you are caught in this space of 'how can we save money?' Manpower is your biggest cost.

Does it allow for the job to be done better with one person? I don't think so. It's a difficult thing when you are out on a story. Some stories are tailor made, easily done by one person. But again, just as an example, I was on breaking news this morning. You've got a reporter going out to the scene of a fire, trying to get the information—was anyone hurt, what started the fire, how many people are affected? The photographer is thinking simply photos, pictures—how to tell the story through pictures. The reporter might have some down time while the photographer is editing to get the information out on the social media sites and update the station. The photographer is then setting up the live truck for transmission back to the air. One person can do all of this, but it takes time. And if time is of the essence, you are going to get beaten on a regular basis.

AA: So you think you don't know what to expect? Does that motivate you to stay up to speed with the tools and new technology?

With anything, it is helpful to have more bodies rather than few. But also understanding the way this business is going, I think it can be done. Some stations have a model that includes a mix of one-man bands and some two-man crews. They have figured out what is important enough where they need a two-man crew and what they can potentially have

one person do. Unfortunately, when it comes to bean counting, the question is going to be asked, ‘Why do we have two people doing this when one person is doing it over here?’ It’s part of the business. Years ago, the cost part wasn’t considered. Now, it’s the first and foremost thought when you have hedge funds and those types of things owning TV stations.

AA: What I hear you saying is that new media has overall positively impacted you and your job. Is that correct?

I’d say so. The end user has already established the fact that they don’t want to wait for news. They are going to consume news on their time. Getting it out quicker serves the audience. So all of these tools give you another way of getting them out there quicker. I believe the organization that gets it out fastest and most accurately will hopefully, at the end of the day, get people to watch—and earn more revenue that way.

AA: What about your daily workload associated with new media? How would you describe it?

It’s very unique here because of the amount of manpower as compared to our counterparts. My feeling is that I want to learn about all the tools I have available to me. Do I want to be the person operating the camera, live truck, editing and all of that? Not necessarily. But shame on me if I’m part of this business and don’t know how these things work. In the last few months, I’ve edited packages and shot video. In terms of self-preservation, it is great. On the other side, guys who are the photographers are not comfortable with this. I saw that same reaction at my other station when I wanted to learn how to edit. People were like, ‘why?’ It is the same thing here. I think it is vital for every journalist to know how to use those tools and not just say, ‘I don’t do that so therefore it is not something I have to worry about.’ I’ve also noticed that when you step out of your role like this, the rank and file doesn’t look upon it kindly. It’s more like, ‘you are stepping on my toes. Why are you learning how to edit? Why are you learning how to shoot? Do you want my job?’ My feeling has always been ‘no.’ But, if we are at a breaking news scene and I can edit tape while you are setting up a live truck or if I can grab a camera because you are doing something, my feeling has always been ‘why not.’ I don’t want to sit there on my ass and read the newspaper.

AA: This brings up another question in terms of skills that are needed now by a reporter. Are those skills changing? If so, what are the skills you need to have?

I think jack-of-all-trade skills. First and foremost as a reporter, you have to have ability to gather facts and write and think on your feet. Beyond that, I think reporters do need to know how to shoot video, how to take a good still photo, and how to produce a newscast. On my shift, early morning before a web person gets in or if I’m on a weekend, I will update the web. I think any reporter should embrace it and learn how to do it. Will it become another chore of theirs? Typically it might. You do a job twice in this business and it becomes yours. I don’t think it is beyond any of us to do that. The time that it takes to do that is not a huge lift in that regard. Again, it just makes you that much more

valuable. With the way this is going, you have to be able to do it. You can't be walking around with blinders on, thinking I report and I only report and I leave all the other stuff up to the people who have that job. Here we have that manpower. Ninety percent of the other stations don't. If you have the number one media market going to one-man-bands, how do you expect us not to.

You can look at it in terms of being a demise or you can look at it in terms of being a transition. I've heard of it this way, and I tend to agree. I think there is always going to be a need from the public for information, whether it is a ball score or what the smoke is off in the distance or who is screwing the taxpayer out of money. I think there is always going to be the appetite for information. As we transition and get new tools, these tools help fewer people do the job that many people were doing before. Am I happy about my brothers and sisters losing work? Of course not. The challenge of getting a live hit on the air now is equal to the challenge of getting a good picture and a web story as quickly as possible to break it on the web. Having gone from the glory days to a time when everyone is scratching to hang on, there are changes we have to endure. I tend to look at it as exciting as opposed to be something that I look at with dread. Having said that, I also tell my kids 'there is no way in hell you are getting in this business.'

[Redacted] has taken on a life of its own because of the way new media has evolved. Even a story like that has taken on a different kind of flavor. Bloggers come out and write stuff—stories through unvetted sources. Throwing stuff up against the walls is what I like to call it. What sticks sticks. What doesn't stick, they still report to get attention.

AA: There is the debate about whether bloggers are journalists.

I respect the fact that people who do that have a role to play. But I take offense, just as a professional musician would take offense to someone who picks up a guitar and strums it. Yes, they are playing an instrument, but you'd like to think there is more going into the professional side of it than something more amateur.

AA: I have a few more questions. I know some traditional sources, like the police departments, have Facebook pages. Are they still sending press release to you? How are you utilizing their social media pages?

We're tapping into it. They'll put photos on Facebook that we'll use and minor crimes stories that will get our attention. But if immediacy is a key for us, posting it on Facebook is not as immediate as we want it. We want the information immediately before police or whoever has prepared it for their Facebook page or social media dissemination process.

AA: That is the thing though—from a PR perspective, you don't have to wait for your traditional gatekeeper, the media.

There is no filter. And the last thing police want to do is sit there and face the media and take a bunch of questions. They can put everything out via other means. It's almost like texting—we write it out, you take it, and leave us alone so we can go do our thing. We

definitely tap into police use of social media. State police typically tell us ‘go to our website.’ It’s a constant battle because their priority is not getting it up on the web. It is a lot quicker to just call them.

AA: How are you keeping up to speed with new media and how did you learn this stuff?

Just playing around. I’m fortunate enough to be in a business where everyone around me is younger. I pick up on their tendencies. I’ve got kids who are very active in it. It’s funny how the paradigm has shifted from age and experience. The younger crew has grown up with it, so they get it. I almost take my cue from them. I still think my experience has some value in terms of not overdoing it with these tools. I’m a big believer in using restraint, instead of being the guy who cries wolf.

AA: And you still have to balance the professional with personal on new media. How do you handle that?

I’ll go a step further because my Facebook page is also my personal page. I’ll never post anything about my views on politics. It’s not my job to give my opinion on every story I cover. There are certain stories that I think everyone can agree on but I’ll keep it light and airy on Facebook. I never get into ‘how dare the Mayor do this or how dare the County Executive do this.’

And you mentioned the veil—lifting the veil on the news process. I like lifting that veil up. I like letting people in on what we do and how we do it. I think there was so much mystery surrounding the media from back in the day. I love demystifying it for people and letting them know it is not a science. What made a story on Monday may not necessarily be a story on Thursday. It can be a variety of factors that go into why or why not that story got attention. I think Twitter and Facebook, more than any other medium, allows me to put photos up to show the process.

I love it. People are truly interested in it. If they see how it is done, I tend to think it can win people over. So they see that sometimes it takes slogging through mud to get video or knocking on a few doors to get a sound bite. If anything, I love that it allows for that. Yes, it is a great way to disseminate information and get it out instantaneously. But it also allows you to show your personality.

AA: Are you using apps on your phone?

I’m using the police scanner app and Dragon dictation app. The other day, as I am driving into work, I knew what story I was going to do and that I had to script the lead-in. I talked right into the iPhone, copy and pasted the script into our news computer system, and that was done. It comes out on this app in printed text, which is beautiful. We take audio and video with this too. The video with this is sometimes quicker to send back than setting up a live signal and feeding the video back to the station.

From a reporter's perspective, getting it out there fast and accurate is important. From a corporate perspective, you are thinking 'how do I make money and derive revenue?' Tweeting and Facebook you are doing to secure audience, but you can't quantify that in terms of dollars and cents.

AA: And it seems like the resource issue is a factor. I know here they stopped allowing people to comment on stories because it took too much time to manage. Reporters don't have to blog here either.

What do they say about most blogs? You do it for a few months and then you tail off because you weren't getting a response. Am I wasting my time?

AA: Then you have people who dabble in it so they can put it front and center on their resume.

Yes, you put that stuff on top. You do it for that reason exactly. When it comes right down to it, there are a large number of people who are blogging. You hope people rely on the station's brand and the reporters we have as credible news sources. This is the brand we have to sell. Our station is the umbrella and under it you have the people who have reported over the years. We have the experience as journalists. You hope people say, 'they have steered me in the right way and I'll spend my precious time with them.' The changes are exciting. It has made our business completely different from when I got into it, but I don't think that is a bad thing. I love the fact that this can get it out there quicker and faster.

## Appendix J

### **PARTICIPANT #8**

**January 8, 2012**

Six years experience in journalism

AA: I'm interested in learning more about how new media is impacting your work. We had the birth of the Internet and then all of these digital byproducts, such as Twitter and Facebook. In a broad sense, how do you think these tools are impacting your job? Let's start with the Internet and then we can talk about social media.

I started reporting in 2006, so the Internet by then had caught on. It had definitely made finding stories easier. You get your finger on the pulse of what's going on and what other news organization are reporting. In terms of Facebook and Twitter, I have seen that explode over the years. I would say it has made our jobs easier. I know some people may argue that we have to do more. But as a reporter, that is the first or second place I go, especially when I am trying to track down people, victims, families, etc.

AA: So you are using these new tools as a resource. Are you doing this on a daily basis? Are you looking for stories on these platforms? Or once you are assigned a story, do you look for related resources via new media?

I don't really look for stories on there. Usually I go there as resource or I go back after a story to see what people are saying about it, for possible follow-up stories. I know a lot of people do go on there for possible stories. I don't. We also use it to track developing types of stories. Recently we had a teen who got into a crash, and people were saying online that she was going to pass. We were constantly refreshing the pages to see what people were posting.

AA: Does this also make your job more difficult, with everything playing out online? Is there a need to update things more often?

That is difficult, in terms of having to have our website up-to-date every second. Before, you didn't worry about the Internet. The most instantaneous thing before was the crawl. That's difficult when you are trying to make your calls and then they are like, 'Well, make sure you throw an article on the web.' You have to watch your grammar and spelling; all this can be overwhelming.

AA: You work weekends and some days during the week. When are you responsible for updating the web?

During the week, we do have a fulltime web staff. They are usually calling us to get the information—what should we say, how should we word it. After they post it, we usually go back and check because we want to make sure everything is put on correctly. Of course, when you are out in the field, it can be difficult because you don't always have time. On the weekend, I have to post stories to the website. It's a bit easier to do this

because I am actually in the newsroom on that shift. I feel like I have a better environment to do web updates on the weekend because I'm in the newsroom.

AA: When you are out in the field, what is the workflow of getting information back so it can be put on all of the station's online platforms?

We don't really have a system. I usually talk to the producer. They get the details and type up an email. It goes out to everyone, and then the web unit will write the online article off of that. We'll get calls from them sometimes in the field, if they have a question. Then I go back to check the accuracy online.

Sometimes when you are dealing with breaking news, you are worrying about going live on-air in five minutes and then you are trying to call to tell them what to put on the web. That is very difficult to juggle.

AA: In terms of skills, broadcast writing is different than web writing. Have you had to adapt your skill set?

I don't find the transition hard from one to the other. The only thing you might have to catch is some of the time references—such as today or yesterday. On the web you want to say a specific day. I don't think that is that difficult. I think the web is more specific though.

AA: How often are you chasing stories that are trending online or that people are talking about on social media? Or, let's say you are out on a story and someone in the newsroom sees something about that story on Twitter. Are they asking for you to chase down or verify the information they are seeing?

I think every day we are using Twitter and Facebook in these ways. Whether it's 'oh, we should do that because of all the posts on Twitter' or if it's a developing story I know producers go to Facebook and Twitter immediately to see what people are saying. I will be out in the field and get a call about something that someone posted on Twitter. For example, 'this is happening on so and so road, so you might want to go see what is happening there.' We are pretty dependent on it. Even for me as a reporter, I go there to snoop when I'm trying to track down a victim's family, for example. It is a lot easier for me to make contact with that family in an indirect, non-intrusive way if I just send a message and say: 'Hi, I am very sorry for your loss. We would like to speak with a family member if you are willing. Just give me a call.' A lot of times I'll get a response. This is better than just showing up or picking up a phone and blindsiding someone. This is another way new media has been useful.

AA: What about the quality of content? Do you feel that all these new tools are impacting the quality of content?

Well, I haven't been around that long, but I definitely think it's taking a hit in the wrong direction when you talk about quality. It's a race now—it's how much you can get on and

how quickly you can do it. I've seen that change even though I haven't been in the business that long. I've felt it myself. Sometimes I've gone with things and I think afterwards that I probably should have checked it before I said it. I think it is moving in a negative direction when you talk about quality.

It's hard; it is really hard. And when you are dealing with the web, it is not only getting information back for web articles. They also want you to take a photo when you are at the scene and send it back. It may seem like just one picture, but when you are dealing with a million things, that can be annoying.

AA: How often are you doing that? What type of device are you using? Does the station provide the devices to snap photos and carry out other responsibilities that are expected?

I would say 90 percent of the reporters here use their own phones for pictures. Fortunately, most of us have unlimited data plans. The station phones are not up-to-speed; they are very inconvenient. I'd rather just use mine and not waste the extra time dealing with outdated station phone. Yes, it is a given, especially during breaking news, that there is something visual that you'll take a picture of. Sometimes I forget because I get so caught up with the people and getting my information. But the photo is a priority.

AA: Are you using your mobile device for any other purposes? I know some of your colleagues are using their devices to write scripts.

I don't write scripts on the phone. I'm more old fashion. It definitely has come in handy when it comes to keeping up with what is going on at the station. I am constantly checking email. I know where such and such a reporter is and what they are covering. They'll also email me to let me know what calls have come in the newsroom for me. I also shoot producers quick emails. For example, 'I think I am going to need a graphic for this. Can you start working on it?' That has helped a lot.

Oh gosh, emails here. Honestly, I've missed a lot of emails because of the amount. We get 100 to 200 emails a day. A lot of times I will try to scan them—even on my days off. My phone is addictive. I'm like 'it's my day off. Why am I doing this? Who cares.' A lot of times I'll come back after two days off and hit delete for two minutes. I pray I didn't miss anything. If I don't clean out my inbox, I am going to have a full inbox and miss the stuff I need for that day. It's tough.

AA: When you are in the field, how are you communicating with the newsroom and vice versa? Are they picking up the phone and calling you?

I think most still call if it's important enough. But, it is email if it's quick and minor. Maybe they want to give us a heads up about something before we get back. I would say I communicate with the producer almost every shift via email.

Emails the big thing. It's kind of annoying. Someone is sitting behind you and they'll email you.

AA: Has the web team gained influence in the newsroom because of the importance placed on the web?

I don't know about influential. But they do drive much of what reporters are assigned to do. We will get emails from them, alerting us to what someone posted on Facebook. That may be a discovery that can be helpful and I didn't see because I am not constantly online in the field. The web team is included in a lot more meetings when it comes to special coverage or special projects. Before you would only have a reporter, anchor, and producer in those meetings. Now, you have someone from the web team talk about how we are going to cover it online.

AA: Is the web team involved in the daily editorial meeting?

No, not on a regular basis. Only if it is something major happening.

AA: Does the station expect you to have your own professional Facebook and Twitter accounts?

No, which I think is different. I came from a way smaller market, and as I was leaving there, they were requiring all on-air talent to have a work Facebook page. Here, there are no rules or expectations. I think we all have them. But it is not like every day I have to post a certain amount of posts or my stories. I know some stations do that.

AA: Do you think the station has a clear-cut sense of what reporters should be doing with new media? If so, has this been communicated to you? If not, would that be helpful to have?

We have not had any strategy or direction for reporters. I know when I got hired the old news director said they were trying to figure that out. But, I don't know what happened with that. I never really heard anything after that. But we are in a management transition, so we don't know what to expect.

AA: Does it concern you at all that many stations are having reporters also shoot their own video? Here at this station you still go out with a photog.

I think it is definitely going to happen here—the one-man-band thing. I just think it is a matter of time. It obviously is taking longer for us than it has for other stations. Yes, that is concerning. That is not something I want to do. I've never one-man-banded, except for college. When I see those poor reporters out in the field trying to carry everything, it's crazy. I don't know how you do it without losing your mind. To worry about how you look and how you sound, then getting all your information and video, and then dealing with Twitter and Facebook and calling back—that is too much for one person.

AA: What motivates you to use these tools? Do you think it makes you more attractive to the station or a potential employer?

I think it is definitely beneficial to say, ‘Look what I can do in the field. I know how to do it. I can handle it.’ I think that is beneficial.

AA: How has your relationship with the audience been impacted by new media? Are you having to find more time to manage these relationships?

I think it has been advantageous more than anything. You do have to control what your relationship is and how much you communicate with them. On Facebook, sometimes you get people who send weird messages. I think it has helped though because people will send me tips on there. The other side is that you get feedback from people that is not so nice. It sometimes shows up on the station’s Facebook page. That is hard. But, at the same time, you are getting to hear what they say about your stories. And they’ll bring up good points or another side of a story that I didn’t think about.

AA: Let’s talk about the future. How do you think your responsibilities will change from here?

More with less. I think that is definitely happening everywhere. Sometimes I think about that, and I’m not sure that I’d have a job in 10 years. Even if I did, I’m not sure I could keep up with the demands of it.

AA: TV news has always been fast-paced. As you said, the demands have increased even more. How do you manage the job demands?

As a reporter, you have that natural curiosity. As much as you want to enjoy your off time with family, you have to know what is happening. I know there are some people here who refuse to get a smartphone on purpose because they don’t want that stress or expectation that they’ll be checking there smartphone all the time.

AA: When you are out in the field, do you think in terms of broadcast first or digital first?

It would depend on the type of story. During breaking news situations—accidents, deaths, shootings, I think digital first. I would call first and send a picture first, along with any information I have. If it’s a more enterprise story, I don’t even think about the website or social media.

AA: How many stories are you turning on a typical day?

It depends. If it is a big story with lead potential, you are doing two different versions of that one story. If it is an enterprise story, or not as important as others in the newscast, we do two different ones on a single day.

AA: Are you using the web as a platform to expand on a story you reported on for the traditional newscast?

It's not pushed or mandatory. When we doing bigger stories, we always put raw video, such as a news conference on the web, and we push people to the web for that.

AA: Have the additional job responsibilities impacted morale here?

I don't think we've seen the negative morale here as much as other stations have. This may be because reporters here still don't shoot their own video or because we have a dedicated web staff.

AA: How do you keep up with new media and technology?

A lot of it you just have to do on your own. It's a lot of poking around on your own. Sometimes I'll ask the web unit, 'How do I do this? or I don't understand this.' Twitter I still don't fully understand and I still don't use this as much as I should. I'm more of a Facebook person. You just have to take the initiative to do it. I don't think I make it a priority as much as I should. I know there are reporters who post on Twitter and Facebook throughout the day.

AA: Do you think it would be beneficial to have newsroom meetings to discuss best practices?

That would be helpful. I tend to think our newsroom is a tad behind in social media, which is interesting considering our staff level. We are a bit behind, I think, in terms of using video and social media on our phones.

AA: What motivated you to get into this business?

I loved the storytelling aspect and being able to focus on one person. Everyone has their vision of what it is to be a reporter and on TV. Then you get here, and you are like, 'Oh my gosh.' The technology has changed things a lot. When you are doing a local newscast, it's not about the quality of storytelling and bringing people in with nice video and good sound. Now, it's just getting it on the air and quick. That's kind of sad. I still try to focus on good storytelling. I never thought about social media and smartphones when I was going to school.

AA: What are the skills that you've had to use—and perhaps acquire—with your changing responsibilities?

I definitely think they have changed since I was in school. I think being able to write for both web and broadcast is key. Sheer writing skills are more important now than they were before because of the web aspect.

AA: Do you use the new tools to keep up with competition? To make sure you aren't being scooped?

That is one thing I have thought of and a reason why I don't post constantly—where I'm going, what I'm doing, who I'm talking to, what story I'm working on. You don't think the competition is checking my page or looking at my posts to see what I'm doing? In one way, I think it has made our jobs easier. On the other hand, you are showing your hand to the other side before the news hits.

AA: Can you give me an example of how you've used Facebook or Twitter to track down stories or sources?

The last one was about a father who was drinking and crashed his car. He wandered off and was missing. His kids had no idea where he was. They ended up finding his body. The way I got in touch with his family was by going to his Facebook page, searching his friends, and clicking on anybody with his last name. I found his son, his daughter, and some other relatives. I ended up messaging his son and daughter. I got a response from his daughter; they were willing to talk with me. Boom. I had the interview.

It has also helped with gathering photos. We don't have to drive 45 minutes to shoot a photo with our camera. People can email it or we can take it off a Facebook page, as long as we can confirm it is them.

AA: Are you visiting traditional sources' online sites—such as the police department—to gather information?

The [ ] district attorney is very savvy in that regard. He'll let us know the information will be on their Facebook page. A lot of police now have their own Facebook pages, posting mug shots, and asking for public's help.

AA: How do you manage your online presence?

I actually have a separate Facebook page—one for my personal life and one for work. Of course, you never know. I would never post anything on either page that I would be skeptical of or afraid of someone seeing. I think some reporters go a bit far in things they post.

AA: How would you summarize how new media is impacting your workflow on a daily basis?

I think it is definitely easier, as a reporter, to connect with people than it was in the past, when you used a phonebook or knocked on a door. On the other level, I think it has made our jobs tougher because we have to have a mindset that it isn't only for the news at 6 o'clock tonight. We need it right when you get to the scene because a web article needs to go up or it needs to go on the Facebook page. It's increased the pace of our jobs. Everything is so fast paced.

AA: Do you ever think about the economic motives involved? For example, digital tools, such as cameras, allow reporters to do the work of two people. Do you think cost-saving measures are fueling any of the changes?

I think we are lucky here. I don't ever really feel that kind of pressure. I think we are in the minority and fortunate here.

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## VITA

Anthony Adornato has 15 years experience in the journalism, public relations, and social media fields. Prior to transitioning to public relations in 2007, Adornato was a broadcast anchor and reporter at several television stations. In 2012, he began serving as a part-time faculty member at Syracuse University's S.I. Newhouse School of Public Communications and an adjunct lecturer at Utica College. He received a bachelor's degree in broadcast journalism from the Newhouse School in 1999. Adornato completed a master's degree in journalism, with a media management concentration, from the University of Missouri-Columbia in May 2012. His current research involves the adoption of new media by communications professionals and the resulting impact on their work routines. He currently resides in his hometown, Syracuse, N.Y.