

THE CHANGING JOB OF JOURNALISM: THE IMPACT OF NEW AND SOCIAL  
MEDIA USE ON JOB SATISFACTION IN A TELEVISION NEWSROOM

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In Partial Fulfillment  
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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

THE CHANGING JOB OF JOURNALISM: THE IMPACT OF NEW AND SOCIAL  
MEDIA USE ON JOB SATISFACTION IN A TELEVISION NEWSROOM

presented by Melissa Blye, a candidate for the degree of Master of Arts,  
and hereby certify that, in their opinion, it is worthy of acceptance.

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# THE CHANGING JOB OF JOURNALISM: THE IMPACT OF NEW AND SOCIAL MEDIA USE ON JOB SATISFACTION IN A TELEVISION NEWSROOM

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## **ABSTRACT**

Television newsrooms and the individuals or corporations who own them, find themselves under pressure to find creative ways to use new and social media to stay relevant to today's media consumer. That pressure trickles down to the newsroom employees who must shoulder the added workload that comes with a multi-platform approach to newsgathering and production. This research explores how an increased reliance on new and social media has changed the job of journalism and whether that impacts the job satisfaction of newsroom employees and their perceptions of the quality of their work.

The research was done through a series of one-on-one, in-depth, semi-structured interviews with newsroom employees at a television station in a mid-size market in the Southeast. Interviews were done with employees at every stage of the newsgathering and production process including managers, producers, on-air talent, photographers, editors and new media managers. The research shows that newsroom employees do have mixed feelings about the increased reliance on new and social media as it relates to their ability to produce quality journalism, but also shows that those seeking to stay relevant in today's job market understand the need to adapt to the changing job of journalism.

# Chapter 1

## Introduction

This research was designed to discover how an increased reliance on new media and social media has changed the job of journalism in order to determine whether that change has impacted job satisfaction in a television newsroom. The move to digital and the introduction of the Internet made newsgathering faster and easier in many ways; these advances also led to increased pressure on, and expectation of, individual news employees. For example, it is almost universally expected that a news crew or individual one-man-band (now known as a Mobile or Multimedia Journalist or MMJ) can readily turn multiple stories in the course of a news day, whereas in the not too distant past, that crew would likely concentrate on turning a single story barring breaking news or a story that dead-ended requiring a change of assignment. But that increased efficiency may come at a cost, something that trade publications have discussed since the switch to digital began in earnest in the mid-90s. One article of that time noted that more than half (59 percent) of television news directors believed that new technology would improve on-air and off-air efficiency. However, only a fifth (17 percent) of those news directors expected digital technology to improve accuracy (Pavlik, 1996).

Now that social media, such as Facebook and Twitter, have become a ubiquitous part of the job of journalism, they, too, take up time in the course of a news day, time that individual employees might previously have used to concentrate more singularly on the journalism part of their job, i.e. researching and developing a story. Based on participant observation and in-depth interviews done for purposes of this research, many broadcast

news employees feel they have less time to do more work and as a result, the quality of their work, and ultimately, “the journalism” suffers as a result.

Web content is a critical component of the output of today’s television newsroom, and is often used as a gauge of that newsroom’s success. Today, newsrooms rely not only on ratings to determine viewership, but also on how many “hits” the website gets, what’s “trending” online, how many people “like” or “friend” the station via Facebook or how many followers the station has on Twitter (personal communication, March 22, 2012). It is not just newsrooms where these numbers matter, sales departments rely on those numbers as well and station management and owners use them as a gauge of overall station success. Observation and interviews also reveal that the pressure to keep pace in today’s demanding new media environment has left many broadcast journalists feeling as though the quality of the on-air product is sacrificed due to the need to post to the web as quickly and as often as possible. The question is how do these changing expectations and priorities impact the job satisfaction of broadcast journalists?

### **Explanation of Terms**

Before moving forward, it would be helpful to clarify some terms. For purposes of this research, new media refers to the transition to digital technology, specifically as it relates to audio and visual production for newsgathering and production purposes and also to the introduction of the Internet into the newsgathering process. The term social media is used to include media which offer an even more interactive approach to information sharing.

Both of these types of media fall under the definition of new media set out in McQuail’s Mass Communication Theory 6<sup>th</sup> edition (2010). McQuail’s definition



focuses on “essential features” of new media: their interconnectedness, their accessibility to individual users as senders/receivers, their interactivity, their multiplicity of use and open-ended character, their ubiquity and their “delocatedness” (p. 41). It is these features of new media that have changed the job of journalism and the role, possibly, even the identity of the journalist and have also, to some extent, affected job satisfaction amongst working news professionals.

This research focuses on how new and social media are used to do the job of journalism, in the context of gathering and producing news content. The discussion of the technology focuses on how new and social media are being used by working news professionals as a part of their assigned responsibilities, not on how new and social media work from a technological perspective. There is some discussion of the switch to digital from analog because this transition has had a dramatic impact on newsgathering in the realm of videography and editing of news footage (Pavlik, 1996). The above definition of new media, clearly incorporates the Internet and social media in its scope, however, to clarify further, this research specifically addresses how Facebook and Twitter have impacted the day-in-and-day-out duties of television newsroom employees.

In order to proceed, we need a working definition of the “job of journalism”. The American Heritage Dictionary defines this as: “the collecting, writing, editing and presenting of news or news articles in newspapers and magazines and in radio and television broadcasts.”

Defining the job of journalism always proves challenging, especially in this new media age. Research has already been done addressing the issue of “Who is a journalist?” a line that is increasingly more difficult to draw, as is the line which determines, “What is

journalism?”. This research does not attempt to study or define these bigger picture questions, but focuses on people who are employed in a working television newsroom producing daily newscasts for on-air consumption.

Job satisfaction is harder to define and can be considered a matter of perception and opinion stemming from self-analysis. To that end, the researcher relied on in-depth, semi-structured interviews to evaluate job satisfaction for purposes of this research. The research sample includes individuals employed as broadcast newsroom managers- news directors, executive producers, assignment editors, line producers, etc. It also includes anchors, reporters, photographers and other non-newsroom positions the researcher encountered that were relevant to the stated purpose of the research. The issue of defining job satisfaction is discussed in detail in the review of literature.

### **Breakout of Research Question**

Overall, this research seeks to address how the increased reliance on new and social media has altered traditional newsgathering methods, thus changing how the job of journalism is done. The question is whether individual journalists perceive new and social media to have impacted their ability to do their job well, and whether it has affected the satisfaction they find in doing their job.

The proposed research questions are:

RQ 1: How are individual employees asked or expected to use new and social media in the execution of their daily duties?

RQ 1A: Does the use of new and social media lighten or increase the workload for those individual employees?

RQ 2: Has it been easy or difficult for television newsroom employees to adapt to the changes brought on by this increased reliance? Why?

RQ 3: How do the changes to the “job of journalism” brought on by increased use of new and social media affect employee perceptions of the product they produce, i.e. news?

RQ4: How do a change in workload due to new media use and perceptions of the ability to do one’s job well, combine to affect job satisfaction in a television newsroom?

To that end, this study will first examine three theories in the field of communication research that prove useful in answering the research question, followed by a review of the literature relevant to the research question. The next section will explain the research methodology and design and conclude by explaining how the research was analyzed and what areas of future research it may point toward.

## **Chapter II**

### **Theoretical Framework and Review of Literature**

#### **Diffusion of Innovation Theory**

Diffusion of innovation theory offers valuable insight into the change television newsrooms have undergone as they moved to digital technology and use of the Internet and, more recently to use of social media as a newsgathering tool. Everett Rogers put forth this theory in his book of the same name. Rogers defined diffusion as, “the process by which an innovation is communicated through certain channels over time among the members of a social system” (p. 5). Rogers proposed four main elements that influence the spread of a new idea: the innovation, communication channels, time and a social system.

Mashburn (2007) effectively evaluated how the diffusion of the Internet and related new media impacted the daily work of local television stations and was able to highlight some of the positive and negative changes stations have experienced as a result of adopting the Internet and new media. This study will delve more deeply into those positive and negative changes from the perspective of job satisfaction amongst employees in a television newsroom. This study seeks to look beyond the main elements that influence the spread of a new idea, to the five stages Rogers identified that individuals go through during the diffusion process: knowledge, persuasion, decision, implementation and confirmation.

In the knowledge phase individuals are first exposed to an innovation but may not be inspired to seek out information about the innovation. Next comes the persuasion

phase during which the individual is interested in the innovation and actively seeks information. In the decision stage, the individual weighs the advantages and disadvantages of using the innovation and makes a decision to adopt or reject the innovation. Implementation is a stage during which the individual is using the innovation to some degree and determines a perception regarding the usefulness of the innovation. Finally, it is during the confirmation stage that an individual makes a decision whether to continue using the innovation and to what degree (Rogers, 2003).

This theory draws from many other disciplines, including anthropology and sociology, and has much to offer in relation to the research question, especially when one sees a newsroom as its own social system. Using the work of Rogers and others who have applied diffusion theory, we can see how a newsroom adjusting to changing media technologies experiences the four elements and five stages outlined above. The transition that comes with new and changing technologies can contribute to more or less job satisfaction among news employees, contingent on several factors.

Mashburn employed diffusion theory to evaluate how Internet technologies changed television newsrooms. This research touched on possible obstacles to new media including conflict between “traditional” employees and “new media” employees, but stopped short of evaluating the sense of job satisfaction these employees have as a result of new technologies. Mashburn focuses instead on the broader impact these changes have had on the stations as a whole, particularly in how the technologies work in regard to the production of a news broadcast.

Another aspect of diffusion of innovation theory may prove insightful in looking at this issue from an individual employee’s point-of-view and aid in evaluating job

satisfaction in a new media newsroom. Rogers (2003) discusses the role of opinion leaders within a social system. These leaders are influential in shaping positive or negative opinions about an innovation. Additionally, these opinion leaders exhibit characteristics in common which set them apart. According to Rogers, opinion leaders typically have greater exposure to mass media, are more cosmopolitan, have greater contact with change agents, more social experience and exposure, higher socioeconomic status and are more innovative in general. The in-depth interviews conducted as part of this research, combined with participant observation revealed a similar group of opinion leaders in the newsroom under study. However, these opinion leaders were not defined by Rogers terms, but instead, influenced their peers due to factors such as age, experience in the news business and job title.

The station observed for purposes of this research will not be identified in order to protect participant confidentiality. The station is an independent television station, part of the broadcasting division of a larger media company. It is located in a mid-size television market in the Southeast. The station produces a morning show from 5:00-9:00 A.M., a noon newscast, a 5:00, 5:30 and 6:00 evening news, followed by late news at 10:00 and 11:00 P.M. and additional weekend news programming.

It is important to consider two types of innovation decisions outlined by Rogers: collective innovation decisions and authority innovation decisions. Clearly, some of the innovation decisions involving bringing new media into a newsroom come from corporate owners and/or local management and thus are authority innovation decisions, while other decisions, such as how best to employ the new media may fall under collective innovation decisions. Either way, how these decisions are made and

introduced can affect an employee's perception of the accompanying changes to their job role and responsibilities.

In a study of Australian journalists Alysen (2009) effectively shows how "the need for speed" applies to every era in the advancement of journalism using archival research to show how changes in 1970s journalism created similar pressures for broadcast journalists. Alysen focuses on how changes in newsgathering technology impacts reporting style and thus on-air content in order to show the interaction between work practices and reporting styles. Citing a 2008 survey of Australian journalists, comprised of a majority of print journalists- only 10 percent were television journalists- Alysen discusses how changes in technology also impact job expectations:

More than 70 percent of respondents in the MEAA's survey said that their workload had increased (MEAA, 2009:13) with the repercussion that stories were being 'pumped out' with less thought and research than was considered desirable (MEAA, 2009:13). This was the result of both cuts in newsroom staff levels and also the fact that staff who remained were expected to generate stories for multiple platforms (p. 4) .

Alysen's research, while highlighting the frustrations experienced by journalists in a new media environment, is focused on a technology-content connection more so than the impact on the individual journalist.

A 2008 survey of European journalists revealed that those journalists were still coming to terms with the changes brought about by the implementation of the Internet ten years earlier (O'Sullivan & Heinonen), while a 2004 survey of television newsrooms in the U.S. revealed that new media and the convergence that often accompanies it was considered a positive experience in most of those newsrooms (Duhe, Mortimer & San). Singer delved directly into the issue of convergence as a growing trend in a 2004 article, and in a 2008 case study, specifically addressed how journalists saw society's

expectations of them changing as a result of new media. Bivens studied journalists in the U.K. and Canada through observation and interviews to find out how traditional journalistic practices were being adapted in light of “varied use of new media among journalists and the public” (2008).

### **Medium Theory**

Some discussion of medium theory may prove helpful in determining a relationship between increased reliance on new and social media and job satisfaction for journalists. There has been some debate about this theory ever since the term “medium theory” was first used by Joshua Meyrowitz in his 1985 book *No Sense of Place*. Medium theory aims to examine how the means of expression impact the meaning of communication, focusing more on the technology- the how of the message versus the content- to determine social impact of a medium.

Others have argued that medium theory cannot effectively address new digital media because of their somewhat unlimited nature (McQuail, 2010), however this study hopes to show that the method of delivery has affected how the job of journalism is done on a daily basis, also affecting how journalists’ feel about their work product.

One issue that factors into how journalists perceive their role in the post-Internet world is linked to the idea of citizen journalism. The ability for anyone, and everyone, to act as an eyewitness to events and share their perspective has blurred the definition of who is or is not a journalist. Lazaroiu discovered that citizen journalism, specifically blogs, present some new types of ethical challenges for professional journalists (2011).

Lowery, in analyzing coverage of an explosion in a smaller media market, discusses how social media such as Facebook and Twitter provided the first accounts of a



major news story in a smaller Montana town and uses this example to offer insight into how professional journalists can and should use social media to improve their coverage (2009). Garrison (2008), Gitner (2010) and Gordon (2009) all point to the potential benefits for professional journalists from using new and social media well and also warn that traditional journalism must adapt if it is to stay competitive in today's media environment. While there is truth to that, Overholser discusses the importance of maintaining accuracy in the age of social media where breaking news is often little more than gossip (2009).

All of these studies tie in with the precept put forth by medium theory which states that the means of expression impact the meaning of communication. This assertion is given weight by considering how the ubiquity of new and social media is changing the very structure of the newsroom. Doyle discusses the creation of new types of employees: he describes them as "curators" who are responsible for presenting a media outlet's online content (2010). As this research was wrapping up, the station being observed was preparing to undergo a major renovation to update the newsroom to better accommodate today's technologies and to re-structure the newsroom in order to place the assignment desk in closer proximity to the group of employees responsible for updating the station's website. This change is designed to ensure the web journalists receive new information and are able to post it as soon as it comes in, without having to wait for the assignment desk to pass it along.

### **Disruptive Innovation**

In order to fully understand why some news employees are less satisfied in an environment that requires them to increasingly rely on new and social media, it will also

prove helpful to consider the theory of disruptive innovation. Clayton Christensen introduced this theory in his 1997 book, *The Innovator's Dilemma*, as a means of explaining how new technologies came to surpass seemingly superior technologies in market. The term was later broadened to include not only technologies, but also products and business models (Markides, 2006).

Markides argues that disruptive innovation theory should be compartmentalized, distinguishing between business-model innovations and radical (new-to-the world) product innovations. This study will touch primarily on the expanded perspective of this theory as it relates to the changes television newsrooms have experienced as a result of increased reliance on new and social media.

There has been some academic research done on the way in which new media has forced a restructuring of the traditional journalism model and, therefore, the business model used by media outlets, but it is the trade publications that have continually sounded the alarm about how the influence of new media is leading to job cuts and changes in the field. Compton and Benedetti, relying on Bourdieu's field theory, evaluated how new media have led to job cuts in both print and broadcast media (2010).

In a similar vein, Erdal studied how the influence of new media has led to different production cultures within media organizations. The argument being new media allows for faster work, which means some employees can turn more work in less time, leaving more time for other employees to pursue "real" journalism (2009). Malone (2008) and Dickson (2006, 2010), writing in trade publications, point to how reliance on new media is forcing media organizations to revamp their staff. Again, the new media world means employees can work faster, thus accomplish more within a work day, but

also demands the creation of new positions to manage the content needs of those new media which can lead to other positions being cut in order to accommodate salaries for necessary new media employees.

While all of these studies and theories give us reasons and rationale for the necessity of television newsrooms to embrace new media and social media and even look at how some newsrooms have gone about doing so, they only skim the surface of how news employees feel about these changes. It seems very little has been in the study of job satisfaction amongst broadcast journalists. The research into job satisfaction focuses almost exclusively on print journalism or targets a specific group such as women or minorities.

In order to focus most successfully on the issue of job satisfaction, this study will rely on diffusion of innovation theory as the foundation of its theoretical building blocks. Diffusion of innovation theory allows for the most complete analysis of job satisfaction because it can be used to examine the way in which new and social media have been introduced into the observed station's newsroom and how those individual newsroom employees are continuing to adapt to changes in their roles due to the ongoing changes these new mediums have created in the field of journalism.

This study may touch on medium theory if and when appropriate, however, medium theory would seem to lend itself more so to a study that is focused on how news content is changing as a result of new and social media or perhaps a study aimed at determining audience perceptions of content. By its definition, medium theory is focused on the medium and the message, this is not the primary focus of this research, and thus medium theory will play a small role, if any, in evaluating my findings.

Disruptive innovation theory has something to contribute to the issue of job satisfaction. As discussed above, newsrooms are seeing organizational changes as a result of new media: staffing reduction while new positions are created for new media managers and employees, different work cultures may exist between traditional and new media employees, etc. Yet again, the issues addressed by disruptive innovation theory in relation to my research question can be addressed under the larger umbrella of diffusion of innovation theory and the specific aspect of that theory that addresses different types of consequences as a result of innovation.

Rogers lists three categories of consequences: desirable and undesirable, direct and indirect and anticipated and unanticipated. It is the researcher's belief that organizational/employee changes as a result of new media can be addressed from this perspective and thus, like medium theory, will only rely on disruptive innovation theory as a secondary research tool.

Journalism has always been a "pull yourself up by your bootstraps" kind of profession, not a lot of room for coddling beginners or anyone for that matter. Employees in today's new media work world often find a new sense of job insecurity. As Carla Kimbrough-Robinson (2008) writes:

Some journalists have been around long enough to witness the evolution of media: from newspapers and typewriters to radio and television to computers and Web sites. The basic way we work is changing. Work has changed from that leisurely coffee break to craft that perfect lede and nutgraph to the quick trip to a coffeehouse with Wi-Fi to send over the latest update. Today's journalists also are coping with other types of changes that hit other industries long ago. Downsizing. Early retirement. Job elimination, job restructuring. Corporate takeovers. Change, in other words, is getting personal. Change forces you to come to reality with the blunt force of WAM (What about me?). What about my future? What about my job? What about my plan? (p. 35)

It is these types of questions and concerns that are weighing in on the job satisfaction scale for today's working journalist. It used to be those at the top of the craft were dissatisfied over the direction the business was going from a content standpoint (Kirtz 1998). Today, it is dissatisfaction with the very nature of the industry.

Brubaker cites lack of training as a major source of job dissatisfaction amongst journalists, ahead of pay and benefits (2002).

The issue of increasing reliance on new media and social media and job satisfaction not only has implications for journalists who are already employed, but also for aspiring journalists- specifically how we prepare them to do the job of journalism as it exists today (Aumente 2007). It is these very issues this study analyzed through observation and interviews with working journalists in a television newsroom.

Because this study focuses on job satisfaction, it will not address, except as relevant to job satisfaction, issues of content and audience due to the increased use of new and social media in a television newsroom, nor will it address as a primary focus changes in organizational structure due to new and social media, unless it is directly relevant to job satisfaction amongst news employees.

### **Job Satisfaction**

In a 1995 study, Pollard defined job satisfaction as, "...the positive affective orientation workers have toward their work or, simply, how much they enjoy their work (p. 1). However, moving beyond mere definition to evaluation of job satisfaction is a challenging proposition.

Many factors can influence job satisfaction and many of those are subjective in nature, subject to individual perceptions of their work environment, their employer, their

supervisor or even the day of the week. Previous studies on the issue show this to be true, thus it is helpful to review what we do know about job satisfaction in the field of broadcast journalism.

As mentioned previously, there have not been many studies done specifically regarding job satisfaction amongst broadcast journalists. Most studies of relevance to the field of mass communication and journalism on the subject of job satisfaction have focused on print journalists, journalists in specific positions, or specific groups of journalists based on ethnicity and/or gender or foreign journalists. Other studies have focused on evaluating how newsroom management handled change or perceived their employees handled change. A review of the literature also reveals studies on other factors influencing journalists' job satisfaction- things such as work/life balance, workplace communication and relationships with co-workers and supervisors. These issues are important, but are not the focus of this research.

Several studies have shown that a key indicator of job satisfaction in the realm of journalism comes from the employees' perception of their ability to produce high quality journalism. Daniels and Hollifield (2002) conducted a 15-month longitudinal analysis of news employees at CNN Headline News during a time when that news outlet was undergoing a major revamping of its entire operation and structure. Citing previous research which showed employees resist and fear change and that managers need more skills to manage periods of change, Daniels and Hollifield sought to evaluate employees' attitudes, morale and the likelihood they would quit their job during this time of upheaval in their work environment. Using a survey format, their primary focus was management's role during times of change and what factors related to management's

handling of change most impacted employees' morale and sense of job satisfaction. They found that long and short term organizational changes and employee perception of management's handling of those changes, had the ability to affect employee satisfaction, but that employees responded most negatively to changes they thought hindered their ability to produce high quality journalism, findings echoed in the current study.

A 2006 study revealed that perceptions of organizational goals and priorities play a key role in an employee's sense of job satisfaction. In a telephone survey of 1,149 media professionals working in radio, television and print media outlets, Beam found that job satisfaction was linked to the value a news organization placed on journalism over profit and was affected by the position the employee held within the organization.

In a survey of local news employees in several television markets in the Midwest, Powers (1991) found that a manager's leadership style is critical in determining job satisfaction, as was an employee's perceived ability to play a part in the organization's decision-making process. Using a questionnaire employing a Likert scale formula, Powers studies news employees' perceptions of their news director's leadership behavior, to determine its effect on job satisfaction. While Beam focused on management to determine job satisfaction within the larger picture of the organization's priorities and goal, Powers' analysis focuses on a single manager, the news director. Powers found that as managers become more relationship-oriented and less task-oriented there is more agreement between management and rank-and-file employees in regards to priorities and group goals, greater attainment of those goals and, ultimately, more job satisfaction amongst news employees.

In a 1995 study of Canadian news workers, print and broadcast, Pollard looked at the ongoing conflict between organizational structure and the role of professionalism. Using a five-point Likert scale, Pollard created a questionnaire that sought to determine how the need to make a profit impacted individual news workers sense of autonomy and, ultimately, their sense of job satisfaction. Pollard cites several factors as critical to a news employee's sense of professionalism, "service to community, full use of education or training, opportunities for initiative and growth, and being able to enjoy the work..." (p. 683), all things his research showed contributed to job satisfaction.

All of these factors- organizational changes and priorities, leadership style and an employee's sense of purpose- relate to the four elements and five stages Rogers outlines in diffusion of innovation theory and in his discussion of the role of opinion leaders and types of innovation decisions. A 1986 study on computerization of a newspaper confirms this. In that study Shipman found that a participatory style of management during technological change contributed most to maintaining job satisfaction during the changeover. Shipman found four factors that contributed to this finding: the method of instruction regarding the new technology, the job duties of the individual using the new equipment, the users themselves and the environment into which the technology was introduced.

These findings offer some benefit to revisiting medium theory and disruptive innovation theory in this regard as they relate to perceptions and expectations of employees during times of organizational change. One factor that seems to influence job satisfaction is an employee having a clear understanding of their duties, separate from what they desire their duties to be- something that is shifting with the increased use of



new and social media- and also an understanding of where they “belong” in the organization, again, something that is subject to change as newsrooms re-structure to accommodate the increased emphasis on online and social media content.

In summation, much of the literature that does exist on job satisfaction amongst news employees offers a more quantified analysis of the issues and challenges that broadcast journalists face in today’s changing media market. While these surveys and questionnaires point to some key central issues that are important to a journalist’s sense of job satisfaction, they lack the voice of the journalists themselves. We do not hear, in their own words, how these journalists are adapting to the changes that are going on industry-wide and in their own newsrooms. As a former broadcast journalist, this researcher believes that hearing directly from the men and women who are experiencing the phenomena under study provides invaluable insight as we seek to answer the question at hand.

## **Chapter III Method and Design**

This study relies on qualitative research methods as it seeks to understand how the increased reliance on new and social media impacts job satisfaction amongst broadcast news employees from the perspective of the employees themselves. One-on-one, in-depth interviews and participant observation were the methods used to collect data followed by use of the constant comparative technique to analyze the data collected.

As previously mentioned, while quantified analysis provides some general trends regarding job satisfaction amongst news employees, this researcher believes it is the anecdotal analysis that will prove most beneficial in answering the question of job satisfaction in a changing media environment (Wimmer & Dominick 2006). Rather than employing a “Likert-type scale” of job satisfaction, this study used the answers provided by working broadcast journalists to evaluate their satisfaction in their role as a journalist and as an employee and how they perceive that has changed or not changed with the added responsibilities of keeping up with new media in an “old” medium.

### **In-depth Interviews**

According to Jupp (2006), interviews offer a researcher several advantages, particularly when done in-person:

The advantages of interviews are that they enable the interviewer to follow up and probe responses, motives and feelings and their potential added value is that the recording of nonverbal communications, facial expressions and gestures, for example, can enrich the qualitative aspects of the data (p. 157).

The interviews, done on a voluntary basis, took place between February 10<sup>th</sup> and March 29<sup>th</sup> of 2012. Interviews were done in-person, one-on-one and lasted on average

20 minutes, with some running as short as 10 minutes while others went as long as 44 minutes. 16 interviews were done for purposes of this research, with only one exception, the Social Media Task Force Director, all interview participants were newsroom employees. That number ensured that the interview sample covered employees of all age, education and experience levels and included every position in the newsroom (See Appendix B). Most interviews took place in the station's "green room", while a few took place in individual's offices or edit bays with one taking place at an individual's desk in the newsroom. All the interviews were completed in one sitting with the researcher asking permission to follow up either in person or via email if necessary. Three participants were emailed to get a specific figure on the number of years they had worked in the broadcast news industry. More discussion of the breakout of interview participants can be found in the results chapter.

The list of questions for the interviews was designed to enable the researcher to simply "have a conversation" with the participants. Starting with questions about the participants education and experience in the field gave them an opportunity to share about themselves and made for an easier transition into the specific questions about how the job of journalism has changed, how they use new and social media and what impact that may have had on their job satisfaction.

Interview questions included:

- How do you use social media, such as Facebook and Twitter, as part of your job?
- What challenges does use of new and social media create for you as a journalist?
- Has use of new and social media improved your ability to do your job?
- Would you say you are satisfied in your work?

A complete list of interview questions can be found in Appendix A.

Prior to the interview, each participant was asked to sign a written consent form that outlined the purpose of the study, assured them their answers were confidential and gave them the opportunity to decline to be interviewed. The University of Missouri- Columbia Institutional Review Board approved all questions and procedures before any interviews were done. Each interview was audio recorded with a digital recorder and was later transcribed.

### **Participant Observation**

Observation took place in the observed station's newsroom February 2012 through May 2012. The researcher spent Thursdays and Fridays at the station, following a typical dayside news employee schedule, approximately 9:00 A.M. until 6:00 P.M. The observation, in this study, was intended to corroborate and offer practical examples of the feelings and opinions expressed during the interviews (Wimmer & Dominick, 2006). The station was chosen for its geographic convenience and also because it has created a Social Media Task Force comprised of employees from each of the station's departments to address how the station, as a whole, plans to address and use social media to fulfill its specified duties. As part of the observation, the researcher sat in on meetings of this task force.

The remainder of the observation time was spent in the newsroom, shadowing various employees and going out in the field with news crews to observe how they use new and social media in the performance of their daily duties. During these observations the researcher was able to talk candidly with employees and kept handwritten notes of any relevant observations or incidents. For example, sitting in a morning meeting, where

the day's assignments are determined, the researcher noted a reporter getting feedback, via text message, from a source that was part of a story that had just aired during a news brief and who was offering a follow up story idea.

The station graciously allowed email access for the duration of the observation, an invaluable tool in gathering "observable" material such as when the station website got a major upgrade:

Tomorrow is a big day at (call letters removed). Tomorrow we begin a new era for our station website,(name of website removed). First some background: (our website) is (this city's) most popular news website. By any measure we outperform all our competitors in the market, including all the other television stations and the (local) newspaper website, (redacted). These days we average about 19 million page views per month, from about 1.3 million unique visitors. We're the number one comScore site in the market (this is a measurement, similar to Nielsen, that's of critical importance to our sales department) and have been for over 1 full year now. We routinely outperform national sites, like CNN.com. We have an incredibly successful site and it's because of all of you. Your attention, contributions, and promotion of the site have made it incredibly successful. As other stations and companies in the market try to become successful in the web world, they point to us as the model of where they want to be. And that's why tomorrow is such a big deal. (Our website) is undergoing a significant and game changing upgrade. When you log onto the site, you won't notice much of a design difference. And that's good. But behind the scenes -- in the way the site is built, produced, and served -- there will be a seismic shift. Our Content Management System (or CMS) will switch overnight to a new and powerful system. A system that will further set us apart from our competitors and prepare us for the future. But I know what you are thinking. What does it mean for me? I encourage you to use it and become proficient at posting to the web. Many of you have been trained on how to use this new tool. If you haven't, (name removed), in the coming weeks will be happy to train you. Delivering news and content on all platforms to our viewers or users when they want it is what news coverage is today. This new system will allow us to continue to do that and allow us to do things in the future that weren't possible before.

That access also allowed the researcher to note that reporters receive frequent reminders to make sure they are posting to Facebook each day and for producers to make sure content is on the web before telling viewers that it is there. It also provided insight

into some of the challenges presented by breaking news in a new media environment, as this email reveals:

First of all, we did a FINE job covering a very difficult story. We were ahead of the competition all day, on the air, and on-line. That helo took off from (name removed) just before 6am. The wreckage wasn't found til more than 6-hours later. We all see the IPNs (email news alerts) that come in, and they are usually a big help with GUIDANCE. But there can be lag times, and as we saw yesterday, accuracy issues. No less than three times, an IPN came over that was WRONG in location, and twice contained the WRONG number of fatalities. PIOs of several law enforcement agencies were calling us, asking for information, as they scrambled trying to find the crash site. The correct crash site turned out to be in (name removed) County. IMPORTANT REMINDER-- IPNs are in effect scanner chat-- WE MUST CONFIRM THEM. Yes, we are in the Internet Age, but the rules of good journalism still apply. It's great to be first. It's better to be right. Any questions, my office is always open.

By virtue of the methods used, this research is qualitative in nature and therefore specific to the newsroom used for field observation; however, all newsrooms operate in similar ways so it might be possible to use this research as a launch point for further research that would allow for generalizability. That is one advantage of participant observation according to Shuter (1975):

Since the findings of a participant observation study can be generalized to the entire class of phenomena under scrutiny...broad theories about real world interaction can be derived from this type of research. In addition to developing theories about the influence of a specific social context...predictive generalizations can be formulated that transcend contextual parameters.

### **Data Analysis**

The researcher used the constant comparative technique to review findings and place them into appropriate categories or themes (Wimmer & Dominick, 2006). This 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, 2006). Combining the participant observation with the in-depth interviews, allowed the researcher to discover meaningful relationships amongst the interview responses and offer a general assessment of job satisfaction as it relates to the increased reliance on new and social media in a working television newsroom (Creswell, 2009). In order to do that, the researcher reviewed the transcriptions of the interviews, organizing the participants' responses into common categories and themes such as definitions of the job of journalism, what they enjoyed most about their job, uses and challenges of using new and social media and whether they were satisfied with their job. The breakdown of categories and grouping of similar responses, combined with reinforcing information from the observation, allowed the researcher to report the findings in an organized manner.

### **Limitations**

There is no perfect study. Each researcher encounters an obstacle of some kind along the way. While this researcher is comfortable with the methodology employed in this study, there are some criticisms of those methods which should be acknowledged and addressed. While in-depth interviews have many strengths, as previously noted, this technique is sometimes criticized because it lends itself to the introduction of bias on the part of the researcher. Great care was taken to ensure that each participant in this study answered the core list of questions (Appendix A), however, there were deviations based on the participant's experience in the business or response to a previous question which may have led the interviewer to ask unique follow up questions to certain interviewees.

While participant observation is a commonly used and widely accepted research method today, that hasn't always been the case, it often was, and still is, confused with or

grouped under field observation in many research method texts. It is often criticized because it relies, in part, on the memory of the researcher to accurately record observations and also because it, like in-depth interviews, introduces the possibility of bias on the part of the researcher should he or she become too closely involved in the setting being observed. Another criticism centers on generalizability of results, an issue addressed previously in this paper.

The constant comparative technique often faces criticism because of its relationship to grounded theory based on the argument that it is impossible for a researcher to lack preconceptions in the collection and analysis of data (Thomas & James, 2006). But Thomas and James, who make that criticism, also concede that the constant comparative method is the one aspect of grounded theory worth keeping.

### **Bias**

The researcher feels comfortable in the methodology used, but acknowledges that her professional experience as a news anchor and reporter could be seen to contribute bias to the study. While that previous experience and “insider” knowledge of the industry and how newsrooms operate seemed to make the researcher more readily accepted by participants in the study, the researcher believes that the use of multiple research methodologies balances out any perceived bias stemming from her personal experience as a news professional. If anything, familiarity with the news routine and pressures of meeting deadline seemed to be of benefit for purposes of conducting this research and gaining access for interviews and observation.



## **Chapter IV**

### **Results**

As discussed previously, most of the results from previous research on job satisfaction amongst news employees are presented in a quantified format, without giving actual voice to the men and women those numbers and percentages represent. The researcher hopes this study will break some ground, relying heavily on excerpts from the in-depth interviews which comprised the primary methodology for this study.

The 16 interview participants for this study covered every type of job in the newsroom according to the following breakdown: three videographers, one editor, one reporter, two anchor/reporters, one producer, three anchors, one news manager, one new media manager, one assignment manager, one assignment editor. That range of interviews included employees ranging in age from their early-20s through their mid-60s, and having anywhere from two years to forty-plus years experience in the broadcast news business.

The researcher reviewed and categorized the responses of interviewees using the constant comparative method. The following research questions are the cornerstone of this study and were used as the starting point to develop those categorizations.

Those questions are:

RQ 1: How are individual employees asked or expected to use new and social media in the execution of their daily duties?

RQ 1A: Does use of news and social media lighten or increase the workload for those individual employees?

RQ 2: Has it been easy or difficult for television newsroom employees to adapt to the changes brought on by this increased reliance? Why?

RQ 3: How do the changes to the “job of journalism” brought on by increased use of new and social media affect employee perceptions of the product they produce, i.e. news?

RQ4: How do a change in workload due to new media use and perceptions of the ability to do one’s job well, combine to affect job satisfaction in a television newsroom?

Categories and themes are marked by bullet points.

- Almost every respondent cited truth-telling and informing as key components of the job of journalism, several also noted the ability to “act as a bridge” or “take people there” as an important part of doing their job.
- Most pointed to the fact that it “is different everyday” as a major reason they enjoyed their work, several described journalism in terms of a calling or as a “service-oriented” profession.
- When asked what they found most frustrating about their work, most respondents noted the pressure of the deadline and the struggle to balance quality work with the need to “make slot”.
- Without fail, every interviewee touched on technology and the need for “immediacy” it has created as one of, if not the, biggest change they’ve seen in their time in the news business; Acknowledging that the immediacy issue is a direct result of the pressure to produce online and social media content.

It is when more specific questions regarding how use of new/social media has changed how they do their job or are expected to do their job or how they use these media

were introduced that stratification appears in the range of answers, typically based on the individual's job description.

- While all of those interviewed felt new and social media improved their ability to do their job, most also felt it had the potential to compromise the quality of the work they produced.
- The consensus among the news employees interviewed is that the on air product continues to supersede the online product, but many say they could see that changing in the future and all agree the online component of their work has increased in importance to their employer and their viewers.
- When asked if they are satisfied in their work, all of the respondents said they were, but distinguished between satisfaction in their personal performance of their duties and the constraints of circumstances under which they performed those duties. As one anchor described it:

Anchor: I'm satisfied in my work as a journalist because I take control of what I can and the one thing I can control is my reputation. It used to be there was a line in the sand that was drawn that journalists definitely would not cross. I understand today that line has moved and changed and the considerations, business things and all, are different and I've been willing to straddle that line a little bit, but I won't jump over it. So, as long as I'm in control of my life and my reputation, I'm satisfied. When it gets to the point where I have to do things and my job is put on the line and there are credibility issues, get out (personal communication, Feb. 23, 2012).

- When asked what could be done to improve their job satisfaction, no one cited anything specifically related to the use of new or social media, citing instead issues related to having more resources and time to do a better job as well as better hours and compensation.

- All of those interviewed believed their feelings were fairly typical for a newsroom employee in a similar position in the industry today. One anchor/reporter described it this way:

Anchor/Reporter: Yeah, I think so. I think a lot of people in our industry, with the roles that I have, still are feeling the pressure of: do more with less. And if it's do more with less and you didn't have the social media side of things, and now we've added the social media duties or responsibilities... I don't think it comes down to... whether you've embraced social media or not, I think a 22 year old new to the newsroom, but using Twitter is like the back of your hand, you'd rather tweet than talk, ...whatever. I don't think it's a matter of have I adopted this innovation yet? It's a matter of just, there are a lot of things to do and it always feels like, "You want more?" So, yeah, I think a lot of people in our industry in this kind of role feel that pressure, and that pressure takes away from job satisfaction (personal communication, Feb. 16, 2012).

It is helpful to view these general findings through the lense of diffusion of innovation theory to get a more specific understanding of how the introduction of new and social media has impacted the job of journalism and ultimately job satisfaction amongst news employees.

Looking at my results using Rogers' five phases it can said that employees in the observed newsroom have passed through the knowledge phase. They have been exposed to online and social media both personally and professionally, however, the timing of that exposure varied based on age, years in the business and position held. The timing of adapting to these innovations is less up to the individual and is more a requirement of their job. Consistent with the idea of the authoritative innovation decision, they have been given guidelines of how they are expected to incorporate those media into their daily newsroom responsibilities that leads logically to my first research question.

**How are individual employees asked or expected to use new and social media in the execution of their daily duties? Does it lighten the load or increase it?**

At the station this researcher observed, newsroom employees are given a quota they are expected to meet, a certain number of posts they are supposed to make each day in the course of their newsgathering duties. Managers acknowledge it adds to the workload, but as one executive producer explains:

Executive Producer: It's where the industry is headed. Well, you're asking people to do more, do more, do more. Before it's, do your package for the day, and that was kind of it. Now it's write for Twitter, write for Facebook, write for the web, so that's a new realm. I think the next generation, the reporters, that's just going to be second nature, Twitter or Facebook. It's kind of like now, we're hiring what we call mobile journalists that are doing more. So this is the next scope of their job, is do more, but that's part of it, you're the communicator, so if you're not telling the story, it doesn't really make sense for somebody in the newsroom, who really doesn't know yet what your story is about, they should be updating it. But you know, it's more on their shoulder (personal communication, Mar. 29, 2012).

And it's not just newsroom employees that have traditionally had more of a hand in developing content that are seeing an increased workload as a result of the need to feed the online and social media outlets, the position formerly known as an editor, responsible for editing video for broadcast is now known as a Multiplatform Producer (MPP).

MPP: Before, even probably about two months ago, not even that long ago, we were trained, we were still in the process of being trained, and it wasn't necessarily an everyday, you had an everyday part of your daily duties that you had to post onto the Facebook, for instance. But now, we have a quota. We have to get 25 videos onto the web in a 24 hour period we have to, we as in the editors, the MPPs, have to put 25 of our stories, or national story or international story, whatever eye-catching, something that might draw an audience to our website. We have to make sure that we have at least 25 going out to the web, which at first seemed like a big number. Depending upon each newscast, whether it's a half hour or an hour long show, there might have been like two, three stories in there. But now we have to take our job even a step further and say, maybe we didn't really touch on this that much during the news, but I'm certain that there are a lot of people out there that want to know about this, so I'll put that on the web, whatever it might be. It's just...I mean, it's very much a part of our job now, we have to do this. We have a quota (personal communication, Feb. 16, 2012).

And anchors, reporters and producers feel the pressure of an increased workload as well:

Anchor/Reporter: Well, we have so many more responsibilities now and it just adds so much to my day. Ten years ago, I would have quite a bit of down time, even if I had two stories; it wasn't a lot of down time, but an hour maybe to have lunch. Now, in addition to all the stories that we have to do, we have to update them online. Not just update them online, but we have to Facebook about them and tweet about it. I have two Facebook pages. I have over 40,000 subscribers combined. So, not only do I have to keep those things always updated, but I have to respond to them because if I don't respond, then you lose them. And it's not just me losing them because I carry a bigger responsibility, it's I lose it for the station (personal communication, Feb. 23, 2012)

Producer: Now I am expected...some stories we are expected to know that we have a web component to go with that story. So in a way when we come up with story ideas, there are times when we have to think, "Okay, what can we put on the web? Okay, what can we leave out of the broadcast part of the story for the web?" Where we may get a letter from someone...we may read parts of it in the story, but then afterwards if you want to read the entire letter, go to the web. That has changed (personal communication, Mar. 22, 2012).

Producer: In a way it has made things easier, but in a way it's also made things harder. It's always change, you've got your pros and you've got your cons. It made it easier, like you said, we can build our own graphics now. You don't have to wait on somebody else to do something, when you can go ahead and do it yourself. But on the other hand, you have to think about it as well, you still have to write a show, in addition to building the graphics for that show. Where a long time ago, where you would just made up your graphics list, took it to the graphic artist and they would have done took care of graphics and you can focus more on writing. Now you're doing all of it. And to a certain extent I do believe it has taken away some of the creativity and some of the writing, because you're back again also with that deadline (personal communication, Mar. 22, 2012).

Web Content Manager: And everybody has to multitask now, because, you know, editors are writing headlines and texts to describe videos that they put in the web. And people that are hired as an associate producer, that mostly thought that they would write the first version of stories, or run Teleprompter are now writing stories for the web (personal communication, Mar. 1, 2012).

MMJ: They want us to do more and they want us to be more well- rounded and be able to post to the web and get viewers feedback and get fans and get people to follow your work online. They want people to comment. They want people to like your page, they want that (personal communication, Mar. 2, 2012).

MMJ: An interesting thing, and this hasn't changed everything but at certain times we don't know where to go for a story. There might be a tragic accident in (name removed). We don't know who is involved. We put something out on Facebook, on Twitter or on our website and people start commenting, "Oh, it was my nephew." "Oh, it was my classmate. They said this, they said that." Sometimes people say, "Yeah, that was my son." And we find him on Facebook, find him on Twitter or find his email address and get in contact with him that way. Whereas before, we would try to track him down (personal communication, Mar. 2, 2012).

Anchor/Reporter: So what's expected now is not just electronic news gathering, and I shoot an interview and I call the pertinent sound bites and I write a cool script and we edit it together. That also means, I've gotta post on Facebook or Twitter before I go out, "Here's what I'm working on today." And during the course of say, covering the debates, "Oh, you know what, now blog for me." So while I'm trying to watch the debate, or set up and interview or do an interview, I'm also expected to be writing 120 words about the event as its happening. I don't mind so much on your fan page, on your station fan page, link a video from the story you did tonight and get some discussion on it or advance it somehow. I don't mind that so much, but it's an intrusion when I'm trying to cover the story and yet I'm expected to do these other things also. Probably an old guy talkin' I guess. I guess that's the, been in it for twenty years, and this isn't comfortable talkin'. But it just seems like that extra work takes away from what I can do otherwise (personal communication, Feb. 16, 2012).

Anchor/Reporter: There's a few different ways, because I'm a news anchor and I'm a reporter out in the field and then I host a show. So, I'm trying to, in all of those things, on a Saturday, when I'm going to anchor the newscast, I'm going to post something on Facebook an hour in advance, thirty minutes in advance of the show, ten minutes in advance of the show, "Hey, here's what's coming up. Hey, you won't believe the story you are going to see!" So, I use it as a tease vehicle. I want to generate interest. I want people to come watch. It's also after I've done a show, specifically when I'm reporting. After I've done the show I want to post, "Hey, if you missed it, here's this really interesting, important, cool story that we've got online, so go to our website." I mean, I get that. I understand that there's value in driving people to our web channel rather than just our broadcast channel (personal communication, Feb. 16, 2012).

Turning to the persuasion phase outlined by Rogers, in which individuals are interested in the innovation and actively seek information about it, we begin to see the importance that training plays and also the role of opinion leaders as we address the next research question.

**Has it been easy or difficult for television newsroom employees to adapt to the changes brought on by this increased reliance? Why?**

One reason the chosen station was a desirable setting for this research was the existence of a Social Media Task Force (SMTF) comprised of individuals from every department at the station including news. Part of what the SMTF does is to provide a common vision for how the station wants to use its online presence and social media to the benefit of the station as a whole. It also provides training on how to use the new tools.

The decision to incorporate online and social media into the news process is more of an authority innovation in the case of this station, driven by the desire to stay competitive journalistically and fiscally. Some of the decisions on how to innovate are handed down corporately, that is, by the media corporation that owns the station. Some interview subjects say that presents a challenge given that it is a local station committed to covering a single community with its own unique “personality”. The Managing Editor of the station’s website talked about a recent corporate update to how newsroom employees post to the station’s website and other online outlets:

Managing Editor: And in a way it’s even more locked down than it was before and it is very much a corporate because in going to the meetings for that re-launch, the people in (name removed), which is our corporate office, were very much, “We want all the stations to be doing this the same way, in the same spots on their websites.” And so if you look at all six websites, the design is really similar. Obviously the logos are different and the stories are different but the layout and the design, you wouldn’t even as a non-educated techno person, you would be able to look at it and say, “I bet the same person is doing both of these.” It’s for corporate standardization. It in no way makes it easier. I mean, the template is required so that fifty different people can contribute to our website without a lot of training, yes. But the ability to not be able to do things beyond the template, and have the structure be the same for everybody, is strictly a corporate decision, just for their standardization (personal communication, Mar. 1, 2012).



Other aspects of online and social media use are handled at the station management level, especially as it relates to local news content and the local audience that station serves.

The leader of the SMTF says it definitely helps that employees in certain key or higher profile positions have taken the lead.

SMTF Leader: And so I think we've finally reached that point of we've got our key people in there who understand this is where this is going, this is a responsibility. We try and get our talent to post and our reporters and a lot of the newer talent who grew up with it, you're right, they... we say, "Hey, you just need to make a Facebook post every day." Perfect, no problem, they can take care of it and they know... Some of our regular anchors, we try and get them to post because we, you know, our fans I think want to connect most with our anchors more 'cause they see them more on a regular basis. They grew up with (names removed) and like those are their, that's who they grew up watching and so I think if they had to ability to connect with them specifically, it would be, you know, if we say, "Here's (name removed) making a post. This is why she likes this story so much. Mary here..." And so we haven't quite hit our goal I think of what, you know, (names removed) have actually posted more so than others and it's helped. And you're right, we just kind of have to keep going back and sometimes we'll make posts for them (personal communication, Mar. 22, 2012).

The previous group fits the profile of "innovators" or at least "early adopters" under Rogers' theory, with some clarification. Rogers found that individuals fell into different adopter categories based on factors such as age, social class and financial lucidity. In the newsroom these groups breakout less by social class and financial means, and more due to position held in the newsroom. This group includes some anchors, several producers and, of course, employees whose responsibilities focus on online content. Most employees fall into the "early majority" category, this group holds a variety of positions in the newsroom and their grouping here is not so much reflective of their unwillingness to embrace the newer online and social media responsibilities, rather they see the new responsibilities resulting from these media as a necessity to do their job

and thus are less concerned about whether they like the innovation as they are with job security.

Producer: I am probably the only producer here who does not have a personal Facebook page because I just don't want one. So it took a while for me to get onto Facebook, because I was like, "I don't want one myself, so why do I have to do it for work?" And finally I accepted the fact that Facebook was going to be a part of new media and so after then I learned how to do things on Facebook (personal communication, Mar. 22, 2012).

The last categories described by Rogers are the "late majority" or "laggers".

Rogers describes these individuals as skeptical about innovation, having an aversion to change, tending to be older and focused on "traditions". In the newsroom environment these individuals tend to be older and/or are in positions that don't require them to innovate quite as much as other positions and depending on their job, they can avoid it, as one photographer stated when asked how he used social media in his work:

Photographer: I don't. They want me to, but I've kind of shied away from it... It has nothing to do with my job, as far as how I do my job. My job is basically to shoot video (personal communication, Feb. 10, 2012).

And age is a factor in the ease with which employees embrace the changes they are seeing, as one lead anchor explains:

Lead Anchor: My frustration is not being able to tell a story in the way I would like to tell it sometimes because you're dealing with time constraints, technical stuff...the changes technology I...I'm getting older and I'm just not as flexible. It sounds terrible, but I swear I can't keep up! I'm keep trying, but I think the younger generation evolves quicker.

But, younger or older, all agree the news business is changing, and learning to keep up is what it takes to keep working and all seem willing to do that to varying degrees.

Something else that newsroom employees agree on, no matter their experience or title is that the job of journalism has changed and will continue to change with the increased use of online and social media.

**How do the changes to the “job of journalism” brought on by increased use of new and social media affect employee perceptions of the product they produce, i.e. news?**

Here’s how one photographer expressed it:

Photographer: Oh, they expect to be able to get things done in 20 to 30 minutes what used to take 2 to 3 hours. Because well, you have a computer, that shouldn’t take you very long, you have access to the Internet, that shouldn’t take very long. If it’s a reporter, you should be able to write a script in 5 minutes, if you’re a producer, you should be able to write a script in 5 minutes. I think it’s made it to where the attention to detail has become nonexistent because they want things so much faster, so much quicker, I mean, get it to the web right now. But we don’t know what happened? It doesn’t matter, get it to the web right now. We need to make sure it’s on the website so if people go to our website, we’re the first ones to have it. That’s the big thing, always gotta be first. And I think that’s been in news forever, the exclusive, the idea to get it on first, but I think nowadays the idea to get it on first counteracts with trying to get the story right and sometimes I think that that’s a fault that we have. Gettin’ it on first to me isn’t somethin’ that I think we should always strive for. I think getting the story correct is something that we should always strive for, and I think a viewer would appreciate that more than just being able to read something. They wanna read content that means something, not just, hey, it’s there. But that’s the fast paced, Facebook, Twitter, website world we live in where it was we posted ours five minutes quicker than the other station, so we won. I don’t know what we won, but we won (personal communication, Feb. 16, 2012).

The implementation stage as identified by Rogers is the stage during which an individual is using the innovation under study, in this case new and social media, and determines a perception regarding the usefulness of the innovation. This is also the stage where we can begin to see some of the consequences of diffusion as outlined by Rogers and where many of my interview subjects offered the most insight.

All of the newsroom employees interviewed agreed that new and social media have improved their ability to do their job:

Lead Anchor: I don't know about social media, but the Internet has made a vast improvement in our abilities to do our job. Research used to be so difficult...now with the Internet, you just "Google" it... As far as social media are concerned, I don't really have an opinion at this stage. I'm not using it... to cover news (personal communication, Mar. 5, 2012).

MMJ: I can tell you, if I'm looking for somebody, and they're under the age of 65, the first place I go is to social media, before I look in the Yellow Pages, before I look anywhere else, 'cause it's easier to find them in social media than it is traditional phone book Yellow Pages anymore (personal communication, Mar. 2, 2012).

But they also agree it has altered how they do their job, and in many cases, the quality of the work they produce, especially when it comes to issues of accuracy and how they define the "job of journalism".

MMJ: I do hear the frustrations especially from photographers because as a reporter I spend the most time with photographers, that they say, "We don't worry about making good TV anymore. They don't want us to worry about the great shots. They just want, you know, you to be entertaining and demonstrative instead of the good journalist. And they just want you to do stuff for the web and for social media instead of focusing on perfecting our product, which is what we got into this business for, which is broadcast news." (personal communication, Mar. 2, 2012).

Photographer: More people watch the news than are watching our Facebook account and a lot of people at a time. I feel like, that we have to make sure that is correct first and stop worrying so much about social media. We need to stop worrying so much about it. It's incredible to me that we are now using a social news desk person. We have producers in charge of Facebook every 15 minutes, if you don't post something every hour if you're a reporter, then you're not doing your job. I completely disagree with that! If you don't post, maybe you are doing your job. Maybe you're out there gathering the information you're supposed to gather to get the story correct or telling the right people what the story is so they can write it for the anchors and put it on the right way. I just feel like sometimes we're more worried about just making sure we're getting it on the Facebook (personal communication, Feb. 16, 2012).

Assignment Manager: We've run into this a couple of times, and that is, "We've got to get it on now!" Okay, let's verify first. Just because we can do it like that.

(Snap!) and put stuff on our websites immediately, good journalism rules still apply. We had the helicopter crash the day after Christmas in December with three people lost and we have a service call IPN. It's basically scanner chat. Three times an IPN came in, three times it was the wrong record of the helicopter had been found and it had the wrong number of casualties. And people are, "We need to get this on the web." No, we need to confirm it first, and then we get it on the web. And like I said, three times it was wrong. Rules of good journalism still apply. It's great to be first. It's better to be right. And sometimes we get a little stampede mentality in the newsroom here, just because we hear something, "Let's get it on, let's get it on!" Let's find out what it is first, okay? (personal communication, Mar. 15, 2012).

Several of the employees interviewed also touched on the impact of the interactive nature of online and social media. Anchors often see it as a tool to built rapport with viewers, while reporters see it as a means of locating potential story subjects and reaching out to them. These were benefits they expected from online and social media, but they agree it has had some unanticipated outcomes as well, as one anchor explains:

Anchor/Reporter: The way that things have changed with social media and the way that people will lash out online. Not just to me personally, knock on wood, I've been very blessed with that, but this morning, they did it to one of my team members, and it's so frustrating and upsetting when they do that because people can take that online forum now and just say things that are mean and so harsh, horrible, and you want to defend yourself but in a lot of situations you can't because there's still a lot of politics in the job. So, I think that is what I would consider to be the most frustrating, is what's become of now the options and avenues for people to critic you and you realize that you are an open book and you have to have a really thick skin (personal communication, Feb. 23, 2012).

The ability to communicate breaking news quickly on multiple platforms is seen as a major benefit of online and social media but, in addition to the accuracy and quality issues addressed earlier, study participants also say they are concerned about how these media make it harder for professional journalists to set themselves and their work apart. An assignment manager explains:

Assignment Manager: Well, we don't wait until the newscast anymore to break stories. We break it on the web. We use our website to drive people to our TV station. That's the way it's going to be. People have their iPhones, they have their laptops, their pads, their tablets and everything. They know something is going on and they want it now! They don't want to wait until five o'clock, six o'clock. They'll tune in then if it's a big enough story and they want to see more. But I'll give you an example, when we go to breaking news, it used to be, you get there, get yourself established and we'll determine if we want to break into programming. Now it's, you get there and start taking pictures and send them back to the web. That's the first thing. We carry news conferences live when we can on the website. We break stories on the website. On the social media there, we get I don't want to say inundated, although today we have been because we had an incident, rumors flying at a local high school where there supposedly was going to be a fight and a lockdown and none of that was true. But all the kids are Facebooking or texting their parents saying, "Mom, there's a million cops here at the school, what's going on. They are rumors. We had this last week at (name removed) Middle School. Rumors. That's a whole other kettle of fish. Then, people call and say, "How come you're not reporting this?" We don't report rumors. We still have to maintain credibility and deal with things appropriately that you know, bloggers and websites don't have to worry about. They say, "Why don't you put this on the air?" "'Cause it's not true, and we don't want to get sued." They don't have to worry about it. We do (personal communication, Mar. 15, 2012).

MMJ: To find a way to stick out from everybody else and to find a way to show that your journalism's real and your facts are hopefully facts, but at least substantiated by somebody who's an expert, who knows it, as compared to other people who are just writing down random stuff. It's hard to tell what is real news, what is a real journalist and fact, and other stuff that's just hearsay. Because, one person can say, "Oh, I heard so and so brought a gun to school." The next person says, "So and so brought a gun to school and now the school is on lockdown." The other person says, "There is a school shooting." And there's a lot of trouble that way. And like I said, taking away viewers from us. We have to find a way to get people back, to use social media and the Internet to drive them to look at more of our product and to use our product. It should be supplementary, not replacive (personal communication, Mar. 2, 2012).

**How do a change in workload due to new and social media use and the perception of the ability to do one's job well, combine to affect job satisfaction in a television newsroom?**

The newsroom employees interviewed all said they were satisfied with their work, but distinguished between satisfaction in their job or how they do their job versus the

limitations of their work environment. As one photographer explained, the increased pressure to perform online and on social media has changed how he views the news business:

Photographer: When we're tryin' to get interviews, and talk to people about what happened around a scene. A reporter's job is also to send back pictures and write on a blog about what's goin' on around them right now! That's not really helpful to our job out in the field. I guess it's helpful to them to fill the pages of Facebook and make sure they have their certain number of posts that they're supposed to do each day, but when we're out on a scene, or out at a story, it'll hinder you in the amount of time that you have to do things and how focused you are in what you're supposed to be getting to make sure that the story is correct. And it makes you post things that... you don't have the full story yet, you're just goin' on there to blog about the fact that we're somewhere right now, and I just...yes, there are police out and about, but we have not talked to them yet, we have no idea what's goin' on. I don't think it helps out in any way, but it's where it's goin', and it's been goin' that way for a while. I mean, it started with the websites and making sure that your website was up. Now that everything is attached to Facebook and Twitter it's just about who gets it first, who gets it on there first. It's all that really matters sometimes and I think that that's just not what I thought it was gonna be (personal communication, Feb. 16, 2012).

MPP: I'm definitely satisfied. I know that I do a good job. I'm not trying to sound like conceited or anything, or if I have a big head. I know I do a good job. I know that no matter what, that what I put out there is gonna be the best that I can do and I do go above and beyond to make sure that the best is put out there and I think that's why I am in this position. There are many more editors who have been here, many more years than me, but I think maybe because of how much I try and make our product good, eye-catching, drawing the viewer in, I feel that on my part, that I'm doing that good. It's a pat on the back for me. I think I'm doing a good job (personal communication, Feb. 16, 2012).

But, even with a sense of satisfaction in their individual work, all the employees interviewed acknowledge that they will have to be willing to adapt to stay in the game.

MPP: I'm not given an option. If I don't want to do that, I don't work here. And that's plainly what it is. That's the way it has been addressed to us, we were...and when I say us, I mean MPPs in general. When we were told that the MPP, the editor, was going to take on posting to the website, posting to Facebook, Twitter, it was just that, we were told this is what we will be doing now, whether you have any interest in it, any history of doing it, and want to do it, you're gonna do it. And, if you mess up, if you put maybe the wrong...one of my problems I even put some bad grammar, like I didn't put an apostrophe in the right area. I'm

definitely told about it within like, five minutes. But again, I didn't focus on that when I went to school. That's not what I ever thought I would want to do. I wanted to work with video. I like video. I like visually seeing things, like I said. But, I'm not given an option, as long as I'm working here, I'm gonna be now delving into not only editing for video, put posting things for the social outlets, whatever they might be, and whatever may come in the future (personal communication, Feb. 16, 2012).

The final phase of Rogers' diffusion process for individuals is confirmation.

Rogers describes it as the phase where an individual decides whether to continue using the innovation and to what degree. In the case of the news employees interviewed for this study, and in general, that is not a choice they can make if they want to stay in the game and that is where the future lies.



## Chapter V Conclusion

To summarize, the purpose of this research was to find out whether the job satisfaction of broadcast journalists is impacted by the changes to the job of journalism brought on by an increased reliance on new and social media.

The research focused on four central questions based on the diffusion of new and social media in a newsroom and how that diffusion changed the way those journalists do their job and even the environment in which they work. Those questions were: How are individual employees asked or expected to use new and social media in the execution of their daily duties? Does it lighten their workload or increase it? Has it been easy or difficult for television newsroom employees to adapt to the changes brought on by this increased reliance? Why? How do the changes to the “job of journalism” brought on by increased use of new and social media affect employee perceptions of the product they produce, i.e. news? How do a change in workload due to new media use and perceptions of the ability to do one’s job well, combine to affect job satisfaction in a television newsroom?

**RQ1 and 1A:** No matter their position or job title, from editor to news manager, each news employee is expected to contribute to the station’s web content as a part of their daily duties. Most news employees are also expected to contribute to the station’s social media channels to connect with, and hopefully, draw in viewership. This study reveals that an increased reliance on new and social media also increases the daily workload for those television newsroom employees.

**RQ 2:** The in-depth interviews offer valuable insight into how news employees feel about their chosen profession in light of the ever-increasing demands of the new media workplace. These employees understand the necessity of the change, and, in the case of KEAB, are offered many opportunities online and in-person to better learn how to use these new tools, but in many newsrooms that is not the case. Lack of training is a key factor in why many employees remain fearful of, and resistant to, the changes these new media bring to their established work routine (Nguyen, 2008). These insights can be used to help broadcast employers develop strategies to improve employee morale and their news product while still maintaining a competitive edge in the news marketplace. Ultimately this research can aid in developing a balance between the journalistic ideal and the realities of how journalism needs to be practiced today.

Training is starting point, but it must go beyond a simple “how to” and should encompass the “why” of new and social media. The newsroom employees interviewed for this research are realists. They have seen the changes that new and social media have already brought and anticipate more change in the future, understanding that they will have to adapt to stay viable in what is now a constantly evolving industry. They are all adapting, some more quickly than others, but a better understanding of how they, as individual employees, fit into the greater organizational goals could foster more willingness to embrace the changes (Beam, 2006).

It opens the door to a discussion on how the broadcast industry can better train news managers to manage the necessary changes their newsrooms and employees must make to stay competitive. Awareness that embracing a new innovation is a multi-step process for individual employees based on a variety of factors including age, experience

and job title enables news managers to better plan how to implement changes in their newsrooms.

**RQ 3 and RQ 4:** The research shows that a combination of training and communication, coming from the top down, can increase and/or maintain morale during times of change and also contributes to employees' feeling better about the quality of their work (Powers, 1991).

What the research found was that there are some common themes that draw individuals to work in a television newsroom, a common outlook on what they perceive their role as a journalist to be. Those factors do not seem to be changing over time, what is changing is how the job of journalism is done in today's newsroom. It is when news employees perceive those changes as a threat to their ability to produce quality journalism that job satisfaction is threatened as well.

Expanding on the previous definition of job satisfaction, Pollard (1995) says:

Job satisfaction is the positive affective orientation workers have toward their work- or, simply, how much they enjoy their work. It is a synthesis of the social and work-related attributes, values, attitudes, experiences, and perceptions that determine the meaning of and motivation for work. Job satisfaction is essentially an accounting of intrinsic and extrinsic rewards sought and received. As a result, workers may share the same level of satisfaction but for different reasons: some seek intrinsic rewards, some seek extrinsic rewards, many seek a pastiche. An awareness of job satisfaction and its predictors is thus essential to a fuller understanding of news as work (p. 682).

This study, because it relies on observation and interviews done in a single newsroom, does not provide a sense of trends in job satisfaction in the broadcast industry, nor does it provide a comparative basis for gauging job satisfaction amongst television news employees in larger and smaller markets. Trade publications, which frequently track job satisfaction through surveys, provide cross-market snapshots of job satisfaction

industry-wide (Beam, 2006). However, as stated previously, all newsrooms operate in similar ways so it may provide a launch point for future research that can offer some general insight into the industry at large and certainly provides a starting point for research into the areas it does not address.

Additionally, as new types of media evolve and newsrooms are forced to adapt, it opens the door to many opportunities for future research. While diffusion of innovation theory is an effective way of evaluating how newsrooms and employees adapt to change, the other theories presented here beg for more consideration, especially when it comes to evaluating change beyond the newsroom- when considering a television station as a whole or evaluating change industry-wide.

Medium theory may prove a valuable tool in determining how professional journalists can continue to set themselves and their work apart in the age of citizen journalism and as changing technology continues to play a critical role in how audiences get their news.

Disruptive innovation theory offers insight for researchers seeking to understand how media organizations are changing organizationally, in the newsroom and beyond, as they respond to the issues discussed in this research.

Another issue worth further exploration is the whether there is a need for news organizations to seek to retain veteran journalists. Trade publications have shown a downward trend in job satisfaction amongst journalists (Beam, 2006). While the way the job of journalism is done has changed, the basics of journalism have not; some would argue more experienced journalists are more critical than ever in today's new media newsroom as a way to provide perspective and grounding.

The insights provided by this research may also prove valuable in evaluating how we teach and train up and coming journalists in order to best prepare them for the realities that comprise the job of journalism today.

All of these issues matter, not just to journalists and future journalists, but because, ultimately, they have the ability to shape the future of journalism: not just how the job is done, but who is doing it, why they are doing it- all things which have the power to ultimately impact the role journalists and journalism play in the public discourse.

## **Appendix A**

### **Interview Guide**

1. Tell me about your career: years in broadcasting, markets worked in, positions held.
2. How do you define the job of journalism?
3. What do you enjoy most about your job?
4. What do you find most frustrating about your work?
5. What is the biggest change you've seen in broadcast journalism during your career?
6. How has new media, such as going digital and use of the Internet, changed how you do your job or are expected to do your job?
7. How do you use social media, such as Facebook and Twitter, as part of your job?
8. Has use of new media and social media improved your ability to do your job well?
9. What challenges does use of new and social media create for you as a journalist?
10. Do you feel that the on-air product (newscast) is more important, as important as or less important than producing content for the web or social media outlets?
11. Would you say you are satisfied in your work?
12. What would improve your sense of job satisfaction?
13. Do you think your feelings are typical for television news employees in the industry today?

**Appendix B**  
**List of In-depth Interview Participants**

Job Title/Age	Years in News*	Years at this station**
Photojournalist, 50s	30 years	7 years
Photojournalist, 20s	6 years	1 ½ years
MultiPlatform Producer, 30s	7 years	7 years
Anchor/Reporter, 40s	22 years	2 years
Anchor, 50s	42 years	11 years
Anchor/Reporter, 40s	19 years	6 years
Photojournalist, 30s	15 years	6 years
Website Manager, 40s	20 years	current position 1 ½ years
MultiMedia Journalist, 20s	4 years	2 years
Lead Anchor, 60s	47 years	37 years
Assignment Editor, 30s	11 years	2 years
Lead Anchor, 50s	26 years	20 years
Assignment Manager, 50s	34 years	12 years
Producer, 30s	14 years	6 years
SMTF Leader, 20s	2 years	2 years
Executive Producer, 50s	33 years	21 years

\*ages are approximate per request of majority of participants

\*\*in some cases, years in business includes internships which led to jobs

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## **Vita**

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