

HOW SOCIAL MEDIA ARE CHANGING THE WAY BUSINESS JOURNALISTS DO THEIR JOBS

Ruisha Qian

Jeanne Abbott, project chair

ABSTRACT

This professional project seeks to answer the question of how social media are changing business reporters' sourcing practices. In the past, reporters depended on face-to-face interviews or email. With the popularity of social media in the newsrooms, there are new ways of reporting — finding sources and user-generated content on social media. This study aims to find out in what situations social media are most used for sourcing, how reporters utilize it, the benefits and drawbacks of this method, how reporters overcome the drawbacks, and what the future could be like for social media sourcing.

The study discovered that business reporters are increasingly using social media sourcing, but they still largely rely on traditional sourcing methods. Business reporters and social media editors do embrace social media sourcing because it creates a large quantity of knowledge in a short time, but they also recognize the potential risk of false information and therefore pay special attention to fact checking. They also identify social media sourcing as a way to interact with the audience and hope social media can provide more opportunities for public engagement.

The study is of importance to reporters because it can shed light on social media sourcing practices and how traditional journalistic standards such as verification are maintained.