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Social Media under Social Control: Regulating Social Media and the Future of Socialization

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Abstract

The process of socialization for new and future journalists will look dramatically different from the process undergone by previous generations of journalists, due to economic realities and changes in the nature of news production. The rise of social media and its role in the establishment of a successful career will also affect the integration of these rising professionals into their employing organizations. These changes in the socialization process will require alterations both in the day-to-day management of these individuals and in the theoretical approaches to studying their work, particularly with regard to the impact of social media on the profession. This paper demonstrates a wide range of concerns that media managers and researchers must consider as the journalism profession incorporates these new professionals into its ranks.

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Much of the research to date on the introduction of multimedia into newly converging journalism organizations has focused on how today's journalists can be assisted in adapting to new methods of reporting and distributing their work, and rightly so. This massive transformation of the way news is made and provided to the public seems to be causing a form of bipolar disorder unique to journalists and journalism researchers, who alternate between predicting either a new age of public engagement with the news or a dark age of doom and deterioration of news.

While those predictions have tended to dominate the discussion of convergence in news organizations, little attention has been paid to the situation that news organizations will face in the very near future. The journalists who today strive to adopt convergent and multimedia approaches to news are already being supplemented and will eventually be replaced by a new generation of journalists for whom convergence is the way things have always been. For these young journalists, the idea of multimedia reporting will seem simply natural, and their life experiences and educations will support that assumption. Convergence, to them, won't even merit its own name as a trend.

Rather than addressing the transitional moment of today's converging newsrooms, then, this paper will explore how new journalists today and in the near future may address their professional obligations when they enter this rapidly changing field. In particular, I will consider the potential effects of these individuals' near-lifelong use of social media upon their socialization into and engagement with the journalism profession and their employing organizations. These future journalists, who will have a deeply ingrained reliance on social media and will work in an increasingly fluid and insecure job market, also face a profession whose core identity is being redefined. This situation will profoundly alter aspiring

professionals' integration into the field, and will require a new approach both to day-to-day media management and to the academic study of journalists' socialization processes, making this issue important to anticipate in the study and practice of journalism.

Joining the Profession: Journalists' Socialization Then and Now

Studies of journalists' socialization examine how new entrants to the profession learn its conventions, norms and boundaries. New journalists learn to apply conventions of reporting or writing, and also to adhere to the standards of "journalistic professionalism," such as the separation of editorial decisions from business concerns (Soloski, 1989). The establishment and, eventually, internalized understanding of these norms allow journalists to make decisions on the fly based on those professional standards, rather than having to refer to a complex set of explicit rules that an organization might otherwise create and employ.

Warren Breed's 1955 study of journalists is still cited as the foundation for research on journalists' socialization. In the newspaper setting, Breed noted that although publishers didn't set explicit rules for their reporters' work, the content of the newspaper still remained within certain boundaries of acceptability that suited both the publisher and community. Breed attributed these apparent limits on content to a process of "social control" in the newsroom, in which feedback from editors and other superiors subtly controlled the activities of rank-and-file reporters. In this socialization process, "the recruit discovers and internalizes the rights and obligations of his status and its norms and values" (Breed, 1955, p. 328). Breed argued that new journalists are motivated toward this internalization by six factors: 1) institutional authority and sanctions, such as actual punishments or more subtle loss of story assignments; 2) obligation and esteem for superiors; 3) aspiration for higher individual status in the organization; 4) lack of allegiance to other groups with an interest in news policy; 5) the multiple pleasures of acceptance

from newsroom colleagues, engagement with news work, and development of social status; and 6) the constant need to manufacture news in a timely fashion despite all other concerns.

Following Breed, future researchers explored how journalists' motivations toward socialization develop and are expressed in their work. Gaye Tuchman (1978) and Herbert Gans's (1979) studies of the mechanics of news creation in newsrooms revealed how disparate journalists united under a common understanding of news values and news-gathering procedures could consistently create news that fit their organizations' needs and the perceived desires of their audiences. These researchers' ethnographic observations informed later work by Pamela Shoemaker and Stephen Reese (1995), who sought to organize and order the various influences on journalists into a hierarchical system, including the journalists' unique personal characteristics, journalism organizations' structure, and the effects of dominant ideology within the broader culture. In the local television news setting, Berkowitz (1993) found that journalists' beliefs about news story selection resulted less from their particular work assignments than from their socialization and ideas about journalistic professionalism. David Mindich (1998) has traced the development of these professional norms in journalism, such as journalists' effort toward objectivity through the excision of all opinion or bias. These norms have become standardized throughout the industry, partly through the increasing availability and expectation of journalism education.

A more recent attempt to recast the research on socialization into the contemporary convergent journalistic setting is the work of Mark Deuze. Deuze's research focuses on the work of journalists and other media workers in today's converged environment. Deuze indicates that "a firmly sedimented way of doing things" in the workplace and in journalism education tends to create "operational closure: the internalization of the way things work and change over time within a newsroom or at a particular outlet" (2008, p. 18). Like Breed and Berkowitz, Deuze

suggests that the rationale for this internalization is that journalists tend to place higher emphasis

on their colleagues' opinions of their work than on the business impact of their work, e.g.,

whether it attracts or alienates readers. In the end, Deuze concludes, this socialization process

results in a "more or less oppressive news culture" that creates hierarchies difficult to penetrate

by those traditionally excluded from news production, such as women and ethnic minorities, due

to the hierarchies' insular nature and prioritization of in-group membership (2008, p. 19).

Deuze's significant difference from Breed is that Deuze writes during great technological

and economic upheaval within the media industries. Deuze emphasizes, for example, the highly

insecure and mobile nature of media workers today. These workers, including journalists, exhibit

a "portfolio lifestyle," in which "careers are a sequence of stepping stones through life, where

workers as individuals and organizations as collectives do not commit to each other for much

more than the short-term goal, the project at hand" (2007, p. 11). While the notion of a "career"

has changed across American culture, with the concept of the "company man" now seeming

outdated in more than just its gendered terminology, so too has the overall economic position of

media workers. More and more of these professionals experience significant career "flexibility,"

which can be an asset, but also a source of fear. Even highly trained media professionals are

likely to spend significant periods working as freelancers, short-term contract employees, or in

other unstable positions. As Deuze points out, some of the job insecurity workers feel is real and

some only perceived, but either way, it has the same impact on the workers' dedication and

personal effort (2007, p. 19).

Young workers entering media professions today and in the near future, then, are not

likely to ever become "company men" or women, but rather will experience these conditions of

flexibility and insecurity from the very beginning of their careers. Though this situation may be

familiar to broadcast journalists, it now permeates the entire industry, and as more journalists

develop a convergence-oriented skill set and seek employment in more than one medium, such job insecurity may become the norm throughout the profession. Only half of journalism and mass communication program graduates from 2008 found full- or part-time employment in the media professions within six to eight months of graduation (Becker, Vlad, & Olin, 2009). Indeed, the layoffs and lack of jobs in 2008 may have been extraordinary due to the economic upheaval of that year, but clearly, journalism jobs are sparse and likely to remain so for some time. The Bureau of Labor Statistics (2010) predicts a 6 percent decrease in the availability of reporting jobs from 2008 to 2018, and "keen" competition for those that remain; new job seekers are advised to consider freelancing. If this is the case, what socialization processes will act upon these newly minted journalists during the early stages of their careers? They and their peers will enter a very different work environment from that experienced by their seniors in the organizations where they work. Moreover, as Deuze indicates, these young workers will participate in socialization not through indoctrination into a single company's standards and norms, but rather through a wider-ranging "participation in informal networks" (2007, p. 87). These networks will be critical to new journalists' success as they strike out to find sustainable employment – freelance, corporate or otherwise. But the networks will not offer the same immersion in a single company's standards and norms that shaped journalists' socialization in the past.

Another significant difference between Breed and Deuze's analyses of socialization is the overall structure of the media industry today. Today's media industry is characterized not by the division of the industry into technologically distinct silos, but, increasingly, by the integration of all media into a convergent, fluid and interdependent "media ecosystem" (Deuze, 2007, p. 6). This industry also is shaped today not by what Deuze calls "editorial logic," or the decisions of editors based on the perceived information needs and desires of the audience, but rather upon

"market logic" – a decision-making paradigm that prioritizes competitive domination, profit, and ratings (2007, pp. 98-99). Therefore, new journalists entering the field today and in the near future will encounter not a mythic "pure" journalism or an attempt in its direction, but rather a melding of multiple media through which journalistic products flow (and are truly best labeled "products" when created within this market logic perspective).

Finally, that "flow" of journalism is more rapid than ever before. The Internet has made it easier for journalists to speak directly to their audiences immediately and with few of the hierarchical filters of the traditional newsroom structure, whether through live blogging, feeding story updates directly to the Web, providing 140-character updates on Twitter, adding video to YouTube and other video sites, or posting on their own personal Web sites or blogs. All these communication options mean that the journalists of the next decade will use multimedia for immediate, direct contact with the audience – the audience once held at bay by the constraints of newsroom hierarchy, the slower pace of daily editing and publishing, and the dearth of opportunities for audience interaction with journalists. These constraints have either deteriorated or completely decayed in today's media environment. Tomorrow's journalists will not encounter many of the opportunities for socialization that Breed and even Deuze offered as the standard rites of initiation into the profession. The socialization process that will develop for these journalists, then, is likely to look quite different from what has been previously observed by researchers. The future of this area of media management and research, therefore, needs reconsideration, particularly with regard to the rise of social media, personal branding, and the internal regulation of media organizations.

Social Media and the Future Journalist

Social media are likely to be a significant force in altering the socialization pattern for

new and future journalists. Social media, for the purposes of this paper, are those dedicated to

facilitating social interaction online and that are not necessarily focused on journalism, but

include individuals' personal information as well. These media include online social networks

like Facebook and MySpace, blogging sites like WordPress and Blogger, and micro-blogging

services like Twitter, along with video- and photo-sharing sites like YouTube and Flickr. All of

these social media exist primarily for the purpose of allowing individuals to represent themselves

in the online world and to interact with others. Traditional news media have adopted certain

interactive elements on their online companion sites, such as the opportunity for the public to

comment on news stories, but the primary purpose of most news Web sites remains, at this

writing, to disseminate the information gathered by reporters, often in exactly the same format as

it was printed or broadcast. Social media, therefore, are quite different in nature.

Social media have already become an integral force in the lives of young people today. A

2010 Pew study reported that 38 percent of teens ages 12 to 17 have created content online, such

as blogging, posting photos or sharing videos. In addition, 73 percent of the teens surveyed said

they used either Facebook or MySpace for social networking (Pew Internet and American Life

Project, 2010). These large proportions of young people involved in social media suggest that

future journalists from this rising generation are enjoying and utilizing these social media. For all

age groups, social media use is a growing proportion of online activity. Nielsen reported in

August 2009 that a full 17 percent of time spent online by all users is now dedicated to blogging

and social networking sites, an increase of 6 percent from 2008 (Perez, 2009). Additionally, as

social media are increasingly integrated into K-12 education, young people will likely view these

media as even more important to their lives. A recent book (Kolb, 2008) describes multiple ways

that K-12 teachers can adapt lessons to include technologies like cell phones, text messaging,

blogging and podcasting, all of which make learning social while they make social media

essential.

Social media have also become components of journalism education in colleges and universities. Many faculty members in these programs have integrated social media assignments into their writing, reporting and editing courses, which increasingly reflect the converged state of the profession. Some universities have even opted to offer courses dedicated to the study of social media from both theoretical and practical perspectives. For example, DePaul University is offering a course in fall 2009 taught by Craig Kanalley, the founder of Twitter news feed BreakingTweets.com, which compiles tweets from around the world related to hot news topics. Kanalley's class includes the use of Twitter for sourcing and as a foundation for entrepreneurial journalism (DePaul University, 2009). The Columbia University Graduate School of Journalism (2009) is also providing a "Social Media Skills for Journalists" course that includes Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Craigslist, Yelp, Meetup and other social media sites in its syllabus. This course teaches students how to use social media to seek out sources, identify news trends, and – most interestingly – how to build the student's "own brand" by "curating your social-media life."

The Future Journalist as Brand

This growing emphasis on personal branding and journalistic entrepreneurship is likely to intensify in the coming years. As aspiring journalists are trained through their educational experiences to use social media skillfully, they will also build invaluable "networked reputations" for themselves (Deuze, 2007, p. 77). When the number of friends a journalist has on Facebook, or the number of followers on Twitter, can help determine his or her career success, the significance of these social media is greatly magnified. For a new journalist who faces an uncertain job market and who must operate among all media flexibly, the ability to maintain and market an individual identity using these social media networks is critical. Both personal

connections through social media and a body of easily accessible digital work help future

employers (long- or short-term) to evaluate prospective employees. As Glaser (2009) notes, "At

a time when people jump from job to job (or get laid off from job after job), personal branding is

becoming more than just a hobby – it's a necessity." MacMillan (2009) provides a detailed

account of his progress from being laid off from his position as a multimedia journalist for the

Philadelphia Daily News to eventually attracting thousands of readers to his own profitable blog

through personal branding and social media, including Twitter. The desire to build a unique

reputation and professional network using these media is likely only to become stronger among

journalists.

       Certainly journalists with strong personal brands lend their attraction and their audience

for their work to any news organization for which they work. Their employment for those

organizations is "value-added," thanks to their individual efforts in developing a style and

audience that is uniquely their own. Scott Karp of the collaborative journalism Web site Publish2

told Glaser (2009) that

> In a digital media world where corporate industrial assets like printing presses,
> delivery trucks, etc. are declining in value, people – reporters, editors, bloggers – are the
> greatest asset that publications have…They should actively cultivate that asset by helping
> personal brands flourish…You could define social media as the shift from publication
> brands to personal brands, as media shifts to the social web. At some point a publication
> brand without personal brands will have very little value to the people who consume that
> brand.

However, it is clearly also important to news organizations that they not become completely

overshadowed by their employees' efforts on behalf of their personal brands. A news

organization still needs a strong brand of its own to effectively market itself to advertisers and its

audience. A balance has to be found between the personal and corporate brands when employees

express themselves through social media and online. Journalists are contributing to their

organizations' social media efforts; a recent study by Hofstra University for the Radio Television

Digital News Association found that 20 percent of TV newsrooms have set up a Facebook page, and 36 percent say they use Twitter "constantly." About 71 percent of stations ask their newsroom employees to work on their stations' Web sites and presumably may also ask them to contribute to the station's social media outreach as well (Tompkins, 2010). Yet in an industry where commitments between employers and employees are often brittle and temporary, individual journalists may struggle to prioritize representing a company brand over their personal brands, feeling that in the name of survival, their own brands must come first.

The integral role of social media in the lives of journalists may also alter their approach to the presentation of information in their work. For example, the significance of building that valuable "networked reputation" and "personal brand" drives many aspiring media professionals to create blogs. However, those who attempt to attract large audiences may opt to use well-known blog traffic growth strategies, such as increasing the number of posts on the blog or using search engine optimization (SEO) strategies on the blog. Merely increasing the number of posts on a blog improves the chances that search engines will send users to the blog, while frequent posting can also maintain an audience (Rowse, 2009). Analysis of the key words that help users locate the blog – followed by increased use of those words on the blog – is also an SEO technique to increase a blog's audience (Ramachandran, 2009). Therefore, journalists serious about enlarging and maintaining a regular audience for their work may manipulate their products to incorporate these considerations. These alterations may not affect the ultimate quality of their work or their organizations, but they represent a growing consideration for journalists who seek to establish a personal brand.

It is apparent that social media and personal branding will alter the professional and personal lives of future journalists. The type of "social control" of the newsroom that Breed observed – in which the new journalist is taught practices and norms through hierarchical

procedures and the feedback of superiors – does not exist in the social media world where young

people live today. These future journalists will already have been using the tools of the future

newsroom from childhood. No longer will aspiring journalists have to wait until their journalism

education or their first jobs to learn the basic skills of creating and distributing information for a

wide audience.

Though the nuances of the inverted pyramid, the application of "objectivity" and other

journalistic norms used to remain mysterious in Breed's day until the new journalist arrived in

the newsroom to work – or at least until a high school or college journalism course – the use of

social media will be familiar from very early in future journalists' lives. Therefore, these

journalists will have to make a transition in their use of social media when they begin to work for

an organization that employs these media for business purposes. They will have to move from

using these media for branding and job-seeking, or just for communication with friends and

family, to using them for work. Alternatively, they can attempt to balance personal (branding)

use of social media and its use for their employment; or, their employers can attempt to define

that balance for them. This last issue – efforts by today's news organizations to define

journalists' use of social media – has provoked much debate and presents a serious dilemma for

those in the profession today and in the future.

Social Control and Journalists' Use of Social Media

Recognizing that many of today's journalists are already seeking to use social media to

boost their own personal brands and build individual networks, news organizations have

struggled to find the best way to manage their employees' social media use. Many major news

organizations have recently created social media policies for their journalists. The policies have

been debated widely online among journalists and critics.

Many news organizations have already attempted to integrate the use of social media into their operations, viewing these media as ways to increase the distribution of their products and to augment audience engagement. They are posting headlines, inviting conversation and "crowdsourcing" information through official organizational Twitter accounts, on top of the similar uses of personal Twitter accounts by many of their individual employees. James Brady of washingtonpost.com told the *American Journalism Review* that social media are a means of "get[ting] your stuff into the ecosystem" for word-of-mouth distribution; rather than hoping that an audience is attracted to the organization's own home page, "the bigger play is to put your stuff directly into a social media site" (Emmett, 2008, p. 43).

However, these organizations have realized that these uses of social media carry risks as well as benefits. Permitting employees direct access to the organization's audience – without the hierarchy of newsroom filters that have traditionally been in place – opens up new opportunities for factual errors, embarrassment and even legal issues. In February 2010, for example, the reported "death" of Canadian folk singer-songwriter Gordon Lightfoot spread rapidly via social media, but was found to have been reported inaccurately. An incorrect alert was sent out on the Canwest News Service wire, based on an inaccurate tweet of "RIP Gordon Lightfoot" from someone with personal connections to Lightfoot's friend and fellow musician Ronnie Hawkins, who mistakenly believed him to be dead (Faguy, 2010; Fleming, 2010). Canwest national affairs correspondent David Akin then posted the alert to his Twitter account, as he does with many alerts. Akin is followed on Twitter by nearly three thousand people, including numerous other journalists (Akin, 2010). Other major publications then posted the news online, including the *Vancouver Sun* and *Maclean's* (Faguy, 2010). Soon thousands of tweets and Facebook posts had inaccurately announced Lightfoot's death to the world.

The immediacy and potentially wide dissemination of information posted to social media

sites mean that editors and executives no longer have the opportunity to engage those they

manage in some of the significant elements of the socialization process that occurred in Breed's

day, or even those in the more recent past. In the Lightfoot example, there was no opportunity for

an editor or manager to step in and request that a journalist verify the information further before

continuing to spread the faulty information; the simple act of "re-tweeting" and re-posting spread

the information after split-second decisions by Twitter users, many of whom likely trusted

Akin's tweets due to his position with Canwest. Editorial interventions could prevent the damage

to journalists' and organizations' reputations that occurs from this kind of event. Interventions by

editors also affect reporters' work in more subtle ways. For example, Breed describes the ways

that reporters would learn from editors' alterations of their work, beyond merely ensuring factual

accuracy: "'If things are blue-penciled consistently…you learn he [the editor] has a prejudice in

that regard,'" said one reporter (1955, p. 328). A tweet has no opportunity for "blue-penciling";

it hits the audience in real time, just after the reporter writing it hits enter. Therefore, the element

of "institutional authority and sanctions" that Breed observed in the socialization process must

now take a different form.

     For many media organizations, that form has been rules and restrictions for the use of

social media. The most draconian approach to managing this concern is to block all access to

social media sites from the media workplace. Australia's *Sydney Star Observer* and

Johannesburg's *The Star* have blocked all access to Twitter from their offices (Posetti, 2009).

The Star, however, does have an official account for the newspaper itself. ESPN, the TV sports

network, also prohibits its employees from having personal Web sites or social media accounts

pertaining to sports, which led to the "Twitter suspension" of one of its employees in 2009

(Kramer, 2009b).

     Many media organizations acknowledge the value of using social media, but have opted

to preserve some control over their employees' use of these technologies. The *New York Times* has restricted its journalists, for example, from completing the "political views" section of their Facebook profiles and from editorializing if they work in news. They are also told to choose online groups and to post links for friends in ways that avoid suggesting bias (Poynter Online, 2009). The *Washington Post* has a somewhat more strict policy:

> *Post* journalists must refrain from writing, tweeting or posting anything – including photographs or video – that could be perceived as reflecting political, racial, sexist, religious or other bias or favoritism that could be used to tarnish our journalistic credibility. (quoted by Kramer, 2009a)

The *Post* policy was quickly criticized by media commentator Jeff Jarvis, who tweeted soon after the rules were released that the "*Washington Post* turns journalists into antisocial mannequins. So much for new connections to the community" (Jarvis, 2009). Moreover, the *Post* states that "guidelines apply to individual accounts on online social networks, when used for reporting and for personal use" (quoted by Kramer, 2009a). Employees' personal lives are therefore affected by this policy as well.

The BBC has developed an extensive set of guidelines for both the journalistic and personal use of social media by its employees. Employees using Facebook, for example, may not post their political affiliations or publicly join politically oriented groups on the site (BBC, 2010). The *Wall Street Journal* policy provides employees a bit more latitude: when they have opinions on topics "unrelated to [their] beat and more leisure or hobby-oriented, [they] can express [their] opinions more directly" (quoted by Buttry, 2009). *WSJ* reporters are, however, prohibited from describing "how an article was reported, written or edited" (quoted by Buttry, 2009). The Associated Press has a similar restriction on sharing information about "internal operations," and tells employees not to "report things or break news that we haven't published" (Strupp, 2009). The News Media Guild, the union that represents over a thousand American AP employees, has asked legal counsel to review the AP's social media guidelines, saying they

infringe on the employees' freedom to speak about their work (Podger, 2009).

The variety of rules that these organizations have chosen to impose upon their employees represents a sharp deviation from the methods of regulating media employees' production that Breed and even Deuze observed. Rather than socializing their employees into the use of social media in the media workplace through discussion and the occasional direct reprimand, a blunt instrument is being used: an explicit policy. The trend at many media organizations of regulating employees' expression in this way seems to be a new development in the media profession, perhaps based in elevated fears of business failure in today's competitive environment, of legal action, or of negative audience responses. Offering general guidelines for the production of media content, along with editorial guidance, seems an antiquated approach in light of the issuance of such rules. The RTNDA (2010) has issued overarching guidelines for consideration by its member news organizations to help lead the discussion of this issue. However, it's entirely possible that the implementation of these suggestions in individual newsrooms may take the form of specific policies, not less-rigid guidelines that could result in divergent interpretations by staff.

The age of gradual social control that permitted a greater application of independence and individual judgment has perhaps given way at media organizations under the pressures of immediate, unfiltered social media. Concerns about social media use by employees aren't unique to journalism organizations. In fact, a recent survey showed that a quarter of companies represented in a survey had disciplined an employee for inappropriate social media use, and 44 percent of the companies had explicit policies encompassing their employees' online and social media activity (Health Care Compliance Association & Society of Corporate Compliance and Ethics, 2009). Therefore, across all types of companies, the use of "social control" types of methods for ensuring that employees use social media properly seems to be undergoing a

replacement by the imposition of strict policies.

Envisioning the Future Journalist in the Regulated Social Media Newsroom

The journalist envisioned in this paper – one who has been immersed in the creation and constant use of social media from an early age – is likely to react negatively to the imposition of workplace social media policies for two major reasons. First, contemporary journalism appears to be slowly shifting to an era of "transparency" and collaboration from an era in which a strict aura of journalistic objectivity (defined as preventing the appearance of personal bias) and professional distance was maintained. Second, the nature of individual media workers' careers will affect their willingness to ascribe to any limitations upon their social media use, whether personal or professional in nature.

The shift from "objectivity" and distance to an age of transparency and collaboration has been best described by David Weinberger (2009), who writes that in a digital age characterized by hypertext and links rather than paper and film, attempting to present a neutral, inconclusive perspective in journalistic work is an anachronism:

> Transparency prospers in a linked medium, for you can literally see the connections between the final draft's claims and the ideas that informed it…during the Age of Paper, we got used to the idea that authority comes in the form of a stop sign: You've reached a source whose reliability requires no further inquiry…[I]n the analysis and contextualization that journalists nowadays tell us is their real value – we want, need, can have, and expect transparency. Transparency puts within the report itself a way for us to see what assumptions and values may have shaped it, and lets us see the arguments that the report resolved one way and not another. Transparency – the embedded ability to see through the published draft – often gives us more reason to believe a report than the claim of objectivity did.

Journalists who never really knew the "Age of Paper" will expect their work in digital form to contain this type of linking and will rely upon the immediate revelation of sources and rationale that links provide. This practice is becoming more and more commonplace, allowing journalists to produce work that immediately reveals its credibility to the interested audience member and

does not have to construct a façade of impartiality when the journalist may have gathered enough

information to draw useful conclusions through critical thought and reason. Such work can

include more than a sterile presentation of "both sides" of an issue; it can present a perspective

and even make an argument, provided that the facts and the reasoning process are adequately

revealed to the reader who chooses to pursue them.

A next step in this transparency process is being pioneered by the nonprofit investigative

journalism organization ProPublica, which recently published on its Web site a "reporting

recipe" for the investigation of state nursing boards' oversight of nurses, based on its 2009 joint

project with the *Los Angeles Times*. ProPublica intends this description of its reporting process to

be used by other journalists to replicate the investigation in other locales, thereby easing the

investigation process and potentially improving the quality and quantity of investigative work

that can be produced across the board (Ornstein & Weber, 2010). This practice would be in

direct opposition to the *Wall Street Journal*'s policies, which prevent the discussion of reporting

practices with the audience. Such a restrictive social media policy is clearly contrary to the push

for increased transparency in the production of journalism.

Additionally, these new and future journalists are accustomed to the immediate and

unfiltered nature of social media. The direct contact with an audience is utterly familiar to them,

and they will expect that type of interaction in both their personal and professional media work.

They will be more likely to query their social media contacts for story ideas and for the reporting

process, and will be familiar with and open to using the procedures of "crowdsourcing" and

citizen journalism that are filtering into the profession. Drawing upon a variety of sources, not

just the official sources who tend to be overrepresented in today's journalism, will be second

nature to future journalists who routinely solicit feedback from their social networks on any

number of personal and professional queries, from what to wear to a party to who to contact at a

government agency for a story.

Moreover, young journalists who enter a profession characterized by convergence and temporary employment will try to maximize social media to obtain status for themselves, perhaps more so than for their employing organizations. As Patrick Thornton (2009) writes on BeatBlogging.org, "social media and blogs can elevate a reporter to the level where he no longer needs the news organization. Eventually a reporter with a big enough Web presence and social media savvy can start a news startup like Tech Crunch or start a blog." As addressed above, journalists of the future are more likely to have developed their own "personal brands" that can either reinforce their news organizations' status – or, alternatively, serve as a launching pad for independent projects or future employment elsewhere. Thornton (2009) also notes that "a reporter that demonstrates considerable Web and social media skills will be considerably more employable than someone who chooses to follow the new *WSJ* social media policy." By restricting their employees' social media uses, media organizations essentially cripple their efforts to establish themselves independently, which may be viewed by media workers of the future as an unfair limitation upon their individual potential for career achievement.

Practical Implications for Media Management

The growth of social media suggests that we are likely to see only greater resistance to organizational imposition of social media policies and rules, given the integral nature of these media to the lives and careers of future journalists. Employers' desire to control uses of these media will have to be moderated and addressed productively.

First, it is worth news organizations' time to consider the issue carefully. Not only can an improperly formulated and implemented social media policy alienate employees, those employees may view those very same social media as a ticket out of the organization if the need

or desire arises. Therefore, employers should consider ways to invest in their employees, to offer

them an incentive to remain with the organization that supercedes the appeal of striking out

independently to work on individual projects or on outside collaborative efforts. That investment

might take the forms of additional training, benefits, assurances of job security and, naturally,

attractive pay. In a job market characterized by constant worry that the next day will bring a pay

cut or a pink slip, the opportunity to work for an organization that obviously values its

employees may counteract the desire to exit the organization and to attempt to use existing social

networks to find or create alternative employment. Clearly, this issue is not unique to media

organizations, but is relevant to all employers during turbulent economic times.

The recent case of David Pogue, technology writer for the *New York Times*, indicates

another area of concern for media organizations. Pogue has been criticized for not consistently

revealing potential conflicts of interest between his *Times* reporting and his outside projects,

including his authorship of technical manuals for technology that he has reviewed for the paper.

As Fry (2009) notes, the "higher public profile and some portable brand equity" that Pogue and

other journalists have developed from these outside projects are assets for their news

organizations, as long as they are disclosed to readers in an ethical manner. News organizations

cannot prohibit journalists from pursuing such outside projects, nor should they; like restrictive

social media policies, such prohibitions will be seen as damaging to the careers of individual

journalists who seek to create sustainable employment in today's market. Fry (2009) suggests

instead that organizations provide guidance to their employees who seek to engage in such

projects, but permit them to do so, as long as "that freedom neither detracts from the

[organization's] needs nor hurts its name."

To encourage buy-in to whatever policies are developed, media employees must feel that

they are involved in the creation of these policies. Individuals accustomed to the transparency

and collaboration enabled by social media will not look kindly on policies that do not themselves embody those characteristics. Breed's 1955 study is instructive in this area, as he demonstrates how the socialization of journalists into the behavior desired by their organizations occurred not through the brute imposition of rules, but through conversation: a sense of proper behavior developed through discussion of specific scenarios that arose in day-to-day work. Such behavior was rewarded through a sense of social solidarity and the chance to do fulfilling work. Breed felt that this process had some negative unintended consequences, as mentioned above; however, handled cautiously, this approach can be effective. While some codification of the organization's policies may ultimately be necessary, an open discussion should be ongoing about their content and relevance.

Additionally, the nature of social media also requires the constant revision and evolution of guidelines for their use, if codified. Podger (2009) cites Mary Hartney, director of audience engagement at the *Baltimore Sun*, on this issue: "The technology is changing, so I hope the ethics policy is a living document…All of this stuff is changing very rapidly. So, anything you write down in an ethics policy or as a best practice is liable to change next week." Although Twitter and Facebook are the primary social media *du jour*, the next innovation is undoubtedly already on its way. Google Wave, for example, is in its early stages of adoption by tech-savvy journalists, and has potential to change information-gathering and collaborative techniques (as described in detail by Milian, 2009). Therefore, if social media policies are ultimately formulated and distributed, they must be malleable to accommodate the next new technology that will test journalists' and organizations' flexibility.

Most importantly, social media represent an opportunity for journalists and their organizations to connect with the audience in critical new ways – a chance to reunite alienated readers and viewers with content and its creators, who have been largely distanced in the past.

Just as new and future journalists have been lifelong creators of media content, so too will their peers in other careers, and this audience will likely seek to create and contribute their own perspectives to the journalistic conversation just as they would contribute to any other topic. Such an audience will expect media organizations to be transparent in their operations, to discuss their inner workings publicly and to be open to public input and feedback. Locking down journalists' social media use, then, would restrict that exchange and prevent the type of full audience engagement with the news that is the dream of those who envision the increased democratic potential offered by the union of journalism and technology.

Theoretical Implications for Media Researchers

Along with media managers, media researchers are entering a new production environment that current theoretical approaches don't necessarily accommodate, at least in studying the socialization of journalists. First, it will no longer be possible to make the convenient assumption that journalists have probably not produced news before they joined a professional news organization, or at least a college news outlet. Instead, it will be entirely possible that today's upcoming journalists will have been "producing news" since childhood. A young person who posts a picture online of something in his or her neighborhood is, in a very real sense, producing news, though not with the same methods used by a local newspaper reporter. These journalists will even have gathered feedback to their work and responded to it, not through letters to the editor, but through Facebook, Flickr, Twitter, YouTube or blog comments.

The act of creating and distributing content online requires many of the same judgments of selection and composition that professional newswork requires. This task may not be as sophisticated in a young person's early attempts as, say, reporting for the *New York Times* or a

national TV news network, but it's a start, and these lifelong efforts will no doubt affect the ways

these future journalists will participate in their work. As a result, the future study of journalists'

socialization will need to include not just what has occurred in their professional employment,

but also the many different content production tasks that they have undertaken throughout their

lives. How did these early experiences shape their knowledge, beliefs and ethics? These

questions, while they might seem somewhat surprising today, will sound much less unusual in

the very near future. Furthermore, journalistic work is increasingly divorced from stable, fixed

newsrooms in which socialization processes would occur. For example, the recent

RTNDA/Hofstra University study shows that about a third of local TV news stations now use

"one man band" journalists, and this figure is gradually increasing (Tompkins, 2010). When

more journalists from all types of news organizations work out of their cars, toting backpacks

full of gear to report in all media from any location in real time, different socializing forces may

come into play. Freelancers will also be subject to processes distinct from those that affect

journalists with steady full-time employment.

This attention to the development of what one might call the "journalistic character"

among future journalists, wherever they work, is a deviation from studies on journalists in the

field today. Much attention has already been paid to the transitional status of currently employed

journalists and the challenges they have faced in integrating multimedia skills into their work and

extending their journalistic sensibilities to incorporate convergence. For example, Deuze states

that the "the professional identity of the media worker gets significantly undermined" by the

copying, editing and remixing of media content (2008, p. 12). However, this is only true if you

are *not* a media worker who has been creating digital mashups of video clips, favorite songs and

personal photos since childhood. Clearly, these future media workers will not feel a deep

occupational identity crisis as a result of new technology. They will have always lived in what

Lessig (2008) calls "read-write culture," not the "read-only" culture that nurtured many older journalists.

This differing context for the socialization of future journalists will lead to new and fascinating research questions addressing not just their development within the workplace, which will no doubt differ due to generational changes, but also that consider their overall attitudes about the ideology of journalism. Beliefs about ethics and transparency are probably the most likely to change due to the differing personal experiences of future journalists. Shoemaker and Reese (1995) designate journalists' individual characteristics as the lowest level of influence on the overall profession and the content it produces. However, the next two levels of influence – media routines and media organizational structure – soon both will be defined by newer entrants to the profession who represent these changing attitudes. Attention to their beliefs, particularly around social media, personal branding versus organizational loyalty, and transparency will yield insight into the future of journalism as a profession. As the organizing structures of today's journalism increasingly deteriorate, new structures and forces will take their place, and the resulting new types of journalism will differ, making them worthy of increased and nuanced study.

Conclusion

Although Warren Breed laid the groundwork for the study of journalists' socialization in 1955, we see over a half century later a radically different array of technology, training and attitudes among journalists, and a new approach to dealing with challenges to the profession. Interestingly, Breed felt that the 1950s approach to integrating new journalists into the profession, with its heavy reliance on journalists' desire to feel accepted socially by their peers and superiors, ultimately "produces results insufficient for wider democratic needs" (1955, p.

335). Because the journalists Breed studied were pushed toward mainstream, non-disruptive activities to gain interpersonal acceptance, they had little incentive to disrupt that social accord by producing the kinds of deeper analysis or investigation that would have, in Breed's view, ultimately benefited the audience. Those projects would be too upsetting to the status quo and to those in positions of power.

Breed concluded that it would take pressure on the publishers from external sources to expand the range of topics and approaches that publishers would permit or encourage in their newspapers. Those external sources included professional codes of ethics, the professionalization of the field and – interestingly – newspaper readers. Breed felt that if newspaper readers demanded "significant news objectively presented" (1955, p. 334), newspaper content would ultimately better serve their needs as citizens. However, he felt that the ultimate responsibility for newsroom policy and the news product fell to the publisher, who too often failed to urge journalists to expand the breadth and depth of their work – and, in fact, may have been motivated *not* to do so to preserve financial concerns.

Social media represent an opportunity for journalists to deal with many of the problems Breed observed in 1955, if their organizations remain flexible enough to allow it to happen. Social media can engage the public in the collaborative production of news they find to be important and useful through crowdsourcing and citizen journalism projects. Journalists can use social media to reach out to a wider variety of sources, rather than relying on the standard set of official sources found in most stories. However, such approaches can only be deployed if organizations create policies that accommodate journalists' desire to implement these technologies in their work, with particular attention to the needs of younger journalists who will likely enter the profession under a significantly different set of assumptions and beliefs about the applications of these media and their role in their personal and professional lives. Social media

can amplify journalism's contributions to democracy in the future, particularly in the hands of the "digital natives" who will soon take possession of the profession, but it is the responsibility of today's media managers to ensure that the path is open for them to do so.

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